



“Home Is Here, Alameda County” Storytelling Initiative

Messaging Guide

Overview:

Housing is essential for thriving, connected, and healthy communities. *Home is Here* is an outreach and education initiative dedicated to uplifting proven housing solutions that keep Alameda County’s 1.6 million residents rooted in the neighborhoods they love.

This message guide offers direction and sample language that emphasizes the importance of safe, stable homes and highlights housing solutions that help reach our shared vision of a stronger, thriving Alameda County. The messages in this guide were developed in partnership with Alameda County HCD and Change Consulting, and informed by the [Begins with Home](#) Narrative Playbook, which presents research-backed approaches for shifting Bay Area residents toward action to achieve housing justice. Though written for this unique moment, these messages are intended to have longevity, keeping in mind that all good messaging is constantly evolving just like your work.

These messages are intended to be headlines or sign posts to lead people through your narrative. Each message can be further fleshed out, adjusted based on what moves your core audiences, and illustrated with relevant data, stories and more detail as appropriate.

Values, Problem, Solution, Action Messaging Framework:

These messages use the Values, Problem, Solution, Action messaging framework by the [Opportunity Agenda](#). This set of core messages:

- Leads with shared and aspirational values to activate emotions and open an audience’s minds and hearts.
- Frames the problems we seek to solve as a threat to our values. This creates a sense of urgency and connects individual stories to broader systems and dynamics. It primes our audience for the solutions we offer, making it clear where the change lies.

- Closes out with positive solutions to leave people with choices, ideas, and motivation, and prime your audience to act.

I. Values Messages: *These messages introduce your vision for change, and what values drive your work. Leading with values creates broad points of agreement and shared goals that will resonate with your intended audiences.*

Main Point: Everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home. When every family can live in dignity and peace in a secure home, we can be the Alameda County we aspire to be.

Supporting Points:

- Stronger and thriving communities start with a safe and secure place to call home.
- Access to safe, affordable, and stable housing is a basic necessity - as essential as food, health care, and education.
- Safe and secure housing directly impacts our collective health and well-being. It equips students of any age to succeed academically, ensures workers can prosper in their jobs, and provides a foundation for generations of families to thrive.
- Home is here in Alameda County for 1.6 million of us, each building our lives alongside one another. From Oakland to Fremont, Alameda to Livermore, our neighborhoods are vibrant, enriched by residents who bring varied cultures and speak more than 57 languages. This diversity is what makes our communities special.
- Home is unique for each of us, and having a safe, stable place to rest, play, and care for ourselves provides the foundation we all need to live and thrive in our communities.
- A stronger and thriving Alameda County starts with everyone, regardless of income or race, having a stable, affordable place to call home.
 - We define an affordable home as one in which a household has enough in their budget for basic needs after paying their rent or mortgage. This usually means a household spends less than 30% of their income on housing.

II. Problem Messages: *These messages describe the problem you are in the business to solve, and explain how it threatens shared values.*

Main Point: Years of failing to invest in affordable housing at the scale we need, while adding thousands of high-wage jobs in Alameda County and the broader Bay Area, has driven up rents and pushed more and more people into homelessness.

Supporting Points:

- Our growing housing crisis has been decades in the making due to chronic underfunding on the federal level and a shortage of affordable housing units in California.
- The federal government has chronically failed to invest in affordable housing at the scale we need. In the midst of ongoing federal funding cuts, more people are being displaced and left without access to safe and affordable homes.
- The lack of access and investments in affordable and secure housing isn't working for any of us. Despite working harder than ever, often working multiple jobs, many people in our county can't afford to keep a roof over their heads.
- This fuels housing instability, homelessness, and displacement, disproportionately impacting Black, Indigenous and Latine residents, other residents of color, and lower-income households.
- Families live in fear of eviction and displacement, with households of color being more likely than white households to have rent debt.
- Systemic discrimination in housing, health care, employment, and education has compounded these challenges. And our cities' streets have become the waiting room for those of us who need shelter and permanent housing.
- In Alameda County, many of our neighbors are priced out, pushed out, or left behind - forced out of neighborhoods they've called home for generations. We are all losing out on the diversity, culture, and spirit that make Alameda County the place we cherish.
- The vast majority of Alameda County residents believe everyone deserves to have a roof over their head. Yet, misinformation and fear-based narratives about housing solutions and homelessness lead to mistrust of the government and leave many of us feeling hopeless and cynical about a way out of the housing crisis.

III. Solution Messages: *Offering solutions gives audiences a sense of hope and motivation. The best solutions are connected directly to the identified problem and make it clear where the responsibility for change lies.*

Main Point: We can make our communities stronger, more inclusive, and healthier by boldly investing in proven solutions that match the scale of the challenge Alameda County faces.

Supporting Points:

- Investing in housing solutions is a pathway to stronger, healthier communities. When we invest in affordable housing as a necessary resource, we open the door to a thriving Alameda County.
- By carefully stewarding public resources, we are making critical progress towards increasing our stock of affordable housing, keeping renters in their homes, and

preventing homelessness. Many great policies and programs are already making a difference that we can expand on and replicate.

- *Home is Here: Stronger and Thriving Alameda County Starts with Housing*, is an outreach and education initiative dedicated to uplifting and growing robust, scalable housing solutions that meet the needs of Alameda County's 1.6 million residents.
 - *Home is Here* shares powerful stories of Alameda County residents and their unique journeys toward finding housing and what home means to them, emphasizing where economic and social support and public resources play a vital role in preventing homelessness and providing a stable and secure foundation for communities.
- By strengthening communities most impacted by the housing crisis, particularly Black, Indigenous and Latine communities, we can move Alameda County as a whole forward.

IV. Call to Action Messages: *Your call to action offers your audience a specific, clearly stated next step to support your work. Be specific and concrete, focusing your actions on steps that your audience can see themselves taking.*

Main Point: Home is here for Alameda County residents. It will take all of us – including renters, landlords, business leaders, homeowners, and people experiencing homelessness– to create an Alameda County where everyone has a safe place to call home, no matter what we look like or how much we earn.

Supporting Points:

- Together, we can unlock a new future for Alameda County - one where our communities can remain diverse, strong, and thriving, and where our neighbors have a safe and affordable place to call home.
- Alameda County residents have a history of supporting affordable housing and strengthening the public infrastructure we all rely on, like roads, transit, water, and fire stations.
- By investing in solutions that match the scale of the challenge we face, we can:
 - Build more affordable homes for people with low incomes so we can keep Alameda County vibrant and diverse.
 - Protect our neighbors from the threat of eviction, displacement, and rents that rise faster than wages.
 - Keep more homes affordable, preserving existing affordable housing options so our neighbors can live in the communities they have always called home.

- Prevent homelessness by keeping people in their homes and making more homes affordable.
- It will require everyone's support so we can live, thrive, and safely enjoy the Alameda County we call home.

Initiative-specific call-to-action:

- Together we can make Alameda County the home we love. Join the *Home is Here* initiative and help us create an Alameda County where everyone has a safe and stable home.
 - Help us expand safe, affordable housing in Alameda County — share the *Home is Here* initiative on social media and invite people in your network to do the same.
 - Visit www.achcd.org/home-is-here to learn more about the *Home is Here* initiative, hear more stories, and get the latest news and resources about affordable housing in Alameda County.
 - Use your voice to advance housing solutions in your county — become a spokesperson and help us shape the future of Alameda County.
 - Join our effort to amplify real community voices. If you know someone whose experience with housing should be shared, nominate them to be featured in our storytelling series.