

# NNA LEGISLATIVE DAY: ADVOCACY 101

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“WE HAVE A RIGHT TO PROTEST FOR WHAT IS RIGHT.  
THAT’S ALL WE CAN DO. THERE ARE PEOPLE HURTING,  
THERE ARE PEOPLE SUFFERING, SO WE HAVE AN  
OBLIGATION, A MANDATE, TO DO SOMETHING.”

– **Congressman John Lewis**

# WHY LEGISLATIVE DAY?

## What will we be doing?

- Making our case to our Federal elected officials and their staff (U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate)

## When will we be doing it?

- April 10, 2024 (Have you registered?)

## Why now?

- Spring is the heat of Federal budget season, the perfect time to inform our leaders of what budget items they should prioritize for the fiscal year.

## What do we ask for?

- \$185 million for NeighborWorks America

# THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS

## President releases budget request – March 11<sup>th</sup>

Not legislation or regulatory action. Think a holiday wishlist

White House telling the public what programs should increase or decrease for the next Fiscal Year (October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025)

## Congress reviews the President's budget request and decides what they want the next FY to look like

Appropriations committee – 12 subcommittees both in the House and Senate

Members of Congress submit their priorities by way of “Member Requests” to the subcommittees

Appropriators write their bills based on Member Requests, President's Request, and priorities from constituents & interest groups

## Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation dba NeighborWorks America

Congressionally-chartered organization

Though a housing program, not in HUD budget but Title III (Independent Agencies)

# THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS

## **Members of Congress have a deadline to submit their requests – usually a month or so after PB comes out**

Individual requests vs Group requests (Dear Colleague)

Tell your Representatives your priorities in time for them to submit to Approps Committee

This includes earmarks! (Formally called “Community Project Funding” (CPF) in the House and “Congressionally Directed Spending” (CDS) in the Senate.)

## **House and Senate then independently write 12 Appropriations bills and accompanying reports – Spring and Summer**

House typically acts first (simply because they move more quickly)

Senate soon after

Bill: power of law, tough to read, “notwithstanding”, “heretofore”

Report: layperson’s terms. Includes committee directives and reporting requirements

## **House and Senate bills are marked up and passed out of committee, move to the House and Senate floor (respectively) – Summer and Fall**

Amendments can be introduced during markup

Amendments can be introduced on the floor

Simple majority in the House, 60 votes in the Senate

“Posting” bills vs passing bills

## **Move to Conference where the House and Senate reconcile differences – Fall and beyond...**

# THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS

**Fiscal Year 2024 (where we are now) ends Sept. 30, 2024**

**Fiscal Year 2025 begins Oct. 1, 2024**

**But Congress still hasn't passed FY24 funding bills?**

Congress is taking quite a long time to come to agreement on FY24 funding levels. We are currently operating under a “continuing resolution” (CR).

- On Jan. 18, Congress passed another two-tiered, short-term CR, which extends FY23 funding levels until March 1 (Ag, E&W, MilCon-VA and T-HUD approps bills) and March 8 (remaining 8 approps bills).

Possible outcomes heading into the March deadlines:

1. Congress comes to an agreement and passes a bipartisan funding deal, setting new funding levels for FY24.
2. Congress does not come to an agreement on new funding levels and passes another CR, extending FY23 levels, potentially for the full fiscal year.
3. Congress fails to come to agreements on FY24 funding or on extending the CR, and the Federal government goes into a full or partial shutdown.

So... what does that mean for FY25? →

# THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS

Despite FY24 not yet being settled, Congress still must start work on FY25 appropriations bills.

So, we are full steam ahead on NNA Legislative Day 2024!

# NEIGHBORWORKS AMERICA FUNDING HISTORY

Fiscal Year	President's Request	Appropriations Amount & Purpose
<b>FY2025</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>FY2024</b>	<b>\$172 million</b>	<b>TBD</b> *House proposal: \$172M (core); Senate proposal: \$168M (core) + \$2M for shared equity*
<b>FY2023</b>	<b>\$170 million</b>	<b>\$166 million (core) + \$4 million for shared equity</b>
FY2022	\$170 million	\$163 million (core) + \$3 million for shared equity
FY2021	\$27.4 million	\$163 million (core) + \$2 million for shared equity
FY2020	\$27.4 million	\$157.5 million (core) + \$1 million for shared equity
FY2019	\$27.4 million	\$150 million (core) + \$2 million for shared equity
FY2018	\$27.4 million	\$140 million (core)
FY2017	\$140 million	\$140 million (core)
FY2016	\$136 million	\$135 million (core) + \$40 million for Natl Foreclosure Mitigation & Counseling

We know the ‘What’ (\$185 million for NeighborWorks America);

We know the ‘Why’ (Congress is writing an annual budget and NeighborWorks America must be included);

Now comes...

# THE HOW

# PREPARING FOR HILL DAY

Make sure you register! - April 10, 2024 in Washington, DC

Schedule your HOUSE appts a month out, if possible – NNA will schedule Senate appts for you and all NWOs in your state.

- Who do you talk to in your House offices? Previous contacts are always a good place to start.
- Additional steps? Submit a scheduling request via the Member's official website. Not every office utilizes an online form to schedule meetings, but many do. It is a good idea to check their .gov website and submit a meeting request via their scheduling form if available.
- Nobody on the books? Call their DC office and ask for their Scheduler and the legislative staffer who handles housing for the Representative. Tell them you're a constituent and about your organization; they will give you the emails of the right contacts.
- No answer? Ask NNA staff to help lead you in the right direction!

# COMMUNICATE YOUR ASK IN ADVANCE

Our Hill day is happening a bit later this year, and we anticipate that the deadlines for Representatives/Senators to submit their priorities to the Appropriations Committees may occur prior to April 10.

This is okay!— You can communicate your funding asks to your Representatives and Senators prior to Hill day. You should:

1. Send emails to each office's housing staffer detailing our \$185M NWA funding request and ask that their boss sign on to the Dear Colleague letter.
2. For Members/Senators with public appropriations request forms on their websites— submit the NWA \$185M funding request via their webforms.

\*NNA will provide detailed instructions and guidance for both tasks.\*

# TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL HILL MEETING

Remember: YOU ARE ON THE HOOK FOR YOUR HOUSE MEETINGS.

**Confirm** a week before

**Research** your members (.gov website, Twitter page, hearing statements, floor speeches, good ole Google)

**Have at your fingertips:** NeighborWorks National & State Impact sheets (constituents are top priority!)

NNA Talking Points and Policy Priorities

NNA Glossary of Appropriations Terms

Other documents and data you can share about your organization

# IMPORTANT INFO FOR HILL VISITS

90% will be with staffer only – this is good!

15 minutes is average, 30 minutes is a win, more than that please let us know

It is the funding elevator pitch – and how it ties into your organization, in their district or state (in 15 minutes)

Always make the ask, they know that is why you are there

Always ask at the end, “how can we help you?”

Build in commute time into your schedule (in other words, plan enough time to get lost)

# HILL VISITS – GENERAL TALKING POINTS

**NeighborWorks America:** congressionally-chartered 501c3 non-profit; led by the five federal regulators; funds groups in all 50 states, DC, and PR in 4,400 urban, suburban, tribal, and rural communities.

- A staffer may ask “Where do I find this magical program?”
- Your response: “It is listed as Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation under Title III of the Transportation, Housing and Community Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.”

# HILL VISITS – GENERAL TALKING POINTS

For all meetings, both House and Senate—

- **NeighborWorks funding is:**
  - **Flexible** – able to fill gaps to make project/program go
  - **First In** – able to show commitment to leverage additional funding
  - **Final** – able to be the last piece to cross the finish line

# HILL VISITS – GENERAL TALKING POINTS

## Follow up with key words:

**Jobs**: let members know how you create jobs (cite data sheets)

**Leverage**: explain how NWA funding triggers private and public leverage (cite data sheets) FY23 National Average = 59 to 1

**NWOs are Small Businesses**: Let members know you're a small business that hires local contractors, puts people to work, invests in local communities represented by the office/s you visit

# HILL VISITS – GENERAL TALKING POINTS

**Link** your housing and community development work to health, education, public safety, etc. in your communities: provide a micro-local story on how funding from NeighborWorks America allowed YOUR work to positively impact the life of one of their constituents.

All the numbers you give are impressive (and accurate), but this concise story should leave no doubt about the importance of NeighborWorks funding and what more you could do with an increase in that funding.

# HILL VISITS – THE ASK

## \$185 million for NeighborWorks America FY25 Funding

### For both House and Senate:

- If Dear Colleague letter is still open, please sign;
- If they do not sign on to Dear Colleague letters, ask them to include NWA funding in their Individual Requests to the Appropriations Committee; or
- If Dear Colleague and Committee deadlines have passed, ask them to support increased NWA funding throughout the appropriations process.

# HILL VISITS: DOS AND DON'TS

## Do:

- **Do** plan to arrive to their office about 10 minutes early
- **Do** have:
  - NeighborWorks National Impact Sheet
  - Statewide Impact Sheets
- **Do ask** – they are expecting it
- **Do thank** them for their time and support
- **Do send** a thank you email

# HILL VISITS: DOS AND DON'TS

## Don't:

- Don't be late, they won't wait.
- Don't dress down – professional dress!
- Don't delay ask for the last 30 seconds.
- Don't embellish, exaggerate, etc.
- Don't forget to send thank you.

# HILL VISITS – SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS!

## Finally:

Build on the relationship.

Hill Visit should not be the end of your advocacy.

Be the subject matter expert.

Make the best of the situation for all involved.

Be relaxed, get ready to do it again!

# NNA LEGISLATIVE DAY 2024

## Questions?



“When enough people come together, then change will come and we can achieve almost anything. So instead of looking for hope — start creating it.” – Greta Thunberg