

Travel-Free Advocacy



Reduced travel doesn't mean reduced advocacy! In fact, virtual advocacy can be a powerful tool. A virtual tour of your program is a unique opportunity to invite members of Congress and their staff that might not otherwise get the chance to see your site first-hand. It offers flexibility for both you and your elected officials. And it can be a fantastic way to share all the great things happening at your program.

Two to Three Weeks Out: Invitation

- Find the contact information for your members of Congress. Call the Capitol Hill switchboard operator: (202) 224-3121. They will connect you to your members' offices where you can ask: "Can you please provide me with the name and email address of your scheduler?"
- Use this [template](#) to send an email to the scheduler of the member of Congress you would like to invite.
- Plan the virtual visit to be about an hour long.

A few things to remember:

- Make the request at least 2-3 weeks in advance.
- You can expect a response time from the office within a week. If you don't hear back after a week, send a follow up email.
- Be clear in your invitation that this is a virtual site visit.

One to Two Weeks Out: Planning the Visit

- **Choose the right setting.**
 - What backdrop will enhance the image of your Head Start program? Which parts of your program do you want to highlight? Are you using videos or pictures?
 - Are you planning to give a live tour of your program? If so, will you have one person holding the camera/laptop and another person facilitating the tour?
- **Design the run-of-show.**
 - Who should be there from your program? Are there key staff members or parents you want to invite? Or key stories you want to share?
 - Think about the parts of your program's work you want to highlight. Focus on just a couple of stories that illustrate your center's impact. For the most up-to-date advocacy talking points, reach out to advocacy@nhsa.org
 - Choose one person to lead the call and help transition between speakers and use this [sample run of show](#) to help you create a plan.
 - Leave 10-15 minutes at the end for discussion.

Day-of: The Visit



READY...

- Convene your team at least 15 minutes before the call.
- Make sure everyone knows the run-of-show, including talking points and transitions.



SET...

- Test the internet throughout your building
- Make sure your computer has a full charge and close all unnecessary apps and programs so everything runs smoothly.



PRESENT!

- Raise the webcam to eye-level and simulate eye contact.
- Make sure to dress the part - wear something you would wear if you were meeting in-person.

Day-After: Follow-Up

Thank your officials and anyone else who joined the call with them for “stopping by” your program.

- Use our [thank you template](#) and include any resources or documents you may have promised to share.

Promoting the Event

- Think of a potential screenshot that helps to capture a moment of everyone smiling and share later on social media. Remember to ask the affiliated Congressional staffer about recording or sharing photos of the virtual visit in advance.
- Use our [social media toolkit](#) and our template press advisory if you want to [alert any local media](#).

Technology

- Decide which video conferencing platform to use. WebEx and Microsoft are the platforms most typically used by Congress, but Zoom works well, too.
- Make sure you have a solid internet connection and adequate lighting.
- Check your microphones and camera, use high-quality when possible.
 - Need assistance? Reach out to advocacy@nhsa.org. Our tech team can help!

Other Ways to Get Involved

- Write a [Letter to the Editor](#)
- Participate in [Virtual Town Halls](#)

Visit nhsa.org/advocacy to learn more about taking action and please reach out to advocacy@nhsa.org with any questions.