

# Advocacy 101 at Fahe



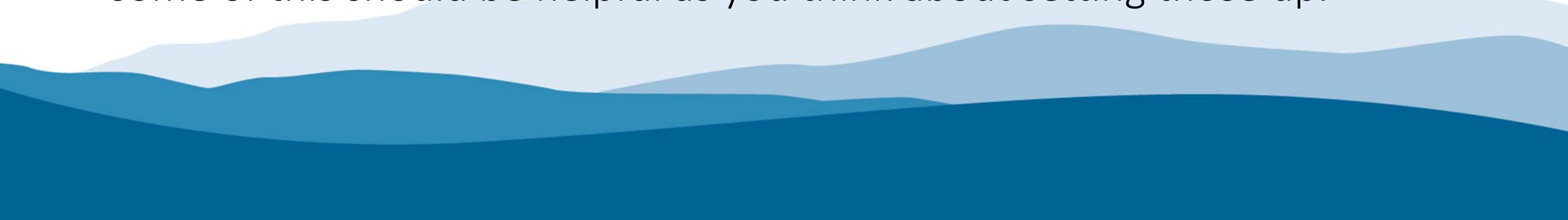
Goal:

By the end of this session, you'll have practical tips on how to get and prepare for a successful meeting with an elected official.

While our focus will be federal legislators, these tips will work to help you secure meetings with state electeds or agency leadership.



# A note on what we'll discuss:

- We're presenting this info as a linear process but everything we cover is adaptable. Use your best judgement on the order of operations and what you do.
  - In this first session, we're going to assume you only have a limited relationship with the folks you're meeting. When you have a relationship with an elected, this process can and should look a little different. More to come on that in later sessions.
  - Fahe will set up your visits with Senate Offices this spring, but you will be responsible for coordinating your own House of Representative visits. So, some of this should be helpful as you think about setting those up.
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# Big Picture Tips:

## **You're an expert. They are not.**

Assert your expertise in a gentle and helpful way. Become a valued resource to that Legislator and their team.

## **Remember the KISS Principle: Keep it simple stupid.**

Explain what you do, why and how you do it, the challenges you encounter or the solutions you see as though you're telling your grandparents or a small child.

## **Be prepared to speak to the “head” and the “heart”.**

Some people are moved by hard facts and quantifiable data. Other people are moved by stories and narratives that feature the real human element or impact.



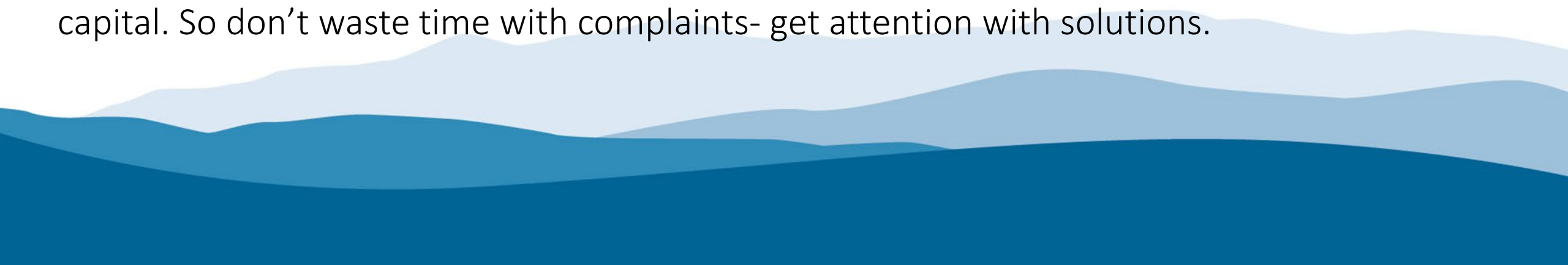
# Big Picture Tips:

## This gets easier with time.

Influencing how people think about a problem or a solution is iterative- it takes time and repeated exposure. The more you do it- the easier it gets.

## Don't just come to complain or make a demand. Come with a solution.

A sound policy, funding or regulatory solution that an elected official can make their own and take credit for, is basically electoral currency. You're the bank that can give them that capital. So don't waste time with complaints- get attention with solutions.

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# Step 1: Define your meeting goal or “ask”

- What is your specific request or recommendation?
- What do you want to happen at the end of this meeting?



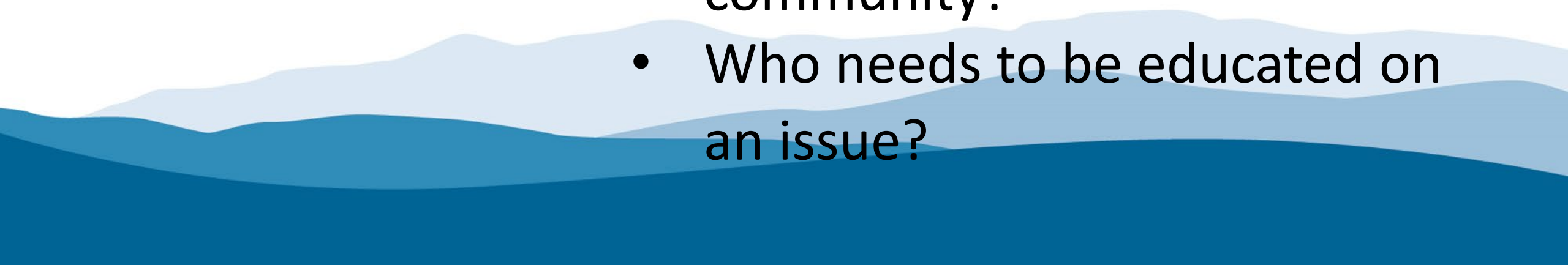


# Our Ask:

Families living in rural areas are not able to access federal programs in the same way as families in cities. Will you support legislation that ensures fairness for rural Americans seeking assistance with housing?



## Step 2: Identify the right target for your issue

- Who has the power to take action?
  - Who has the influence to lead others to do what we want?
  - Who might be interested in what we have to say?
  - Who represents my community?
  - Who needs to be educated on an issue?
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# Our Targets:

- Senators and House Reps who represent communities impacted by persistent poverty
- Senators & House Reps who sit on appropriations committees
- Representatives from the Districts where you serve



# Step 3: Gather your intel

- What motivates or “moves” my target? What’s their personal history? What are their special interests? What did they do before taking office?
  - What matters to their constituents? What have they introduced or campaigned on? How have they voted?
  - How do they speak in interviews? What is their communication style?
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# Getting Intel & Applying Emotional Intelligence:



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It's not about how you think about an issue.

It's about framing your message in a way that gets someone listen and act in a way that you want.

# Step 4: Identify attendees & who should send the invite

- Do you know them or someone on their staff?  
Do you know someone that does?
- Who will this person listen to?
- Who lives in, or serves their constituents?
- Who has a good title and name recognition?


# The Invite:

- For Senate Office visits, Fahe will send the invites and coordinate small groups with a Fahe staff person to help keep things moving.
- For House Office visits, you'll need to think about this on your own. So, as a caucus you may want to get together and plan who will go where and who will request the meetings.



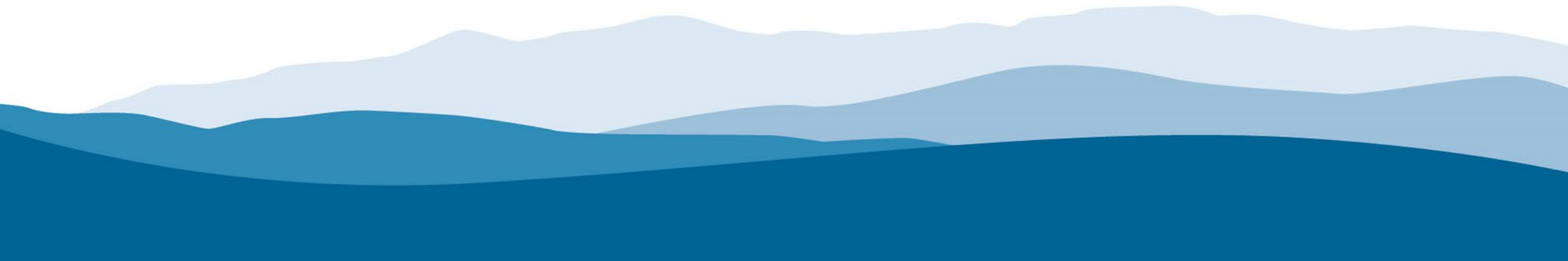
# Outside of Spring Retreat:

If you're doing a legislative meeting think about.....

- Other Fahe members or partners that serve in a particular electoral district
  - Community leaders (faith leaders, business owners, local officials)
  - Board members or other large scale supporters of your work (who maybe give to other causes or electoral campaigns...)
  - Individuals or families who have benefitted or will benefit from your services (though, this is a delicate ask and should be transparently discussed with clients/families)
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# Step 5: Draft your invite

- Who do I send it to?
- Who do I cc on the email?
- What do I say?
- Should I call?





# SAMPLE Draft Invite:

To: [SenatorStewart@pretendhouseofreps.gov](mailto:SenatorStewart@pretendhouseofreps.gov)

CC: THEIR STAFF (constituent services/scheduler/leg director etc) and WHOEVER ELSE IS ATTENDING MEETING WITH YOU

BCC: [advocacy@fahe.org](mailto:advocacy@fahe.org) (so we can track!)

Subject: Request for meeting – Housing and Community Development Opportunities in Southwest MD

Dear Representative Stewart and Staff,

I am writing in my capacity as Executive Director of Maryland Housing For All, and the State Caucus Chair for Fahe MD, to request a ~30 minute meeting with you and your staff to discuss a number of budgetary and policy opportunities we believe have real promise for the state of MD. As you're likely aware, MHFA has over 40 years of experience working in your District and last year alone, we delivered nearly 100 units of housing working families can afford to your constituent base.

We will be in DC for our annual meeting during the week of April 21<sup>st</sup>. My colleagues (cc'd here and listed below) and I are all available during the afternoon of April 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>; but we are happy to work around your office's availability.

Thank you in advance for your time and we look forward to sitting down in April.

Best,

Maggie Riden, MHFA

Andrew Bates, MD Community Action

Vonda Poynter, Fahe

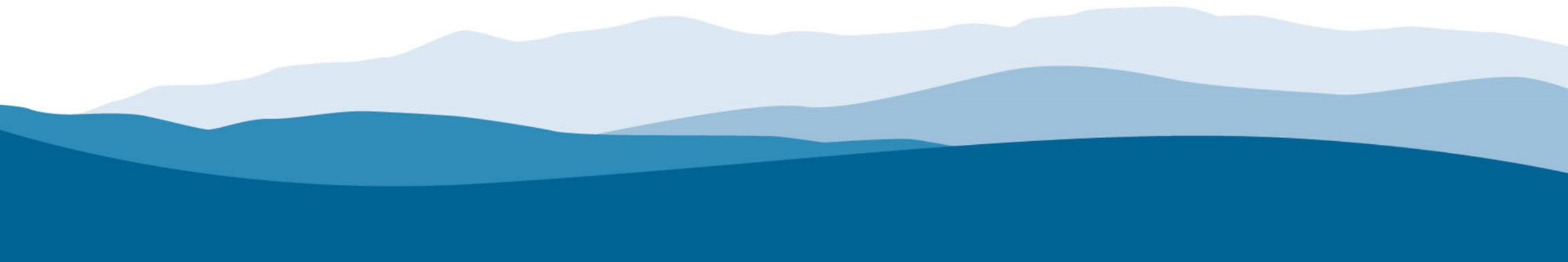


# Step 6: Develop your leave behind materials

- A one pager with the problem statement, your solution (include supporting data on the impact or effect of taking action if possible) and your ask. And/or
- A simple one pager that outlines your organization/coalition's work and impact. Short impact stories and pictures are great.
- Both should:
  - Be tailored to your audience.
  - Be written at a 6<sup>th</sup> grade level.
  - Include contact info.

# Leave Behind Materials

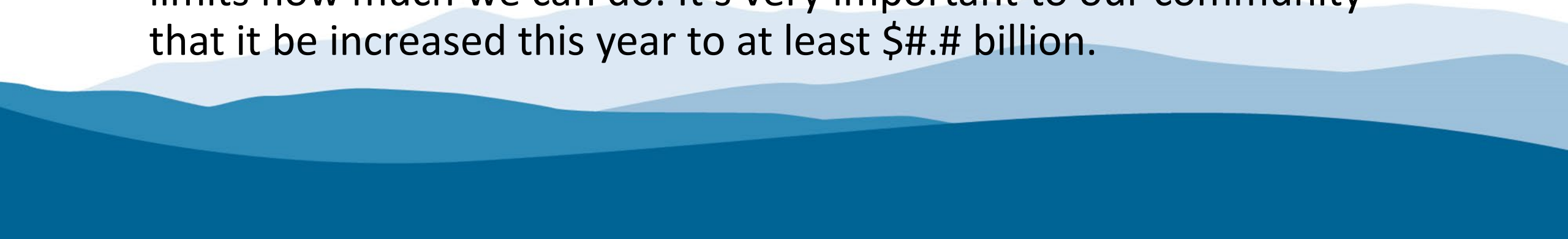
- Fahe will provide:
  - Congressional District One Pagers
  - Income Eligibility One Pagers
- You're encouraged to bring:
  - Any short brochures or one pagers on your work and community level impact. It's great if these include pictures or testimonials




# Step 7: Draft your elevator pitches

- You need one for each organization
- You need one for your “ask” or recommendation
- These are talking points that quickly relay your “ask” or message. They should be tailored to get the interest of your audience.

# Elevator Pitch:

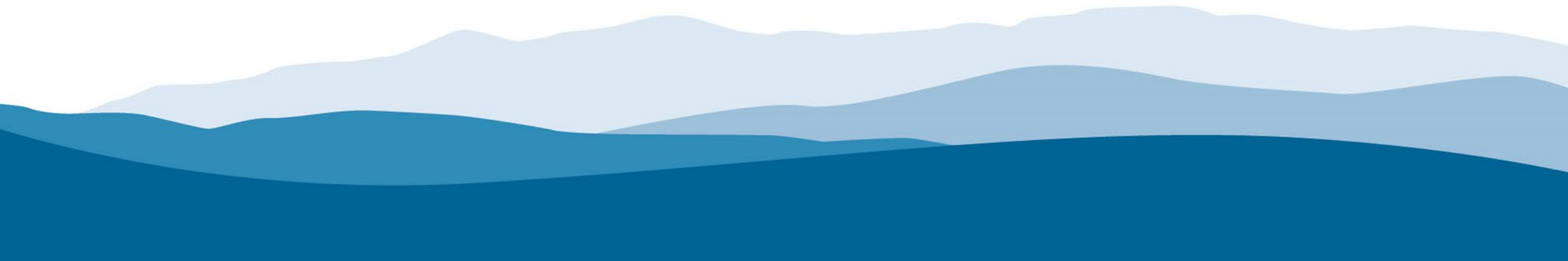
- **For my organization:**
  - **For income eligibility:** Families living in rural areas are not able to access federal programs in the same way as families in cities. We need legislation that ensures fairness for rural Americans seeking assistance with housing.
  - **For funding:** The HOME program is what allows us to do any of this work we've been talking about; but that also means the funding level limits how much we can do. It's very important to our community that it be increased this year to at least \$#.# billion.
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# Step 8: Host a pre-meeting with partners

- Finalize Your Meeting Agenda
  - Practice your organizational and “ask” elevator pitch
  - Assign meeting roles and responsibilities
  - Identify likely questions and devise clear answers (and who will give them)
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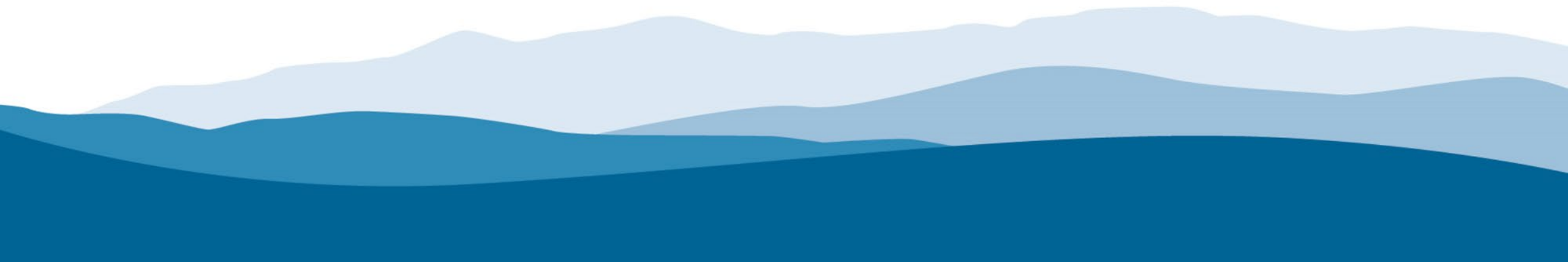
# Step 8: Meeting Roles

- Will be covered in session 2: March 29<sup>th</sup> 11-12:30 EST





# Questions?



# Step 8: A Note On Collateral

