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

BAY AREA

COVID eviction battles have moved to the Bay Area suburbs
Examples of tenant voices in recent news articles

Rebuffed Tenant Group Weighs Whether to Continue ‘Debt Strike’

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

**ARE YOU A SONOMA COUNTY HOMEOWNER?**
Then we want to hear from you!

**¿VIVES EN EL CONDADO DE SONOMA?**
¡Entonces nos gustaría saber de ti!
Welcome to Reddit.
Where a community about your favorite things is waiting for you.

**Welcome to Reddit.**
Where a community about your favorite things is waiting for you.

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*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/](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.

aeseke@mrsu.com Switch account
* Required

Email

Your email

What's your full name?

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 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 su historia con nosotros.

aeseke@mrsu.com (not shared) Switch account

Cuál es su nombre completo?

Your answer

Correo Electrónico:

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

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

“We 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 ESQUIVIES
House cleaner, renter, Petaluma resident

Add your voice...

We Want to hear from YOU | Generation Housing
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?