

APARTMENT CAREERS MONTH

— FEBRUARY 2014 —

NATIONAL APARTMENT ASSOCIATION EDUCATION INSTITUTE

AFFILIATE

COMMUNICATIONS

TOOLKIT



How to Use This Toolkit

In this Apartment Careers Month 2014 Communications Toolkit you will find tips and template materials to help you build awareness in your community about the many career opportunities our industry offers, as well as emphasize the economic and job impacts of apartment communities in your hometown. Each template has an explanation of how to use it to best achieve your communications goals. This toolkit is intended as a guide. You are encouraged to customize these materials to reflect the unique attributes of your community and its apartment industry.

The template materials in this toolkit include:

- o News Release
- o Key Messages
- o Letter to the Editor
- o Sample social media posts

In addition to these templates, we have included media outreach tips that will help you publicize Apartment Careers Month 2014. Disseminating the apartment careers messaging to your local media is key to your success. The combination of the tips, strategies and customizable templates should be everything you need to execute a successful media outreach effort in your community around Apartment Careers Month 2014.

For questions regarding this toolkit, please contact Mark Evans at mark@thelyst.com or at 979-492-1150.

News Release

Apartment Careers Month activities, particularly those done locally, are newsworthy because they are designed to help people in your community find jobs in the apartment industry and to let your community know about the types of career opportunities our industry offers. Many people looking for jobs don't know that these opportunities exist in our industry. Members of the local media may be interested in helping spread the word about your efforts to raise awareness, as long as you supply them with the information they need. Newspapers and other media outlets regularly use press releases to learn about topics and stories they might not otherwise cover.

Below you will find a press release template that can be tailored by your association and distributed to your local media outlets. You can choose to fill in the highlighted sections with information specific to your association, or you may customize the release further with additional local statistics or activity highlights.

Tips: Sending Your News Release

Your local media market is cluttered with organizations trying to get their issues covered by the media. Here are some tips for sending your press release to your local media:

- Identify contacts at your local print, TV, radio and Internet news outlets and how they prefer to receive news releases. This will involve a phone call to the outlet or a quick search on the outlet's website. Some contacts may want you to email them the release while others may ask that you submit it through a form on their website.
- When you contact the individuals at these outlets, introduce yourself and your association. Be sure they know when and why you will be sending them the news release. Also, confirm that you are speaking to the correct person at the news organization—they may suggest that your story is more appropriate for a different reporter at their office.
- Make sure that when the news release is sent to media outlets it has been posted in a logical place (e.g., news or hot topics section) on your association's website. Feel free to send this hyperlink out to association members, friends or partners and ask that they share it with their networks and on social media. Don't forget to post it to your association's own social media channels.
- Designate a point person at your association to handle any calls from reporters seeking additional information on apartment careers. This person's contact information should be listed at the top of the release. Respond promptly to any reporter inquiries as they may be working on tight deadlines.

Sample News Release

NEWS RELEASE
[INSERT DATE]

CONTACT: [INSERT CONTACT NAME]
[INSERT CONTACT PHONE NUMBER]

Apartment Industry Offers Wealth of Career Options

[INSERT AFFILIATE NAME] Celebrates February as Apartment Careers Month to Raise Awareness about [INSERT CITY]-Area Job Opportunities

[INSERT CITY], [INSERT STATE] – Whether showing an apartment to a prospective resident or fixing a unit’s leaky faucet, people who work in the [INSERT CITY] apartment industry say they enjoy the challenges that each day brings and the chance to provide others with more than just a roof over their heads but also a place to call “home.”

As the nation’s \$1.1 trillion apartment industry marks February as Apartment Careers Month, the [INSERT AFFILIATE NAME] is doing its part to let others know about the exciting career opportunities to be found right down the street at the nearest apartment community. [INSERT A SHORT SENTENCE OR TWO BRIEFLY DESCRIBING ANY LOCAL APARTMENT CAREERS MONTH ACTIVITIES.]

The [INSERT CITY] apartment industry provides jobs for more than [INSERT NUMBER OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY LOCAL APARTMENT INDUSTRY] workers. Nationally, the industry employs more than 686,000 professionals who work onsite at apartment communities. An additional 1.7 million people are indirectly employed by the apartment industry. It’s an industry that has a constant demand for new, skilled employees, as 35 percent of U.S. households are renter-occupied households.

“When people are looking for jobs, they don’t often think about looking for a position at their neighborhood apartment community,” said [INSERT AFFILIATE SPOKESPERSON NAME AND TITLE]. “Our industry is always looking for talented people from a wide variety of backgrounds to fill open positions. Whether you have a college degree or a high school education, you can have a long, successful career in the apartment industry with the right attitude, dedication and training.”

Many people start in the industry as leasing consultants or maintenance technicians and work their way into management positions. In fact, large property management companies often require new employees to spend time working onsite at an apartment community before moving into other positions within the company, such as in marketing, accounting or information technology.

To help prepare people for jobs in the apartment industry, [INSERT AFFILIATE NAME] offers seminars and training that provide new employees or those interested in an apartment industry career with the skills they need to succeed as a leasing consultant, maintenance technician or property manager.

The association is also reaching out to veterans and military spouses to let them know how the apartment industry makes a good fit with their backgrounds and skills, [INSERT LAST NAME OF SPOKESPERSON] said. Because most areas have at least one apartment community, an apartment industry career does not limit a person to one city or town and can be a “portable” career, which is ideal for military spouses who must frequently move.

More information on apartment industry careers and Apartment Careers Month may be found on [INSERT AFFILIATE NAME]’s website at [INSERT URL] or by visiting ApartmentCareerHQ.org, which is a website of the National Apartment Association Education Institute.

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[IF DESIRED, INCLUDE SHORT PARAGRAPH OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON YOUR AFFILIATE]

Media Interview Tips

Key Messages

Key messages are useful for interviews with the media and for speakers at community events. They act as a guide for those speaking to community groups and media about Apartment Careers Month and apartment industry jobs in your community. The template key messages below outline the general ideas that should be mentioned when discussing Apartment Careers Month. To customize the key messages, add specific details about the ways in which your association is working locally to raise awareness about the career opportunities offered by the apartment industry. Also, highlight the economic impact provided locally by the apartment industry and the jobs it provides.

Note that you do not need to use every key message for every audience. Select the ones that are most appropriate to your audience or of highest priority to your association. The key messages below are meant as a guide and a pool of messages from which you can select.

The Media Interview

Participating in a media interview is an excellent way to get the word out about Apartment Careers Month. Once you begin informing media outlets about the local career opportunities provided by the apartment industry, they might be interested in interviewing you or your spokesperson (who you will need to select in advance).

Interview Tips

- Never walk into an interview unprepared. You should know who is interviewing you, what type of news they report on and how the interview will be used. This allows you to properly prepare to answer the reporter's questions.
- Practice with a colleague before the interview takes place. Speak clearly and calmly so that the reporter can catch everything you're saying.
- The media works in sound bites, so the more concisely you can express your points, the better.
- During the interview, listen attentively and provide thoughtful responses.
- Follow up after the interview. Send any additional information the reporter may need to write the story. Ask whether there is anything else you can provide (e.g., fact sheets).

Apartment Careers Month 2014

Key Messages

- The month of February 2014 has been designated National Apartment Careers Month by the National Apartment Association Education Institute and [INSERT NAME OF YOUR LOCAL APARTMENT ASSOCIATION].
- The apartment industry is a \$1.1 trillion industry.
- Rental housing offers an affordable, maintenance-free lifestyle for college students, couples saving for a home, military families, people moving to a new location, empty nesters and seniors.
- Thirty-five percent of U.S. households are renter-occupied households with 17.1 million occupied apartment homes and 35 million apartment residents. The [INSERT CITY] area alone has [INSERT NUMBER] apartment communities.
- To meet the challenges of a growing rental housing industry, new, skilled workers are constantly needed to replace retiring workers and to staff newly built apartment communities.
- The [INSERT CITY] apartment industry provides jobs for more than [INSERT NUMBER OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY LOCAL APARTMENT INDUSTRY] workers. Nationally, the industry employs 686,000 professionals who work onsite at apartment communities.
- An additional 1.7 million people are indirectly employed by the apartment industry. This number includes: apartment employees at regional and corporate offices as well as local marketing, laundry, pool, flooring, pest control, plumbing, electrical and HVAC professionals, to name a few.
- [INSERT NAME OF YOUR LOCAL APARTMENT ASSOCIATION] is working with local apartment communities and apartment management companies to let [INSERT CITY]-area job seekers know of the many career opportunities to be found in the apartment industry.
- [INSERT SPECIFICS ON ANY APARTMENT CAREERS MONTH ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE ASSOCIATION]
- No matter your educational background -- college degree or a high school education -- you can have a long, successful career in the apartment industry with the right attitude, dedication and training.

Apartment Careers Month 2014

Key Messages

- The apartment industry offers full-time, career-track positions with competitive pay plus health, dental and life insurance; a 401K plan; tuition reimbursement and often a rent benefit (discount).
- The apartment industry offers several career paths – apartment management, apartment maintenance, apartment leasing and even apartment supplier.
- Typically, people start in the apartment industry as leasing consultants, maintenance technicians or product/service providers to the apartment industry. They may then be promoted to apartment manager or maintenance supervisor or work in a number of areas, such as marketing, operations, asset management or training and development.
- **[INSERT NAME OF YOUR LOCAL APARTMENT ASSOCIATION]** and the National Apartment Association Education Institute offer courses and training that provide new employees or those interested in an apartment industry career with the skills they need to succeed.
- NAAEI offers professional designations in leasing, maintenance and apartment management – to name a few – that can help people looking to break into the industry or those already in the industry who want to grow their career.
- Visit ApartmentCareerHQ.org for more information on apartment industry careers.

Letter to the Editor

A letter to the editor is a tool used by individuals or organizations to express an opinion about a timely issue that is important to readers. Letters to the editor are often written by an authority on a subject, who is seen as a trustworthy source of information. You can reach a significant number of people by publishing a letter to the editor.

Use the template below for drafting a clear message that quickly and interestingly expresses your viewpoint.

Getting Your Letter to the Editor Published

- Determine under whose name to submit the letter. This will likely be your executive director or president of your board of directors.
- Use the enclosed template letter to the editor as a guide. Feel free to personalize it with details unique to your community and your local apartment industry.
- Keep your letter short. Most publications will only accept a letter that is a few hundred words.
- Look on your local newspaper's website for information on how to submit a letter to the editor.
- You may also submit your letter to the editor via the outlet's website. Each publication is different, so be sure to pay close attention to all available submission instructions.
- No matter how you submit the letter, be sure to follow up with the media outlet to ensure they have received your submission.

Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

February marks National Apartment Careers Month. The apartment industry is one that provides jobs to more than 686,000 professionals who work onsite at apartment communities. An additional 1.7 million people are indirectly employed by the apartment industry. In the [INSERT CITY] area, we have [INSERT NUMBER] apartment communities employing more than [INSERT NUMBER] people. Yet, few people are aware of the many career opportunities that are often available at their neighborhood apartment community.

[INSERT ASSOCIATION NAME] is working with local apartment communities and apartment management companies to let job seekers in our community know about the qualifications and training needed for a successful career in our industry. Many people start as leasing consultants or maintenance technicians and with a great attitude, hard work and the right training can quickly move into management positions.

As part of Apartment Careers Month, [INSERT ASSOCIATION NAME] will [INSERT DETAILS DESCRIBING APARTMENT CAREERS MONTH OUTREACH OR PROGRAMS YOU ARE CONDUCTING].

Our industry hires people from a wide variety of fields and educational backgrounds. Whether you have a high school education or a college degree, you can find your place in the apartment industry. Apartment careers are also careers you can take anywhere. To learn more, visit ApartmentCareerHQ.org or contact our association.

Sincerely,

[INSERT NAME]

[INSERT TITLE], [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME]

[INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION – FOR VERIFICATION PURPOSES ONLY, NOT FOR PUBLICATION]

Social Media

No matter the platform – Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn – social media is a great way to reach a lot of people with the same message. The key with social media is to provide information to followers that is useful and that they will want to share with others. This content can take a variety of forms, including status updates, photos, hyperlinks to interesting news and even videos. Social media can help you spread the word about Apartment Careers Month 2014.

Throughout February, we encourage to use your association's social media channels to raise awareness among your followers about Apartment Careers Month and apartment careers. Post information on any Apartment Careers Month activities you are doing or information about upcoming educational opportunities you are offering. Ask your followers to “like” your posts on Facebook and to share them with their own followers. Also encourage them to take a look at the career resources available at ApartmentCareerHQ.org and on the website of the National Apartment Association Education Institute.

We have included below some sample posts for February. Many of them highlight content already available through NAAEI or ApartmentCareerHQ.org. We encourage you to write your own or to customize these for your association and community. Make sure to highlight in your own posts any Apartment Careers Month-related activities you are conducting in your community. Invite people to attend and post pictures and/or short video segments of the events.

Social Media Tips

- Keep posts relatively short – no more than a sentence or so. This applies to Facebook as well as to Twitter, which already has a 140-character limit. Studies show that shorter posts are more frequently shared than longer ones.
- Even though Twitter allows 140 characters for posts, keep your posts to no more than 130 characters maximum (105-115 characters, ideally). You want to allow space for people to insert their own comments and to retweet your posts without your message being cut off at the end.
- Use your posts to initiate a two-way dialogue with followers – ask them questions or their thoughts on an item you post.
- Share with your followers interesting, relevant content that has been posted by others – either by sharing on Facebook or retweeting on Twitter. This can help you generate more views for your posts as well as help turn you into a resource for others so they keep coming back to check out your posts.
- Try to post late in the evening or first thing in the morning. People tend to be overwhelmed with posts during the workday, so they are more likely to see something you post in the “off-hours.”
- Don't forget to use LinkedIn. If your association does not already have an active LinkedIn profile, make sure to set one up or claim it. In the past year, LinkedIn has added many ways for companies to take advantage of its site. This includes the ability to post status updates, which it previously did not allow for company pages.
- If you haven't already, make sure you “like” (on Facebook) or “follow” (on Twitter) other Facebook pages or Twitter users relevant to the apartment industry. Look for opportunities to share content they post.

Sample Social Media Posts for Apartment Careers Month

Week 1

- **Facebook 1:** Did you know that February is Apartment Careers Month? Visit ApartmentCareerHQ.org to learn about the exciting career opportunities our industry offers.
- **Twitter 1:** February is Apartment Careers Month. Visit ApartmentCareerHQ.org to learn about the many career opportunities our industry offers.
- **Facebook 2:** Check out this video on the many job opportunities to be found in the apartment industry. February is Apartment Careers Month. (Include link to: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGw40b37qsE&feature=share&list=UUdvfK5Skkk_w8Qa-a-faY7Q)
- **Twitter 2:** Check out this video on the many job opportunities to be found in the apartment industry http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGw40b37qsE&feature=share&list=UUdvfK5Skkk_w8Qa-a-faY7Q (Make sure you use a url shortener if the program you use for Twitter posts does not automatically shorten long urls.)

Week 2

- **Facebook 1:** What do you enjoy most about working in the apartment industry?
- **Twitter 1:** Looking for a job? Consider a career in the apartment industry. Visit ApartmentCareerHQ.org
- **Facebook 2:** We offer training that can help you land your first apartment industry job or grow your career in the industry. Take a look at some of our upcoming programs. (Insert link to relevant webpage on your association's website that lists current education offerings)
- **Twitter 2:** Education is key for a successful apartment career. Register for one of our upcoming programs. (Insert link to relevant webpage on your association's website that lists current education offerings. Use url shortener, if necessary.)

Sample Social Media Posts for Apartment Careers Month

Week 3

- **Facebook 1:** The apartment industry employs more than 686,000 professionals who work onsite at apartment communities. Visit ApartmentCareerHQ.org to learn how you can start a career in the industry.
- **Twitter 1:** The apartment industry employs more than 686,000 people who work onsite at apartment communities. www.ApartmentCareerHQ.org
- **Facebook 2:** Take a look as Olivia Hunter discusses apartment industry job opportunities for college graduates (Include link to: <http://youtu.be/PBOTHipWY2E>)
- **Twitter 2:** Watch Olivia Hunter discuss apartment industry job opportunities for college graduates <http://youtu.be/PBOTHipWY2E>

Week 4

- **Facebook 1:** How did you get your start in the apartment industry? February is Apartment Careers Month. Use this as an opportunity to share your stories with others looking for a career.
- **Twitter 1:** Check out all of the professional designations we offer and pursue one to advance your career <http://www.naaahq.org/learn/education/designation-programs>
- **Facebook 2:** Professional designations demonstrate your commitment to the industry and are a great way to advance your apartment career. (Include link to: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWzrCKG2PxE&feature=share&list=UUdvfK5Skkk_w8Qa-a-faY7Q)
- **Twitter 2:** Learn more about the value of apartment industry professional designations http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWzrCKG2PxE&feature=share&list=UUdvfK5Skkk_w8Qa-a-faY7Q