



Copy the text of this letter and update the items in YELLOW with your information to invite your member of Congress to visit.

Sample Invitation Letter

[DATE]

The Honorable **[FULL NAME]**

United States **[SENATE/HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES]**

Washington, D.C. **[20510 (SENATE)/20515 (HOUSE)]**

Dear **[SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE] [LAST NAME]:**

On behalf of **[INSERT NAME OF COMPANY]** in **[INSERT CITY/TOWN]**, I invite you to tour our company/facility during the upcoming August recess.

We would like to share more about the services our **company/facility** has provided our rural community for the last **[INSERT NUMBER]** years. During your visit, we welcome you to **[visit an active broadband deployment site, tour the company's facilities, meet our staff, see how our customers use our robust broadband network, or attend [X event]**. Broadband providers in rural America are critical to a community's overall well-being through their commitment to providing the highest-quality service. We are proud to build and deliver broadband connectivity and operate essential services for our community.

(INSERT short paragraph about your Smart Community—what you do, job numbers, economic footprint, who you serve, etc.)

We are happy to work with your scheduler to find a date that works well for you. I will follow up on this scheduling request within a week.

We look forward to providing you with a more personal look at the challenges and opportunities in providing broadband in rural America and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[TITLE]

[ORGANIZATION NAME] [ORGANIZATION ADDRESS]



Tips for Hosting a Successful Visit with an Elected Official

Company site visits with elected officials, especially those with members of Congress, are essential to building support for rural broadband and appreciation for Smart Rural Communities. Site visits can help to foster relationships that will benefit your company and communities for years to come. Here are some tips that can help to make your upcoming visit a great success.

1. **Send a formal invitation letter.** Even if you speak in person with a member of Congress, congressional staffer, or other elected official about visiting your program, follow up with a formal invitation letter. Such an invitation letter should be submitted to the elected official's scheduler in the form preferred by the office. Most congressional offices will have a separate scheduling e-mail address to which invitation letters can be sent. Don't hesitate to call an office and ask how they prefer to receive invitations. If a board member or other community partner who knows your program well has a relationship with the elected official, ask that partner to co-sign the invitation letter or follow up on your behalf.
2. **Be flexible with respect to the date and time of the visit.** Don't be afraid to offer several days or a period during which your program would be able to welcome the elected official to visit. Elected officials, particularly members of Congress, often have busy schedules into which they try to squeeze many visits, events, and engagements. Reasonable flexibility with respect to scheduling will increase the likelihood of securing an elected official visit.
3. **Don't be afraid to follow up on a pending invitation.** Members of Congress and other elected officials receive far more requests of their time than they can reasonably fulfill, and sometimes invitations get lost in the shuffle. If you haven't received a response to a pending invitation, feel free to call the elected official's scheduler to confirm they received the invitation.
4. **Choose the right service location.** Members of Congress and local elected officials representing a specific geographic area will be most interested and willing to visit a service location in their congressional district or jurisdiction. If you have multiple service locations, do your best to offer an elected official the opportunity to visit a service location within the region they represent, but make sure the chosen location is also a strong example of your company. Also, consider how to make your visit more appealing – opportunities to see deployment in action or to tour facilities and see the delivery of service in operation are often of greater interest than presentations.
5. **Once a visit is scheduled, let NTCA know!** To maximize the success of your visit, we need to pool resources, experience, and expertise. NTCA and Smart Rural Community have tools that can enhance a visit with an elected official, and we can help answer your questions to



ensure the visit is a success. NTCA members may wish to review advocacy tips and issue papers (including brief videos of NTCA staff explaining the issues) [here](#) (note that member login is required). Other “smart” resources for SRC providers, including workforce development and career awareness toolkits, are available [here](#). If you need assistance, contact ga@ntca.org.

6. **Invite customers and community members to participate in the site visit.** Elected officials will want to know how your company is helping connect your community. It always helps to have important members of the community who rely upon your network and services—such as local officials, key businesses, or school district representatives—to join the visit, even if just for a few minutes, to speak in support of your work.
7. **Confirm whether the visit will be open or closed to press.** This will affect your preparation for the visit. If the elected official wishes to have the event open to press, a media advisory will have to be issued, in coordination with the elected official’s office before the visit.
8. **Be careful not to engage in political campaign activity.** Be careful not to turn the event into a campaign rally, the focus of the event should be the services you provide and your community not a campaign.
9. **Highlight the connection between federal funding and your impact on the local community.** During the site visit, remember to explain that your company receives federal funding to help communities thrive. Use this opportunity to remind your representative about the importance of universal service funding to what you do and other funding priorities and challenges.
10. **Provide briefing material in advance of the visit.** Elected officials will almost always receive a briefing memo from their staff in advance of any event or appearance. Providing a briefing memo to the elected official’s staff several days before the scheduled visit will save them time, which they will appreciate, and ensure the right message is presented to the elected official. Again, NTCA resources can be helpful to you in preparing this.
11. **Make an “ask.”** At some point during the program visit, someone (typically a board member, executive director, or state commissioner) should ask the member of Congress or their staff to take specific action in support of rural broadband. For example, if there are particular issues you’re facing in a funding program or if there is a particular piece of legislation that you would like them to support, share that with them and ask for their help on it going forward.



12. **Share about the visit on social media.** Make sure to take a picture of the elected official visiting your company and post the picture of the elected official to your social media accounts. This provides an opportunity to thank the elected official publicly, and if the elected official shares the picture from his or her account, that's great publicity for your company. Tag NTCA and use #SmartRuralCommunity in any social media posts about the visit.
13. **Thank the elected official for visiting.** A simple thank you note can go a long way. At a minimum, follow-up with the elected official's staff, thank them for taking the time to visit, and provide any materials that were discussed or requested during the visit.
14. **Let us know how it went!** A successful visit can often lead to future engagement with the elected official. We encourage you to debrief with us after the visit to organize a follow-up plan and ensure the elected official's future engagement that will build upon your great work.