

Getting the Most from Your Hill Meetings

Preparing for Meetings

- Reach out to your delegation as soon as you know you will be attending NCSHA's Legislative Conference to arrange your meetings, and at least one or two weeks in advance of your trip. You can find the phone numbers for your representatives [here](#) and for your senators [here](#).
- **We encourage you to schedule meetings after 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 22, or after 10:30 on Thursday, April 23,** so you'll be able to take advantage of LegCon programming and hear from the Administration officials and members of Congress speaking at the event. However, if those times are inconvenient for your members, set up meetings whenever you can get them.
- Know on which committees your members serve so you can hone your messages to them. If you have a large delegation, prioritize meetings with those who serve on committees with jurisdiction over affordable housing issues, and focus your discussion on the issues their committee(s) cover. The most influential congressional committees for affordable housing are:
 - **[Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees](#).** These committees have jurisdiction over all tax-related issues including the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (Housing Credit) and tax-exempt private activity bonds.
 - **[Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and House Financial Services Committees](#).** These committees have jurisdiction over all policy related to programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including the HOME Investment Partnerships program, Housing Trust Fund, and Section 8. They also oversee the Federal Housing Administration and the housing Government-Sponsored Enterprises, including Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Ginnie Mae, and the Federal Home Loan Banks.
 - **[Senate Appropriations and House Appropriations Committees](#).** These committees have jurisdiction over all issues related to program funding. In particular, members of the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Appropriations Subcommittees on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) have jurisdiction over HUD program spending, and members of the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Subcommittees on

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies have jurisdiction over funding for Department of Agriculture rural housing programs.

- Ask if the member is available for the meeting. If they aren't, ask to meet with senior staff who cover the key issues.
- Bring leave-behind materials to emphasize the work your agency has done in the district/state. While NCSHA will provide advocacy materials, the most important materials are state specific.
- Make sure to know basic information about the issues that are most important to the member with whom you're meeting and the characteristics of their district. For example, a member who served in the armed forces may be interested to hear how your agency has helped veterans, or a member from a rural area may want to know how affordable housing programs are working in rural communities.
- Education is key to effective advocacy. If you are meeting with a member you haven't previously met with or a new staff person, make sure they understand your agency's role in your state's affordable housing system. Avoid acronyms, jargon, and lingo with which they may not be familiar.
- Come prepared with information about the housing need in your state. Be prepared to discuss how your agency has assisted residents of your state with housing needs and how it could do more with additional resources.
- NCSHA will host a priorities briefing for LegCon attendees on Monday, April 21 to cover our top asks, messaging, and details about the legislative environment to help you hone your message with the most up-to-date information.
- If you wish to discuss a particular bill, know its name, number, and lead sponsors. It is also good to know other cosponsors, especially cosponsors in your delegation. NCSHA will have available for you bill summaries and updated cosponsor lists for all [NCSHA-endorsed legislation](#) introduced in advance of LegCon.

- Make “the ask.” Be sure to let your member know what you need them to do to advance HFA affordable housing priorities. Be clear, specific, and direct. If a bill you want them to cosponsor has not been introduced yet, let them know you will be back in touch as soon as it is.
- If Congressional staff join you in the meeting, make sure to get their business cards so you can follow up with them later.
- On the day of your meeting, keep an eye on your cellphone and/or email: Unplanned last-minute activity on the Hill could delay or change the location of your meeting.

Photos and Social Media: #HFAsOnTheHill

- Request permission when you schedule, or at the start of, your meeting to take a couple of photos with the member in their office.
- Share those images on social media, expressing thanks to the member for the meeting, and tag the member's office in the post. (Check out these HFA examples from previous NCSHA Legislative Conferences.)
- When tweeting during NCSHA's Legislative Conference:
 - ➔ Mention (@) your members of Congress, @[YourHFA], and @NCSHAhome.
 - ➔ Include our hashtag: #HFAsOnTheHill
- If you email your meeting photos to romanoff@ncsha.org, NCSHA will share them on social media, broadening their reach and impact.



Following Up After the Meeting

- Follow up after the meeting with a thank-you email. Express appreciation for the member or staffer's time and reiterate your main points.
- Briefly go over your priorities and repeat your main requests. If the member or staffer requested additional information, supply it in an easy-to-understand manner. If applicable, share [links](#) to relevant FAQs and fact sheets on issues discussed during the meeting.
- Searchable PDFs are valued by staffers. This format allows the user to zero in on specific concepts using key words.
- Send a short, handwritten thank-you note and enclose your business card. We have it on good authority that members and staffers appreciate those notes!