

FIREWOOD BANK RESOURCES

ASK YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS TO VISIT!

WHY INVITE YOUR CONGRESSPERSON TO VISIT?

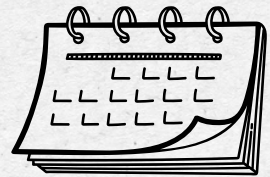
Representatives of the district that your firewood bank serves should be aware of the great work that is happening among their constituents, as well as the urgent need that makes the existence of your firewood bank necessary. A visit from your congressperson can help you raise your profile, raise money, get more volunteers and more firewood - and possibly get more federal funding for the Forest Service to keep providing grants to firewood banks. Looking for more inspiration? We used the [National Alliance to End Homelessness' checklist](#) to help formulate the steps in this guide!

1. PLAN AND SEND AN INVITATION

Talk to the organizers and volunteers about the benefits of having a high profile visit from your member of Congress. Do you want them to know about heating needs in your community? Do you want media coverage that could help you get more volunteers, donations or firewood? Designate a point person to call the local district office of the member of Congress and ask about their process and which staff person you should deal with. If you don't know who your member of Congress is, locate them with [Common Cause's search tool](#). AGH staff can help with any of these steps as well.

2. SCHEDULE

It can take many months for a visit to happen so be patient and don't be afraid to keep following up with their office. Ideally, a visit can happen when you have a lot of volunteers processing or distributing wood, so they can see your firewood bank in action. A staffer might tell you that they'll "Be in touch with more information." or that "We'll give you a call back later." Don't be discouraged! If they can't come during one of your scheduled volunteer days, consider organizing your volunteers to come whenever the member of Congress can come. Try to work around their schedule.



3. PREPARE & HOST

Reach out to local news organizations to let them know a member of Congress is visiting. You can use this template for a press release. Be sure to prepare some key messages you want to convey. If you received Forest Service funding (via AGH) be sure to tell them about how that helped your operation and to thank them for making that happen (even if they weren't directly involved). Tell them that future funding is vital for many banks to expand and carry on. Be prepared to turn off all noisy equipment when the member of Congress is there. Be sure to capture some photos or video footage of the visit.

4. FOLLOW UP

Be sure to thank the congressperson and their staff with a letter or email. Make sure they see any media coverage or coverage in your own newsletter. Keep in touch with the staffer periodically to let them know how many families you served each year!