



TIPS FOR GETTING TO KNOW AND LIFTING UP HOUSING + TENANT VOICES IN THE PRESS

MARCH 2022

Agenda for today's training

- Context
 - What are we trying to accomplish?
 - How lifting up tenant voices helps us accomplish our goals
 - Tenant voices in recent news articles
 - Storybanks
- Short discussion
 - Topic: Your experiences with lifting up tenant voices in the media
- Building a relationship with tenants
 - Case study with Cory Winter, Hamilton Families
 - Case study with Stephanie Picard Bowen, Generation Housing
- Preparing tenants for press interviews
- Q&A

What are we trying to accomplish?

Our goal is to elevate the conversation around housing in ways that prioritize racial equity and highlight the challenges faced by renters across our region. This approach is also designed to unseat negative attitudes about renters and reduce resistance to the 3Ps consensus policy frame. We want to shift the narrative:

- **From housing scarcity → housing justice**
- **From individual responsibility → structural change**
- **From “rugged individualism” → a shared community that benefits all**
- **From fear of loss through change → confronting the risks of the status quo**
- **From defeatism and reliance on luck → belief in change through collective action**

How lifting up tenant voices in the press helps us accomplish these goals:

- Underscores the concept that **achieving housing justice requires structural change**
- **Counters defeatist attitudes around housing** by showing how life changing it is to have safe, stable, affordable housing
- Helps the issue of housing insecurity **reach a broader audience**
- **Gives tenants some agency** in how their situations and stories are shared
- **Makes the news story about people** -- not just housing prices

Examples of tenant voices in recent news articles

< Home

San Francisco Chronicle

e-Edition

Account

BAY AREA

COVID eviction battles have moved to the Bay Area suburbs



Brontë Wittgen/The Chronicle



LAUREN HEPLER Feb. 10, 2022



Examples of tenant voices in recent news articles

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC PRESS

NEWS SPECIAL REPORTS NEWSPAPER 'CIVIC' PODCAST KSFP RADIO NEWSLETTER ABOUT DONATE

Rebuffed Tenant Group Weighs Whether to Continue 'Debt Strike'



Sharon Wickham/San Francisco Public Press

57 Taylor St., a building owned by Veritas Investments, Inc.

San Francisco Chronicle

Account

BAY AREA

This Silicon Valley county is trying to end a 'hidden epidemic' of homeless families. Will it work?



Lauren Hepler

Oct. 13, 2021 | Updated: Oct. 15, 2021 7:36 p.m.



1 of 7

STAN SMITH, FOREVER



Click to find locations



6010 Mall Walk Space 8080
Yonkers, NY 10704

18.05 mi to the nearest location

What is a storybank?

Storybanks are a database of personal stories on any one topic (i.e. housing insecurity) that groups can refer to when fielding media requests

Columns for storybank spreadsheet:

- NOTES
- NAME
- EMAIL
- PHONE
- CONTACT PROTOCOL
- LANGUAGES
- STORY SUMMARY
- COMFORT W/ MEDIA

Why storybanks are important:

- Helps you organize the people available to speak to subsets of the broader issue so that it lives in a permanent place
- Helps you understand the gaps in stories/perspectives ahead of media requests
- Allows organizations to work together in uplifting housing justice stories
- Can easily find people in specific places/counties to line up with media requests

DISCUSSION:


What challenges does your organization run into when getting to know and putting forward tenant voices in the news?

BRINGING IN & GETTING TO KNOW LOCAL TENANT VOICES

CASE STUDY WITH HAMILTON FAMILIES

CASE STUDY: GENERATION HOUSING


Bringing in community voices



**DO YOU LIVE IN
SONOMA COUNTY?**

Then we want to hear from you!

WE ARE
GEN H



**ARE YOU A SONOMA
COUNTY HOMEOWNER?**

Then we want to hear from you!

WE ARE
GEN H



**¿VIVES EN EL CONDADO
DE SONOMA?**

¡Entonces nos gustaría saber de ti!

WE ARE
GEN H

Bringing in community voices



Welcome to Reddit.

Where a community about your favorite things is waiting for you.

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↑
20
↓

What's your experience been like living in Sonoma County? (self.sonomacounty)

submitted 1 year ago by [GenerationHousing](#)

Hi everyone! I'm Melissa from Generation Housing. We're an organization based in Sonoma County that advocates for more affordable housing options in Sonoma County. We're currently collecting anecdotes from people on what it's been like living in Sonoma County to help prove that affordable housing is vital for the future of the county. If you'd be happy to share your own experience with us please click on this link: <https://generationhousing.org/we-are-gen-h-we-want-to-hear-from-you/>

14 comments share save hide report

all 14 comments

sorted by: best ▼

Bringing in community voices



Living in Sonoma County: Share your experience with Generation Housing

As an organization focused on advocating for increased housing in Sonoma County, we at Generation Housing are reaching out directly to the community and want to hear from YOU. Please feel free to skip any questions that don't apply. Thank you for sharing your experience with us.

aeske@mrss.com [Switch account](#)



* Required

Email *

Your email 

What's your full name?

Your answer

Email Address:

Your answer

Text Number:

Your answer

How long have you lived in Sonoma County?

Your answer

Can you tell us a little bit about yourself? What is your profession? Are you a student?

Your answer

Where do you live in Sonoma County?

Your answer

What type of housing do you currently reside in?

- ☐ Apartment
- ☐ Condo
- ☐ Single Family House
- ☐ Shared House
- ☐ Duplex
- ☐ Unhoused
- ☐ Other

La vida en el condado de Sonoma: Comparta su experiencia con Generation Housing

Como la organización enfocada en abogar por el aumento de viviendas en el condado de Sonoma que somos, Generation Housing quiere llegar directamente a la comunidad y queremos saber de USTED. No dude en omitir cualquier pregunta que no le aplique. Gracias por compartir tu historia con nosotros.

 aeske@mrss.com (not shared) [Switch account](#)



Cuál es su nombre completo?

Your answer 

Correo Electronico:

Your answer

Numero de texto:


Your answer

Building relationships with community voices



Generation Housing
March 16, 2021 · 🌐

We are 150 Gen H members strong and we're going for more! Join us today at generationhousing.org/membership #WeAreGenH



150
MEMBERS!

Thank you for joining us and making a commitment to building a Sonoma County that is welcoming and affordable for all!

Putting forward community voices in communications



Generation Housing

April 19, 2021 · 🌐

Veronica along with her four children and husband have rented their two-bedroom apartment ever since they moved from Mexico 16 years ago. Her dream is to one day become a homeowner and wish the same for her children, but she realizes this may only happen if they leave Sonoma County.

Sonoma County is home. Veronica along with other Sonoma County residents hope to make it a place where everyone can live here for many generations to come. Learn more about their stories by [explo... See more](#)

"I really would love for my children to be able to raise their kids in this county, even if we can't afford to stay here. I hope that as working and educated individuals they can make enough to afford to live in this beautiful place they love."

VERONICA ESQUIVIAS

Nanny and house cleaner, renter,
Petaluma resident



GEN H

Add your voice...



Generation Housing

June 15, 2021 · 🌐

We are teachers, first responders, farm workers. We are grocers, we are artists. Together, each of you, all of us, and all residents of Sonoma County. We Are Gen H, and we all need affordable places to live. Join us at [wearegenh.org](https://www.wearegenh.org)!

Watch this video and more on our YouTube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_tHYR-5FBL9mNPiZd7uuwQ



[GENERATIONHOUSING.ORG](https://www.generationhousing.org)

We Want to hear from YOU | Generation Housing

[Learn more](#)

PREPARING TENANTS FOR PRESS INTERVIEWS

Before the Interview



- Make sure to set up a translator if needed
- Offer to do practice interviews with the tenant ahead of time
- Be explicit with the reporter about what the parameters are and how the tenant wishes to be identified (i.e. no last name, pseudonym, etc.)
- Be available to join the call in a listening capacity and step in if the tenant feels uncomfortable or nervous at any time

Tips to Share with Tenants Before Interviews



- Tell your story using examples and anecdotes
- Speak specifically about things you know
- Take your time answering questions – it's okay to collect your thoughts
- Don't be pressured to share personal information that you are not comfortable sharing
- Don't give information you are not confident is accurate
- Don't answer questions you don't understand – break the questions down, or ask the reporter to do so
- It's ok to end the interview if it's hostile or makes you feel uncomfortable



QUESTIONS?