Effective Ways to Talk About Housing

Talking about affordable housing can be challenging, but framing our messages effectively can build support for affordable housing

Who Lives in Affordable Housing?

Households making 80% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI) are eligible to live in legally-binding affordable housing, which costs households 30% or less of their gross income.

AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING IN THE TRIANGLE J REGION

45% of renters are cost-burdened meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on rent & utilities



&

71% of renters that are making less than $50,000 are also cost-burdened



There is an estimated **shortage of at least 42,467 rental units** that households making $35,000 or less can afford



People in the Triangle J region working in all types of jobs are eligible for affordable housing & could benefit from it [1]

Childcare Worker	Bus Driver	Electrician	Teacher	Police Officer	Healthcare Social Worker
					
28% of AMI $21,080**	**37% of AMI** $28,290**	**54% of AMI** $41,150**	**59% of AMI** $43,970*	**66% of AMI** $49,180*	**79% of AMI** $59,490*

* Durham, Orange, & Chatham Counties MSA
** Wake, Johnston, & Franklin Counties MSA
Based on 2016 HUD calculations & mean wages from www.bls.gov by MSA. Assumes worker is the sole earner in a 4-person household.

TIPS ON HOW TO TALK ABOUT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

From the Frameworks Institute[2]

Tell stories with people, places, & systems
Talk about people, places, & systems interacting. Discuss where challenges occur & where interventions could be implemented

Explain the role of systems in housing
Show how public policies shape the problems for people & communities. Avoid opening up conversations about "personal responsibility"

Connect housing with other issues
Make the case that housing affects us all & intersects with a variety of important issues like health, education, employment, & public safety

Explain causes & effects of housing insecurity
Describe the reasons for housing insecurity like lack of jobs & low-wages, so that people don't make assumptions

Explain that where you live affects you
Making it clear that where we live influences our health, & other outcomes helps people focus on systems & policy solutions

Tell a "Story of Us" not a "Story of Them"
Discuss collective problems & benefits. We are all negatively impacted when there isn't enough affordable housing & we can all benefit from more housing that is affordable to all

Effective Value Statements [3]

- Hardworking people should be able to afford housing & still have money for groceries & other basic needs.
- Children deserve an opportunity to succeed in school & life, which is tied to having a stable home.
- Housing gives people an opportunity to build better lives. To succeed you need a place to call home.
- It is only fair that everyone has a safe, decent place to live.
- We need to remove the barriers that Triangle residents with low incomes face in finding housing they can afford, close to work & schools.
- We can live in a region where everyone has access to opportunity & a decent, stable, affordable place to call home. By investing in housing opportunities, we can create communites with a better future for all of us.

This infographic was prepared by Triangle J Council of Governments in July 2017. More information and resources on affordable housing can be viewed at www.tjcog.org/housing.aspx

(1) AMI in 2016 for Wake, Johnston , & Franklin Counties is $76,600 & for Durham, Orange, & Chatham Counties is $74,900.
(2)"You Don't Have to Live Here" Why Housing Messages Are Backfiring and 10 Things We Can Do About It. (2016) Enterprise, Frameworks Institute. http://www.enterprisecommunity.org/resources/you-dont-have-to-live-here
(3) Talking about Housing: Effective Advocacy Messages. Portland Housing Allliacnce. http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Messages-that-work-Rev-Oct-20131.pdf