

SENIORS ACTION NETWORK ADVOCACY GUIDE





PARTICIPATING IN THE SENIORS ACTION NETWORK (SAN)

By communicating with lawmakers you can help them understand the issues that are important to you. You have the ability to influence their views on important policy issues.

Affordable senior housing is a great example. As a senior resident or advocate for seniors, you can present a better picture of why there is a desperate need for the preservation and development of affordable senior housing, and support for other senior programs across the country.

Your efforts will serve as the powerful tool we need to get policies enacted that benefit seniors in need.

This SAN Advocacy Guide Will Help You:



Know when to take action.



Know how to find your lawmakers.



Know how to communicate with your lawmakers.

Did You Know?

Lawmakers always want to hear from their constituents.



HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN TO TAKE ACTION?

SAN will send an action alert asking you to contact your lawmakers. You will have the choice to communicate with them by:

- Email
- Telephone
- Letter/Group Letter





COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LAWMAKER

By Email




We make it easy for you. When there is a call to action, we will include a link for you to access a pre-written email message to your legislators. All you will have to do is enter your location so that the message is sent directly to your representatives in Congress. We encourage you to use the letter as a guide to write your own story about the issue.

If you wish to send an email message on your own, that is very easy too. If you are unsure who your lawmakers are, visit the Seniors Action Network website at: www.seniorsactionnetwork.org and look-up your legislator by your zip code. You will have an option to send them an email directly from their profile.

Tips for Emailing

- Begin with a clear definition of who you are (a concerned constituent) and why you are emailing their office (e.g., affordable senior housing). Aides are more likely to read your email if you make it clear why you are emailing the office.
- Keep it short, simple, and straightforward. Legislative offices receive a large amount of email messages and mail.
- Close with a specific request. Keep it realistic and pragmatic. Ask the member to consider your views on their next vote; urge him or her to speak out on an issue or a bill, or to support or oppose legislation.


Enter your information to take action now!

Send an email to your officials with one click!


Mr.

Email (jsmith@mail.com)*

Mobile Phone* 

Home Address (123 Any St)*

Zip Code*



Dear Official,

This legislation would increase the availability of affordable senior housing by improving how Housing Choice Vouchers can be project based by allowing the project-basing of up to 30% of the agency's vouchers (rather than today's 20% of the agency's voucher budget) when the vouchers are used to house elderly and/or disabled

By Phone

You may contact your representative or senators by calling them. Telephone calls can be effective because they provide a personal interaction. Placing a call only takes a few minutes.

Tips for Calling

- Call your lawmakers by dialing this toll-free number (855) 340-0712. The automated system will prompt you to enter your 5-digit zip code.
- When connected, let the staff know why you are calling. Please keep in mind that you won't speak to your representatives directly, so ask for the staff person who handles the issues about which you are calling. If that staff person is unavailable, ask to leave a message.
- Provide your name, city, and contact information so they can get back in touch with you if they have follow-up questions.
- Be as specific as possible about what you are asking your lawmaker to do. Use the talking points we provide to you in the action alert. Most importantly, tell your personal story of how the issue is affecting you.

Did you know?

- All 435 of the House of Reps. seats are up for re-election every 2 yrs.
- 1/3 of the Senate seats are up for re-election every 2 yrs.



By Mail

You can also contact your lawmakers by writing a letter.

- Identify yourself as a constituent and explain why you are writing. If you want a response, you must include your name and address.
- Provide specific rather than general information about how the topic affects you and others. If a certain bill is involved, cite the title or number whenever possible.
- Close by requesting the action you want taken: a vote for or against a bill, or take a certain policy position on the issue.
- The best letters are courteous, to the point, and include specific supporting examples.

Did you know?

Your lawmaker may want to respond to your letter so include your mailing address in all written correspondence.

*****SAMPLE LETTER*****

DATE

Write to your U.S. Senators at:

The Honorable (full name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Write to your U.S. Representative at:

The Honorable (full name)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator/Representative _____:

As one of your constituents, I am writing to ask you to ensure that senior housing and other programs for America's elderly receive essential funding. As a senior on a fixed income, I face the daily challenge of balancing the cost of housing and other basic necessities which are essential to my well-being.

Housing programs administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provide communities for seniors across the country, and allow us to have a quality, affordable place to call home. Unfortunately, one of the primary programs that supports the development of affordable senior housing, the Section 202 Capital Advance Grant program, has been eliminated even though more seniors are in need of housing. I urge you to work with other lawmakers to find new ways to invest in affordable housing with services for older adults through HUD, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program and the Rural Housing Service.

I also urge you to provide additional funding for home- and community-based services programs under the Older Americans Act. These services include congregate and home-delivered meals, chronic disease self-management, transportation, falls prevention and other cost-effective services that enable seniors to live independently in their communities.

Without the assistance of these programs, many elders will have to face the hard choice of paying rent, going hungry or ignoring medical care. Please support the continued funding of these essential programs for America's elderly.

Sincerely,

Are You Ready to Lead the Fight For Seniors In Your Community?

Be the Voice. Become an Advocate Today!

By joining the Seniors Action Network (SAN), you can “Be the Voice” for America’s Seniors, fighting for affordable senior housing, quality senior living and care communities. We will help you contact your lawmakers in Washington, DC, and tell them to stand up for America’s seniors. Together, we can make a difference.

SAN Advocate Activities

As a member of the SAN, you will:

- Tell your story to lawmakers. Are you a senior, a caregiver, or love someone who is? Then decision-makers need to hear from you!
- Answer the “call-to-action” by contacting your lawmakers about issues that affect the lives of seniors.
- If you are able, meet with your lawmakers face-to-face to explain firsthand the challenges seniors face.



***Are you interested in taking the next step
toward being a SAN advocate? Sign up now!
Sign-up on the SAN website at
www.seniorsactionnetwork.org
or text “Seniors” to 52886***

name

mailing address

city

state

zip

phone

email address

Mail this form to: Seniors Action Network c/o LeadingAge 2519 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, DC 20008



SAN CONTACTS & RESOURCES

Contacts

Marsha Padilla-Goad
LeadingAge
Director, Grassroots and Member Engagement
mpadilla-goad@leadingage.org
(202) 508-9442

Sarah Fitch
Volunteers of America
Manager, Public Policy
sfitch@voa.org
(703) 341-5019

Resources

Main Website
www.seniorsactionnetwork.org

Other Resources
WWW.HOUSE.GOV
WWW.SENATE.GOV

Did you know?

The SAN website has many educational resources about the issues that affect seniors.
seniorsactionnetwork.org