Framing and Messaging for Affordable Housing

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National Housing Conference
Our agenda

• Introduction to values-based messaging

• Values-based message exercise

• Reports and reflections
We are not blank slates.

knowledge
stories

patterns of association
cultural models
media
frames

experience
stereotypes
myths
Frames

*noun*

the lenses through which people view and receive information.
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
The case for values

Level One: Values
• Fairness, opportunity, hard work, security

Level Two: Issue Areas
• Health care, public safety, housing affordability

Level Three: Policies
• Section 514 loans, LIHTC, trust funds
Solutions, not crisis

- Crisis language causes our brains to shut off!
- Use aspirational language: What could our community look like if we worked together to solve this problem?
- What benefits will the solution create for the community? For your audience?
Tell “landscape” stories

- **Stories about individuals** cause your audience to focus on the person, not the problem: *What should she have done differently to prevent this problem?*

- **Landscape stories** show systems and structures to create a fuller picture of the problem— and points to *collective* solutions.

- Looking at the landscape helps you discover **new voices who can deliver your message.**
Eliminate the “other”

- **Avoid**: poor, low-income, working poor
- **Use instead**: struggling to make ends meet, living on the brink, working to provide
Turn data into social math

- Simplify
- Find a familiar comparison
- Break numbers down
Putting it all together

Kids learn better, parents can work better and everyone is healthier when we have safe, stable and affordable homes for all our residents. But today, you could fill the local basketball arena with the number of kids who don’t have a place to call home. We can solve this problem. We know how to help families end or prevent their homelessness and return to stable housing. By passing H.B. 1234, we will increase funding for affordable housing and make sure more kids and families in our state have a safe, stable place to call home. Please call your elected officials today and ask for their support.
For more information

Housing Communications HUB

http://hub.nhc.org

Messaging & Framing Toolkit
Small-group exercise

CREATE A VALUES-BASED MESSAGE
## Sample message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Value Statement</strong></th>
<th>Kids learn better, parents can work better and everyone is healthier when we have safe, stable and affordable homes for all our residents.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Statement</strong></td>
<td>But today, you could fill the local basketball arena with the number of kids who don’t have a place to call home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solution Statement</strong></td>
<td>We can solve this problem. We know how to help families end or prevent their homelessness and return to stable housing. By passing H.B. 1234, we will increase funding for affordable housing and make sure more kids and families in our state have a safe, stable place to call home.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Step one: Identify values

Write down a few words or sentences about what home means for you.

Consider:

- Why is your home important to you?
- What does it mean for a person to have an affordable home?
Step two: Consider your audience

• Who are you trying to convince?

• What matters to that person or group of people?

• What *values* does your audience hold?
Step three: Create a value statement

• Compare your housing values and your audience’s values. Where do they intersect?

• Using those intersecting values, create a statement that answers the question, “Why are affordable homes important to our community?”
Step four: Write a problem statement

- What facts or data do you think will convince your audience to become interested in solving the affordable housing problem?

- Can you incorporate social math into your problem statement?
Step five:
Write a solution statement

• Think about one possible solution to the affordable housing problem.
• Is this a solution that’s worked in nearby communities? Is there something unique to your community that will help make this solution effective?
• Consider how your audience can be part of the solution.
Report-out

YOUR HOUSING MESSAGES
http://hub.nhc.org

Continue the conversation
Contact me

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