Virtual Event Planning Guidelines

* Decide on your budget and ask main partners to contribute. Depending on your final plan a virtual grand opening or ground breaking event could be planned for under $5,000. Costs could be much less if internal staff were able to video virtual tours and if speakers submitted their own videos with their remarks.
* Contact Audio Visual vendor to get ideas and plans that would be within your budget.
* Decide the key partners who should speak. This may include Mayors, Congressional Representatives, key community, development officials and property partners. You also may want to have a resident make remarks. It is usually appropriate to have the highest elected official speak first, but you may want to check with their office for their preference. Touch base with selected speakers to see if they are able to participate.
* Think of a potential theme. This provides a "hook" for media coverage. This can also be used to determine how to celebrate the grand opening (ribbon across a resident's door or community center; presenting a door decoration or key to resident; big red ribbon with lots of scissors, etc.). Is it a place for families? What makes this development unique, desirable? A theme isn't always necessary with a standard ribbon cutting, but having one could attract more attention and could help tie the whole event together.
* Arrange to video a tour of the property from exterior to inside and include a couple of the units – this would be best if you could get some of the residents involved – to look at "lived in" units.
* Suggested invitees:
  + Any federal officials involved with the project – also try member of Congress
  + State officials involved in project (Ohio Housing Finance Agency, Ohio Department Services Agency)
  + Local officials involved in project (Mayor, City Council, HUD, etc.)
  + All people involved in financing (lenders, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing and/or other syndicators, Federal Home Loan Bank, all investors, etc. OCCH can provide you an address list of investors involved in the project.)
  + Local organizations involved in the project (local community development corporations, neighborhood groups, etc.)
  + People with the project (manager, resident manager, owner, architect, accountant, etc.)
  + Residents
  + Media
  + If there is a residential neighborhood nearby, you may want to invite local residents or any resident group to promote positive relations and for them to be more informed on the project.
  + Anyone else?
* Send media advisory out to local press – newspaper, radio stations, TV stations.
* Call press to follow up a couple days before the event.
* Prepare fact sheets or brochures on the project (including the name of every organization involved).
* Prepare a press release for media acknowledging the grand opening and recognizing everyone involved in the project.

If you are an Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing partner, contact, Rhonda Snyder, rsnyder@occh.org with any question.