

Sample Meeting Agenda & Worksheet

Below is a sample meeting agenda and policy talking points to help you think through the framework of your meetings with your Senator(s) or Representative(s) and/or their staff members. If more than one person attends, think about who will chair the meeting and who will cover each agenda item. Use the sample meeting agenda to help you fill in information on the meeting agenda worksheet.

MEETING AGENDA

1. Introductions (BRIEF)

- Everyone introduces themselves and their agency and says **one or two sentences** about their involvement with the issue of homelessness. If there are more than 3 people in the meeting, the Chair might want to do the introductions.
- Mention any relationships you have with acquaintances of your Senator or Representative.

2. Thank the Senator / Representative for something

- *We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for your dedication to improving policies that will allow us to better address homelessness in (COMMUNITY).*
- What is the Senator's / Representative's history of support on this issue?
- Thank him or her for something specific. For example, co-sponsorship of or work to support legislation, a federal appropriation for your agency, or visiting your program recently.

3. Purpose of the meeting

- *We are here today to talk to you about the local progress being made in (COMMUNITY) to implement solutions to homelessness and how we can work together to advance our progress. Specifically, we ask that you work in support of providing an INCREASE for McKinney-Vento programs in the FY 2011 Appropriations Act.*

4. Tell local stories of personal and community-wide success

- Members of Congress are more likely to support your request when you can demonstrate how much you have accomplished with the resources that you have. It shows you can obviously put the resources to good use.
- Share any community or program-related outcome data. Describe what you do and concretely explain why your program works. Relate McKinney-Vento funding and HPRP to your city's success.
- Tell the story of how you (or an individual/family you know) benefited from a local homeless assistance program.
- Share information about your community's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.
- Discuss any involvement of interesting partners in the community who have come together in your local movement to end homelessness (i.e. business owners, community organizations, local leaders / elected officials).

5. Describe how this policy issue will impact homeless people and programs in your community.

- *See "Sample Talking Points" below.*

6. Make a SPECIFIC ask

- *We ask that the Senator/Representative contact Appropriations Committee leaders right away to express his/her support for including an INCREASE to HUD's McKinney-Vento programs in the final FY 2011 Appropriations Act.*

7. **Response from Member / staff**

- Think about what questions you expect the Member to ask, based on past contact with him/her.
- If the meeting is with staff (not the Member), the staff will have to ask their boss before giving you an answer. Ask when you can follow-up with him/her.
- If the Member of Congress is there, you should ask “Who on your staff can I follow up with?”
- If you get a maybe/no response to your policy request, ask what additional information you can provide to help them decide and/or address their concerns.
- If you get a ...
 - **Yes:** Say: “Wonderful!”
 - **Maybe:** Ask: “Is there any additional information I can provide to help you decide?”
 - **No:** Say: “Is there a reason why you will not do this? Is there any information I can provide that might address some of your concerns? (This is an excellent opportunity to keep the lines of communication open.)”

8. **Closing**

- Summarize any commitments made by the Member / staff
- Repeat any questions you need to answer in follow up (that you couldn’t answer in the meeting).
- Thank them and ask when and with whom and when you should follow up.
- Invite them to see a local program next time they are at home (April recess).

Sample Talking Points: Impact of McKinney-Vento Funding on Your Community?

- ◆ A funding level of \$2.2 billion would help us to make significant progress toward implementing the HEARTH Act. Because of their high cost, renewals would basically swallow up all of the McKinney-Vento funds if the program receives flat funding. This would mean that **(COMMUNITY)** could not make any progress toward implementing the HEARTH Act through new CoC projects or the continuation of the highly effective Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) through the HEARTH Act. It would also mean we couldn’t make any progress toward addressing the effects of the recession. It would put a dead stop to our strong momentum from the last several years under multiple Administrations and multiple Congresses.
- ◆ **These programs work.** Between January 2005 and January 2007, McKinney-funded programs contributed to a 10 percent reduction in homelessness nationwide, with larger declines in the number of people in families (18 percent decline) and unsheltered homeless people (13 percent decline). They also contributed heavily to a 35 percent decline in chronic homelessness between 2005 and 2009.
 - **Talk about local declines over the last several years.** If the most recent data shows an increase, describe the progress your community had been making prior to the recession.
- ◆ With an increase in McKinney-Vento funding, we could continue funding new CoC projects, including permanent supportive housing (PSH), to help us make further progress toward ending chronic homelessness once and for all.
 - **Talk about the need for additional PSH to address chronic homelessness** in your community, and the local success you have had in solving chronic homelessness.
- ◆ With an increase in McKinney-Vento funding, the HEARTH Act could continue funding a significant percentage of programs created through HPRP.
 - **Use data to demonstrate how you are using HPRP** to prevent and end homelessness.
- ◆ Talk about what you need additional McKinney funding for specifically. Describe a new CoC program that could be created or an existing CoC or HPRP program that could continue.

MEETING AGENDA WORKSHEET

Meeting with _____

1. Purpose of the meeting

Specifically, we would like the Senator / Representative to contact Appropriations Committee leaders in support of an INCREASE in McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants funding in FY 2011.

2. Introductions (BRIEF)

3. Thank you

4. Tell stories of success

5. Describe how this policy issue will impact homeless people and programs in your community

6. Make the ask

We ask that Senator / Representative contact Appropriations Committee leaders to express his/her support for including an INCREASE for McKinney-Vento programs in the final FY 2011 Appropriations Act:

7. Response and Questions

Think about what questions you expect the Member to have based on past support of specific issues or past contact with him or her.

Think about how you will respond to questions the Member or staff might have.

8. Closing

Thank you for

Summarize any commitments made by the Member / Congressional staff.

Repeat any questions you need to answer in follow up (that you could not answer in the meeting) and any additional information you need to provide.