

## Congressional Site Visit Toolkit

Members of the United States Congress have the power to make decisions affecting the Head Start program. These decisions are based on what they see, read, and hear on a daily basis through a combination of national and local media, meetings with experts, testimony of Executive Branch Agency officials, and the voices of advocacy organizations, lobbyists, and trade associations. However, there is no more powerful interaction for a Member of Congress than with a constituent—one who can help her or she understand the impact of federal policy on real people.

Members will always jump to meet constituents, but the best way to retain a lasting relationship with your Senators and Representatives is to be a resource to them. In your role as a Head Start or Early Head Start program, you have the ability to share valuable information about the needs of your community—and whether you agree or disagree with that Member of Congress, or even if you're new to Congressional outreach, you have a mutual interest in sharing and discussing that information. One of the most effective ways to ensure that Members understand your particular program is to host the Member for a visit so they can experience Head Start firsthand. This toolkit will assist you in successfully planning and executing such a visit.

**Not sure who your Senators or Representatives are?** Go to [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) to find information on your Senators. Go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), and in the upper right-hand corner, enter the zip code for your headquarters. Be sure to consider whether the map of your Representative's district may not cover all of your centers, and think about contacting other Members as well who may be touched by your program. Be sure to write down the contact information for the local District or State office closest to you.

Keep in mind that it may take weeks, months, and in some cases, a year or more to arrange a visit like this. Don't be discouraged! The extra time can be fruitful—you can jumpstart your communications by introducing yourself in person at the local office and asking the person at the front desk who you should stay in touch with to share program news, data, and updates. While you continue to press for a site visit, stay engaged with the Congressional office through formal meetings in the local office, Town Hall gatherings hosted by the Member, and traveling Office Hours.

If you'd like the complete guide, keep reading. Click on the links to web resources and templates.

Here's a **BASIC CHECKLIST** for a site visit:

- ✓ [Check the calendar and time your outreach!](#)
- ✓ [Make a plan for the visit](#)
- ✓ [Invite the Member](#) and [Follow-up](#)
- ✓ Plan what you are going to [say to the Member](#) or [press](#)
- ✓ [Thank them](#) for their visit
- ✓ [Keep up the engagement](#)

## COMPLETE GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL SITE VISIT

### Timeline and Timing:

Congress is in session, generally, Monday-Friday. On days when the Congress is “in Recess,” Members are back in their home states and districts, attending local events, meeting with constituent groups, and taking time with their families. It is on one of these recess days that you should schedule your visit. Congress designates these recess times at the beginning of each calendar year. Please check the most updated [House](#) and [Senate](#) schedules.

You should contact the office at least four weeks in advance of your preferred time for visiting, depending on the specificity of your request. If possible, try to be flexible. For instance, if you are inviting a Member to join an open house on a specific day, you are likely to receive a quick yes or no, and it is best to reach out far earlier than four weeks—but if you ask for a date for the Member to simply “visit when he is next back in the State” you have opened the door to following up continuously with the staff to arrange a visit when the Member’s schedule allows.

### Organizing the Day:

Plan ahead, before inviting! Many Members will only allot one hour or less for a visit. What is the best way to show off your program? Some ideas to consider:

- Is this a one-time event that occurs on a specific day—such as your open house, end-of-year celebration, or holiday party? Be clear with the staff on the details of these events.
- Allow time for the Member to make remarks (impromptu or prepared) to the group. Some Members will jump at the chance to speak, others will decline.
- Ensure that the Member has time to sit with parents, board members, volunteers, and community supporters, as well as staff, to have a “discussion” with them about what is most pressing as it pertains to Head Start.
- What are you most proud of within your program? Do you have a new initiative? Are you the only provider of some kind of community service? Has your program distinguished itself in some way from other area service providers?
- Who are your best voices within the program? Do you have an all-star parent who you are proud of; an interesting community partner that can speak to the value of your work and impact in the community; a business leader who supports you; or staff who are exceptionally articulate and passionate? Consider ensuring they are there and prepared to help guide the Member on his or her tour of the program.
- Members appreciate the opportunity to take photos with children and staff. Consider the time it will take to arrange “posed” photos with children and staff, and be sure to prepare to be clear with the Member’s staff how you wish to use those photos (putting them on your website, releasing to media, framing for your wall, tweeting them or posting to facebook or other social media, etc.)

You will want to have some idea of your plan for the day before you send out your invitation—the scheduler or staff may ask you questions that pertain to these details. [Here is a sample plan.](#)

Generally, a scheduled visit to introduce a Member to your program should consist of the following:

- 1) Introductions and overview of their time at the facility.
- 2) Tour of facility.
- 3) Activity and Photos inside the classroom with kids, if you have them, or if not, photos with staff while they are decorating/getting ready.
- 4) Conversation with parents/local Head Start community partners (if time permits).
- 5) Saying thank you in a letter, in the press, and/or through social media.
- 6) If possible, create a memento of their visit through a commemorative photo, or art project for display in their District Office.

### **Invite the Member:**

When you reach out to the Congressional office to arrange a visit, you will be contacting a person specifically designated to handle the Member’s District or State schedule. To find out who this person is, call the local office directly to ask for a name and contact information (email and telephone number) for submitting your request. Staff turnover occurs frequently in Congressional offices, so even if you’ve done this before, it’s always good to be sure that the person you know is still working for that Member or still handling the schedule.

Click [here](#) for a general invitation to visit, and [here](#) for a sample invitation to an event on a specific date.

### **Following up about your invitation:**

Follow-up on your invitation is essential. You may receive an automatic reply to your request from the office, or you may hear nothing at all. It is important to give the staff some time to consider your invitation; wait one week to call the scheduler to ensure they have received the invitation and see whether or not they have questions about the request to visit. Many times, the scheduler will ask you to resend your invitation.

After your first call, regardless of whether you speak to a live person or leave a message with the scheduler, always follow-up with another email message. Forward your invitation again using these templates for following up to a [phone conversation](#) or [voice message](#).

Is the Member not available, but willing to send his staff? That’s FANTASTIC—and you shouldn’t be disappointed, especially if this is your first time reaching out. Staff play a critical role in helping Members gather information, and sometimes have deeper policy knowledge! Treat them as well as you would treat the Member.

Be sure to continue following up via email – short notes that read, “Hello (NAME)—I hope you are well. I just wanted to check in on this request to see if there was anything else you might need. Many thanks and have a great weekend.” will suffice.

Many times, the scheduler will tell you when he or she intends to make decisions about your request (i.e. one or two weeks prior) and will tell you when to expect to hear back.

Try not to contact them repeatedly before that date if this is the case!

Not hearing back? Consider using other voices to reinforce your request. For instance, a member of your board might know or have met someone on staff—or one of your community business partners or supporters might have an opportunity to weigh in. Share your invitation with as many people as you can, and ask them to help.

Also make sure you're taking advantage of opportunities to meet Members and reinforce your request at their previously scheduled events—a Town Hall meeting, for instance, is a great time to speak up for your program and ask the Member or staff to look into your invitation.

### Confirmed! Now what?

- Refer to your plan, and make sure all the people you want to speak for your program are able to come.
- Add details to your plan—make it an itinerary to share with those helping execute the visit.
- Write down and rehearse what you want to say. Refer to these discussion guides for [Directors](#), [Staff](#), [Parents, and Volunteers](#) for guidance. Also, check [NHSA's Advocacy](#) page for updated talking points on specific policy questions, such as annual appropriations, the Impact Study, and Universal Pre-K legislation.
- Make sure you've assigned someone to take photos, and make sure they're working with the best camera available!
- The Member will likely have a staff person with them—don't ignore them, and make sure you get their card and/or contact information before they leave.
- Assign someone on your staff to take notes of the visit—this person can observe what interested the Member, write down their questions, and ensure that any items that were promised in follow-up (data on parent training programs, or a list of community partners, etc) are recorded and sent.
- Your recorder can also write down “reflections” for possible follow-up to media outlets, a write up of the visit for your website, or tweets/facebook posts describing the day later on.
- What materials do you want to have ready for the Member to take home?
  - Something fun: memento from their time with the class (jelly bean jar, painting, book, etc)
  - Something useful: One-pager on your program (recapping everything you talked about), information on your outcomes, list of community or state-wide partners.

### What about the press?

You can engage the press at any time surrounding the visit. If it is a special event you're planning (your open house, something tied to a national or state advocacy campaign, holiday party, end-of-year celebration, etc) you should consider [notifying the press](#) about your event in general, and letting them know whom you've invited. If you have a relationship with a local reporter, reach out to them and let

them know that they may be interested in covering the event, either due to its significance to the children or community, or due to the Member's involvement.

For a general site visit, consider keeping the event private and just a sending [press release](#) to the media after the visit. This allows you to preserve the Member's isolated attention during the visit, and gives them some visibility afterwards.

Alternately, you can choose to only promote the event via [social media](#). You can tweet before the visit your excitement about the impending tour, and then send a picture while the event is going on. You can also use social media to publicly thank the Member for visiting and engaging with your program. Make sure to cross-post to the Member's own social media feeds so they can respond and keep the conversation going. For a complete list of members and their Twitter handles as well as other social media accounts, please see these [House](#) & [Senate](#) lists.

Regardless of which plan you choose, you should let the staff know your intentions in advance, and be sure to give them the opportunity to add or edit a quote from the Member before you send. The Member may also wish to have a say in press coverage. In some cases, they will not want to attend an event that is covered by press.

#### **After they leave:**

First, make sure you send a [thank you letter](#), on your letterhead, to the Member him or herself. This is something you will put in the mail, versus emailing. Be sure to promise to follow up with the staff, and express your gratitude and appreciation for the staff work involved in arranging the visit.

You should also send an email [thanking the scheduler](#) who arranged the visit, and if applicable, the [press secretary or communications director](#) who worked with you on the media and social media aspects of promoting the visit.

One key step is your [thank you to the staff](#) that accompanied the Member, via email. It is in this note that you can include follow-up materials requested or discussed at the meeting, and establish the best working relationship going forward. Be sure to include a 'next step'—i.e. "I will be sure to follow up with you in October to let you know when we have set a date for our book fair" or "We are in the final stages of writing our next Community Needs Assessment; I would be glad for a chance to sit down with you once it is complete to let you know what we've found."

As an extra step, consider reaching out to the Member's Washington, DC staff if you have already met with them, to share a quick report on the visit and to let them know you're looking forward to sharing follow-up materials with them as well.

Within one month from the visit, be sure to have sent all promised follow-up items to the staff, or have touched base with them to explain any delays.

#### **Beyond your visit:**

Your goal is to keep the conversation going! *Definitely* send a note to the Member's DC and state/district staff when:

- There is a pressing Federal policy issue: annual appropriations, annual budget, major early learning legislation, or a request to weigh in on specific issues—stay connected to NHSA for these opportunities!
- You have new materials to share: Has your Community Needs Assessment been updated? Do you have an annual report that has just been completed? Have you produced new outreach materials for a specific population in your service area?
- You have new data to share: Do you have a report from kindergarten teachers on how your graduates are doing? Do you have new numbers on how many parents have completed a training program?

*Consider sending a note to the staff when:*

- Your program or center has won an award.
- One of your children, parents, staff, or volunteers has won an award.
- You are organizing a public community event (Book drive, clothing drive, open house, fundraiser, etc).
- You have a new, interesting community partner that is helping you expand or innovate.
- Your program has been mentioned in the local press.

Your overriding goal is to make sure you will be valued as a competent resource and a go-to source for the Congressman's questions on Head Start and early learning in the community going forward. Choose your opportunities to reach out wisely—try not to email more than once per month unless necessary.

Best of luck!

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**One last thing—be sure to coordinate with NHSA so that we know when a Member is visiting and how the visit goes—we can help with follow-up on federal policy questions, and we will reinforce your gratitude for the Member making time to join you and learn about the program when we go to the Hill!**

# **TEMPLATES**

## Sample Plan for a Site Visit:

### Springfield County Head Start for Healthy Life Tour:

- Welcome by the Director and/or Board Chair outside of the facility or inside the entrance
- Orientation: Director describes what the visit will entail (“We’re so glad you’re here. We’ll start with a quick overview of our program with parents and our health partners in the break room, then we’ll take a tour of the facility and introduce our students to you and have some fun with them. Then we’ll visit with some of our other community partners and talk more broadly about how we’re working to address the health challenges these children and families are facing.”)
- Director gives short overview of program to include number of centers, staff, children, history, partners, funding sources, etc.
- Introduce the health partners present (Dentist, Health Clinic, Nurses, Nutritionist, Community Hospital)
- Tour of the facility and program (Bring along your “all stars” to help answer questions and drive conversation). Some ideas for discussion:
  - o Staff—Explain how the Head Start enrollment process works—your partners, your process for finding families and prioritizing, and how your waiting list works
  - o Family Engagement Coordinator— Explain how Head Start is so much more than day care or pre-k through its comprehensive, two-generational model that can focus on the health needs
  - o Director— Explain how you are different from other Head Start programs, because you can adapt the federal standards to local needs
  - o Health partners— Explain how sequestration, state or local funding cuts, or other rising costs have hurt your program and the ability to provide health and wellness services, and how you are coping with those changes
  - o Health partners and parents— Explain the unique role of parents in your structure and how you work with them to ensure healthy homes
  - o Other partners to talk about their unique role in Head Start (as a community supporter, volunteer, service delivery partner, school district employee, etc.)
- Participate in “Healthy Life” activity with children – some preliminary ideas:
  - o Group painting—“still life of a bowl of our favorite fruit” to hang in the Member’s District office
  - o Reading a book about healthy food or going to the doctor to the children
  - o Playing a game about choosing the right food with children
  - o Eating healthy meal with children
  - o Participating in health screening/immunization day
- Photos with children, large group photo, action photos during activity
- Retire to the conference room for an in-depth discussion with the adults—volunteers, parents, staff, community business leaders, school officials, etc. Allow the Member or staff to ask

questions and for the people around the table to share their stories about how Head Start has worked to improve public health and the impact of its efforts.

- Exit and thank you's
- Send release to media and upload photos to Twitter and Facebook, check back with Press Secretary and Scheduler

**General Invitation Letter to Visit Program:**

VIA EMAIL TO SCHEDULER/SCHEDULING EMAIL ADDRESS

DATE

The Honorable [NAME]  
United States Senator/US Representative  
DC OFFICE ADDRESS

ATTN: Scheduler

Dear Senator/Representative [LAST NAME]:

On behalf of all of us at the [YOUR CENTER] Head Start Center, I write to you today to thank you for arriving at a budget agreement to restore the sequester funds to Head Start programs. Additionally, we would like to invite you to visit our program when you are back in the area for spring recess – our students are excited to show you what they have been learning!

As you may already know, we serve XX children and families in STATE/CITY, and have been working for over XX years to provide a quality early learning experience for those at risk. (INSERT MORE FACTS ABOUT LOCAL PROGRAM)

Head Start ensures success by becoming a compassionate partner with parents on behalf of their children. Recognizing that parents are their child's first and most influential teachers, we work with families to remove barriers to their success and to deepen their ability to support their children. Children who go through Head Start are less likely to need special education classes or repeat grades when they're older, and are far more likely to graduate high school and help their families escape a cycle of poverty.

We thank you for your consideration of our invitation, and hope you can join us in April.

Best,

NAME  
CENTER  
PHONE NUMBER

**Invitation Letter to an Event:**

SUBJECT: INVITATION TO JOIN A HEAD START MEDIA EVENT @ (AREA) HEAD START PROGRAM

VIA EMAIL TO SCHEDULER/EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

CC: Local district/state staff or DC office staff you have worked with previously

The Honorable (First and Last Name of Representative or Senator)  
(United States House of Representatives or United States Senate)  
Washington, DC

Dear Senator/Representative (Last Name of Legislator):

(Insert name of child care or Head Start program), located in (insert name of town, name of state), provides comprehensive, high quality early education to (XX) children each week—though sequestration has taken a toll on us, we are committed to continuing to operate the best possible program for our area’s at-risk children and families. As you make plans to visit your constituents over the August District Work period, we hope you join us for a special event on (day/during the week of) to call attention to the children and families we have had to cut from our Head Start and Early Head Start program.

This month, we will be displaying XX empty seats outside of our facility to mark the (XX) lost opportunities due to sequestration. During the week of August 19<sup>th</sup>, we are planning a public event at our facility to raise awareness for these lost opportunities. We feel that it is important that people understand that at Head Start, there isn’t much fat to trim-- Even with the local flexibility we are afforded to implement the cuts, since our operating costs for energy, transportation, and health insurance have continued to rise over the last few years, we have had to make the devastating choice to close centers/cut children/lay off staff.

And as you know, these cuts matter more than others. For every \$1 invested in a Head Start child, society gains \$7 in return through increased earnings, employment, and family stability; and decreased welfare dependency, crime costs, grade repetition, and special education.

We know you agree that sequestration is a poor way to cut government costs, and hope you will join us to talk about the local impacts of this policy. We plan to invite local media, and have photographs taken of the chairs and our guests to be posted on social media. We will also be following up with media after the event to share our photographs and remarks made.

We look forward to the opportunity of hosting you at our program for this event. I will follow up with your staff soon to work out the details.

Sincerely,

(Center director’s name)

**Sample follow-up email to scheduler after a phone conversation:**

Dear (Name):

It was a pleasure to speak with you today. For your reference, below is the invitation we sent to the Congressman. I'm happy to answer any additional questions you or the Representative may have.

(Include other follow-up points from your conversation)

We do hope that we can arrange a visit for the upcoming recess. Our children will be well-served meeting with a prominent elected official—a community celebrity reading with them is always exciting—and their parents and our staff will be so delighted for his/her engagement and attention to their work.

Please let me know if there is a date that will work; we understand that he/she has many demands!

Sincerely,  
YOUR NAME

(paste original invitation below or forward original email)

**Sample follow-up email to scheduler after leaving a voice message:**

Dear (Name):

Per my voice message, I wanted to follow up today regarding the (NAME OF PROGRAM)'s request for Congressman (NAME) to visit our program during the upcoming District Work Period. I have included a copy of that request below.

We do hope that we can arrange a visit for the upcoming recess. Our children will be well-served meeting a prominent elected official—a community celebrity reading with them (or other activity) is always exciting—and their parents and our staff will be so delighted for his/her engagement and attention to their work.

Please let me know if there is a date that will work; we are happy to be flexible and understand that he/she has many demands!

Sincerely,  
YOUR NAME

(paste original invitation below or forward original email)

## Conversation Suggestions (DIRECTORS, STAFF)

- Introduce yourself, and thank the Member of Congress and/or staff for meeting with you
- Thank the Member of Congress and/or staff for past support
  - “Thank you for your support for our local work—Congress has a long bipartisan history of supporting Head Start, and up until sequestration, we have been very lucky to have had enough support to maintain our programs and the breadth of service in our community.”
- Talk about Head Start in your community and the specific impact of sequestration or other budget decisions
  - “Last year, we had to cut (# of children, services, partners, facilities, etc)—and it had a huge ripple effect on our community (describe). Nationally, over 57,000 children were cut.
  - We are SO THANKFUL that Congress not only restored funds cut from sequestration, but agreed on new investments in Head Start and Early Head Start to help cope with the rising operating costs—like energy, transportation, and health insurance—which have been eating away at our budget these past few years, and create new opportunities to serve at-risk infants and toddlers through Early Head Start.
  - We are in planning stages now to bring our programs back to financial health—and though it will be a long road, we are so eager to be able to better meet the needs our children and families.
  - Today we’d like to share with you a small reminder of our children and their excitement when they’re in a Head Start classroom.”
- Talk about the importance of maintaining federal funding and the impact of the program
  - “Cutting funding for Head Start and other early learning programs—which reach kids in the critical early years—is a shortsighted economic move. For every \$1 invested in a Head Start child, society gains \$7 in return through increased earnings, employment, and family stability; and decreased welfare dependency, crime costs, grade repetition, and special education.
  - In our local program, we have seen countless children go on to success in K-12 schooling [share numbers and any examples of local impact and results]
  - We understand the need for federal deficit reduction and are committed to running cost-effective, accountable, and innovative programs – we continue to streamline every day while costs continue to rise and our waiting lists grow due to the sharp increase in homeless and poverty-stricken families.
  - We ask that you please stand up for our communities and the future of our children and families by continuing investments in early learning, and working towards a permanent fix to sequestration—the only thing worse than letting it happen the first time would be to let it happen again.”
- Thank them for their time and express your willingness to talk further

### **Conversation Suggestions (PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS)**

- Introduce yourself and your role at the Head Start center, and say a little bit about how many students and families are served
- Congressman/woman/Senator, thank you so much for working to restore the cuts to Head Start and Early Head Start!
- It is such a relief to parents to be able to bring their children to a high quality setting like this—Head Start truly cares about the well-being of the family, and has helped get so many people on track.
- It was very, very tough to implement the sequestration cuts. (Share personal story or knowledge of how sequestration impacted you)
- We are so thankful for your work to support us.
- My son/daughter/student etc benefitted from Head Start—[tell your story]
- And our entire family is now succeeding thanks to the lessons learned here. We're eating healthier, reading together every night, and I'm connected to a program that is training me for a better paying job so I can provide for my children.
- And I'm now involved in the community as an advocate and volunteer—I would not have come so far today without this program
- Head Start has such an impact on our community, especially because our poorest families are impacted from multiple sides— they need employment and education help, assistance for food and housing, and in order to keep their jobs, affordable and safe places to leave their children.
- I am so glad you're able to be here and see what Head Start does first hand.

**Sample Media Advisory for an Event:**

**DRAFT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
DATE

**Media Contact:**

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**Head Start to Host Healthy Homes Open House**

*Featuring local health service providers; Congressman John Doe to make remarks*

The (NAME OF HEAD START PROGRAM) plans to host the Healthy Homes Open House event on (DATE), a community wellness forum featuring local representatives from our county and city health system. Congressman John Doe (IN-3) will join to express support for the event.

The event, sponsored/supported by the Main Street Hospital, welcomes local health service providers who have generously offered to host information booths at the center, where they and their volunteers will help families obtain free basic eye and hearing exams, nutrition information, and immunizations. Congressman Doe, a retired physician, will attend to meet the providers and families, and make brief remarks about the importance of public health programs.

These services are part of the core mission of the Head Start program, which ensures a comprehensive intervention, including health and wellness services, for our community's at-risk families.

WHAT: Healthy Homes Open House

WHEN: DATE

TIME (9AM- 3PM)

WHERE: Address

WHO: List all guests

CONTACT: Name  
(111) 222-3333

*Additional information about us can be found at (website)*

*Additional information about (your partner) can be found at (website)*

###

## Sample Press Release:

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
DATE

Media contact: [Insert Name]  
[Insert Phone]  
[Insert Email]

### **Congressman John Doe Visits Head Start**

*Congressman meets local volunteers and families, reads and paints with the class and expresses his support.*

**CITY, ST** – (NAME) Head Start program today welcomed Congressman John Doe for a visit and tour of the facility.

While the students began their day (learning, reading, playing, etc), the Congressman took a tour of the facility and learned first hand what Head Start does to serve the at-risk children in (CITY). Volunteers, parents, staff, and community partners were on hand to answer questions and explain how much Head Start has impacted their lives.

“Head Start has absolutely saved my family,” said Jane Jones, a Head Start parent from CITY. “I was an inexperienced mother and had no support, Head Start gave us the tools to succeed. I’m proud to say my two daughters are now on the honor roll in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, I’ve got a good job, and now we give back to Head Start every chance we get.”

Congressman Doe’s tour ended with a fun painting project with the children, who took their celebrity guest in stride.

“I’m so impressed by the work that (NAME) Head Start does to serve our community’s children and families. It’s clear that without these services, many of our at-risk citizens would have nowhere to turn. I will certainly continue championing the Head Start program when I am back in Washington.”

###

## Sample Social Media:

### TWITTER:

“Excited to welcome @repjohndoe at @yourheadstart to talk about what he’s doing to continue his commitment to early childhood education”

“Great to have @repjohndoe at our program today! Glad to hear his enthusiasm for early childhood programs—hope he helps keep us strong.” (INSERT PIC W/ REP)

“Thanks to @repjohndoe for promising to work on expanding Head Start after visiting us today!” (INSERT PIC)

### FACEBOOK:

“THANK YOU to Representative John Doe for visiting the NAME Head Start program today! With the school year about to begin we are glad to hear that Representative John Doe to do everything in his power to ensure Head Start programs are funded- providing early childhood education to hundreds of thousands of children in low income families.”

“We’re looking forward to our visit with Representative John Doe (TAG HIS OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE) next week. We at (NAME OF HEAD START ORGANIZATION) appreciate the opportunity to talk about Congress’ commitment to Head Start programs and the children that depend on them.”

“We had the chance yesterday to visit with Representative John Doe (TAG HIS OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE) in our (CITY) Head Start Center. We had a great discussion with him about continuing to invest in our next generation! (INSERT PIC W/ REP)”

### Sample Thank You Letter to Member of Congress:

Format this letter on your program's letterhead. Then scan and email the pdf to the scheduler and/or staff.

(Date)

The Honorable (First and Last Name of Representative or Senator)  
(United States House of Representatives or United States Senate)  
Address

Dear Senator or Representative (Last Name):

Thank you for taking the time to visit with the parents and staff from the (NAME OF HEAD START PROGRAM) during your recess last week. We hope that our visit helped to make clear how Head Start and Early Head Start centers in our community provide high quality early learning experiences for at-risk children and families. We also hope you enjoy your hand-decorated jar of jelly beans—a reminder of the Head Start students' excitement that can continue to hold treats for visiting constituents!

[MORE DETAILS ON VISIT, OR MORE DETAILS THAT YOU PROMISED]

As we discussed, we are thrilled that the FY14 Omnibus Appropriations legislation passed, and funds are beginning to be restored to Head Start and Early Head Start programs. We appreciate your willingness to discuss the impacts of sequestration in our community and the challenges ahead; please know how excited we are to be on the road back to restoring services to children and families in our community.

Over the next few months as the 2015 budget process continues, we sincerely hope that we can be a resource to you. Please let us know if you have any questions, and thank you again for visiting our program.

Sincerely,  
YOUR NAME

## Sample Thank You Email to Staff

Dear (NAME):

Thank you for taking the time to (join Congressman Doe during his) visit with the parents and staff from the (NAME OF HEAD START PROGRAM) during recess last week. We hope that our visit helped to make clear how Head Start and Early Head Start centers in our community provide high quality early learning experiences for at-risk children and families. We also hope you and Congressman/Senator (NAME) enjoy your hand-decorated jar of jelly beans—a reminder of the Head Start students' excitement that can continue to hold treats for visiting constituents!

[MORE DETAILS ON VISIT, OR MORE DETAILS THAT YOU PROMISED]

As we discussed, we are thrilled that the FY14 Omnibus Appropriations legislation passed, and funds are beginning to be restored to Head Start and Early Head Start programs. We appreciate your understanding of the impacts of sequestration in our community and the challenges ahead; please know how excited we are to be on the road back to restoring services to children and families in our community.

Over the next few months as the 2015 budget process continues, we sincerely hope that we can be a resource to you and (Representative/Senator NAME). Please let us know if you have any questions, and thank you again for visiting our program.

Best,  
YOUR NAME

**Sample Thank-You Email to Scheduler:**

Dear (NAME):

I wanted to send you a note to express my sincere thanks for your assistance in arranging for Congressman/Senator (NAME) to visit our program today. Our children, parents, staff, and volunteers were so thrilled to have had his ear and honored by his attention to our program—and it would not have happened without your help!

We will deliver a framed photo of his time reading with the children next week; we hope it is a suitable memento of his time with us today and a reminder that he is always welcome!

Many thanks,  
YOUR NAME

**Sample Thank-You Email to Press Secretary:**

Dear (NAME):

Thank you so much for your assistance in arranging to connect the photos and quotes from the Congressman's visit to our press release and social media feeds today! Our entire family of children, parents, staff, and volunteers were so happy to have the Congressman present and we hope our extra push to let the community know about his visit was helpful.

As you requested, I'm attaching a few more photos for your use. Our favorite is the one with him reading to the children. We're glad to keep the conversation going over social media as well!

Thank you again,  
YOUR NAME