

begins with **home**

NARRATIVE PLAYBOOK



This guide from **Begins with Home** is intended to be a resource in storytelling and content strategy for everyone – advocates, neighbors and organizations – deeply committed to achieving housing justice in the Bay Area.

Our society is constructed by laws, social norms, culture, the stories we tell ourselves about who we are. Narrative strategy is the important work of changing mindsets so we can break down those constructs and free ourselves from rules and structures that have never served everyone, and are holding all of us back now.

This narrative playbook includes information about the Begins with Home campaign, our research, approach, and messaging, along with tips and best practices on using storytelling and content to move our shared audiences towards action. Whether you're writing an op-ed on a specific bill, contacting voters about an organizing opportunity, or talking to your friends at dinner, these strategies

and messages can help spur meaningful, structural change in the Bay Area when we collectively apply them.

The strategies and narrative guidance in the following pages build on the [Shift the Bay Narrative Playbook](#) – a housing justice narrative playbook for the Bay Area from the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH).



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 01: WHAT'S BEHIND THE STRATEGY

- A. If we haven't met yet, let us introduce ourselves: We're **Begins with Home**
- B. What's holding us back
- C. What we can do about it
- D. Who are our audiences? And, who are we trying to reach?

✦ OUR RESEARCH-BASED CAMPAIGN APPROACH

SECTION 02: ALIGNING YOUR WORK

- A. The Metanarrative: How we're building up a big story together
- B. Begins with Home messaging is designed to help tell our story
- C. Your cheat sheet: The Begins with Home essentials checklist
- D. Looking to example stories for inspiration...
- E. Applying narrative strategy to digital organizing

✦ HOW YOU CAN USE WHAT WE'RE DOING IN YOUR OWN CONTEXT

SECTION 03: THE APPLICATION

- A. Practice: Now it's your turn...
- B. Using messaging to answer tough questions
- C. Here's what you can do next
- D. Other helpful resources

✦ APPLYING THE NARRATIVE TO YOUR OWN WORK

SECTION 01: WHAT'S BEHIND THE STRATEGY



A. If we haven't met yet, let us introduce ourselves: We're Begins with Home.

[Begins with Home](#) is a movement of neighbors from every corner of the Bay Area, coming together as neighbors and advocates – renters and landlords, homeowners and people experiencing homelessness – to unlock a new future for our communities where no one is left behind.

When it comes to building a future of housing justice in the Bay Area, change is possible. Together, we can create a Bay Area where everyone has a safe place to call home no matter what we look like, how much we earn, or where we lay our heads down to sleep. By uniting as neighbors, investing in solutions, and harnessing

our region's resources, we can build a future for the Bay Area rooted in justice, community, and possibility.

Building on years of audience research, landscape analysis, coalition-building, and experimental, localized campaigns, the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH), with twelve campaign partners from all nine Bay Area counties, is bringing this coordinated, regional narrative campaign to the public at scale, rooted in our research findings and aiming to grow our movement's power.



B. What's holding us back

68%

say it's not too late to address housing affordability in the Bay

25%

feel hopeful about the future of housing affordability in the Bay

Citation: 2023 Shift the Narrative Annual Tracking Poll

You might be surprised to hear that most of our neighbors in the Bay Area feel that change is possible, and it's not too late to make a difference about housing affordability in our region. Despite the barrage of bad news, people haven't totally given up!

But you might be less surprised to hear that very few of our neighbors actually feel hopeful about the future of housing affordability in the Bay. Why is it harder to feel optimism about the future? Maybe it's a sign that people don't know how we can get there, or feel confident that we can do it. That's something our movement can help with.

At the same time, less than half of voters say they feel there is something they can do, and a quarter are unsure about whether they can personally make a difference. We have a big opportunity to help people see how they can take action, and connect to their belief that it's possible to make a difference.

Before we think about changing how the Bay Area shows up for housing justice, we need to remember that the most key thing about narrative strategy is this: **folks mostly don't make decisions based on data.** We humans are emotional creatures: **we make decisions based on how we feel.**

If this is comfortable for you, think about the mental and physical experience of feeling despair, anxiety, fear. What happens for us physically and mentally? We close up, our vision and senses narrow, our choices feel limited.

Then, think about what happens physically and mentally when you feel hopeful, inspired, motivated. We feel a sense of possibility, openness, empathy, connection. It feels empowering to think about the future.



Right now, folks in the Bay Area are hearing about doom and gloom – and as a result, they're feeling doomy and gloomy. That's not a recipe for winning their support. We need to change how people feel, so we can change how they act. To do so, we have to change what people are seeing.

Our research reflects a reality we face: the problems of housing affordability, housing insecurity, and homelessness are visible problems. Often highly visible. But our solutions and our progress are too often invisible. This is a flashing warning sign calling for a narrative intervention. Let's look at how we can all work to disrupt this cycle so we can change what people are seeing, feeling, and doing to win housing justice.



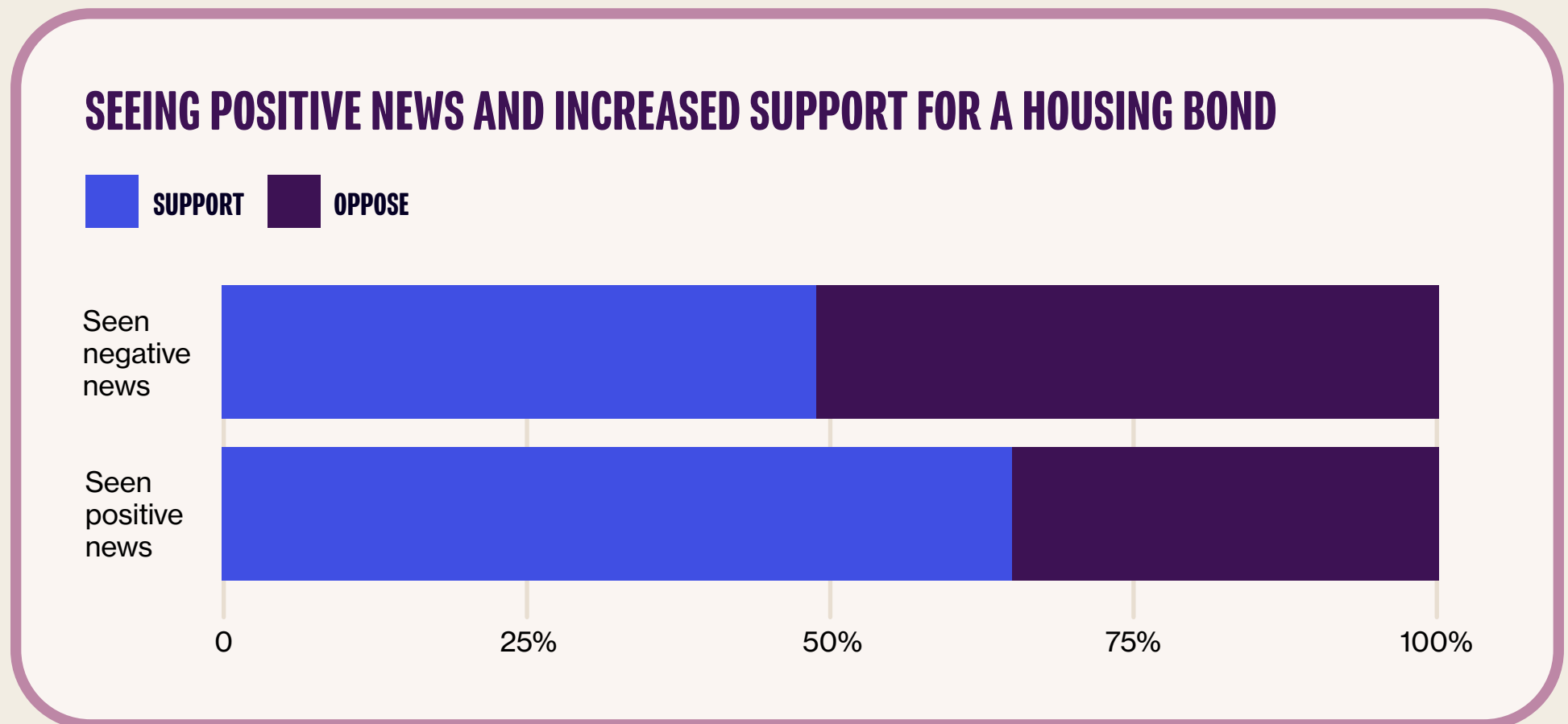
C. What we can do about it

The Begins with Home narrative strategy is designed to change how people feel. And move them to take action.

We're working to establish a vision of housing justice in the Bay Area that uses storytelling and digital organizing, shared with compelling branding and visuals, to encourage residents to become the heroes of housing justice. We believe we can move more people to take action if we meet them where they are and show them how a series of small, concrete actions can build up to bigger change.

Our [2023 Shift the Narrative Annual Tracking Poll](#), which surveyed 1,500 voters from the 9-county Bay Area in September to October 2023, shares the latest key findings around the values and attitudes influencing housing and racial justice, as well as the policies and messages resonating with Bay Area residents.

This research illustrates a strong correlation between an individual **hearing positive information** about housing with feeling hopeful, taking action in their community, and supporting large-scale regional policies.



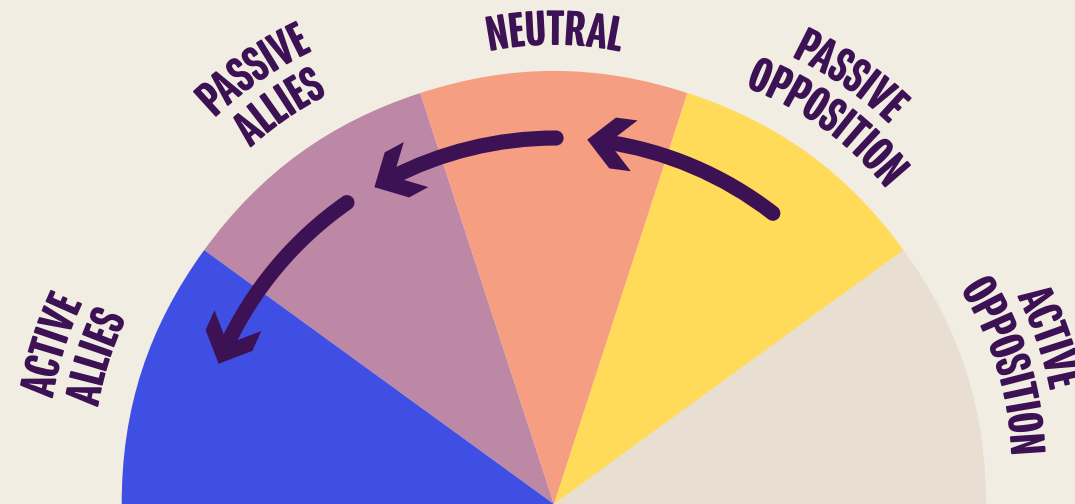
So, what does this all boil down to? **If we can help more people feel more hopeful, they are more likely to support meaningful, structural change.**



D. Who are our audiences? And, who are we trying to reach?

EXAMPLE OF A PASSIVE ALLY:

“ I agree with you, but what can we do about it...”



SPECTRUM OF ALLIES

Citation: Spectrum of Allies Tool by George Lakey, Training for Change

EXAMPLE OF PASSIVE OPPOSITION:

“ I just don't feel like affordable housing is right for my neighborhood...”

84%
<50%
25%

of Bay Area voters are concerned about low-income and disadvantaged families being able to find an affordable place to live.

But remember, less than 50% of voters say they feel there is something they can do, and

are unsure about whether they can *personally* make a difference.

How does this translate into our strategy? **Most** voters in the Bay Area are supportive of affordable housing and preventing homelessness – but are not taking action right now. In other words...we have a whole lot of ‘passive allies’ on our hands.

The truth is the opposition often has a louder presence than it does in numbers. The **majority** are inclined to agree with us; it's our job to move them to action!

By using the strategies in this playbook, we can all help convert ‘passive allies’ to ‘active allies.’ And for voters who are more in the middle, including those who fall into ‘neutral’ and ‘passive opposition,’ we can convert them to ‘passive allies,’ then hopefully, to ‘active allies.’ That's how we grow the majority of Bay Area voters.



SECTION 02: ALIGNING YOUR WORK

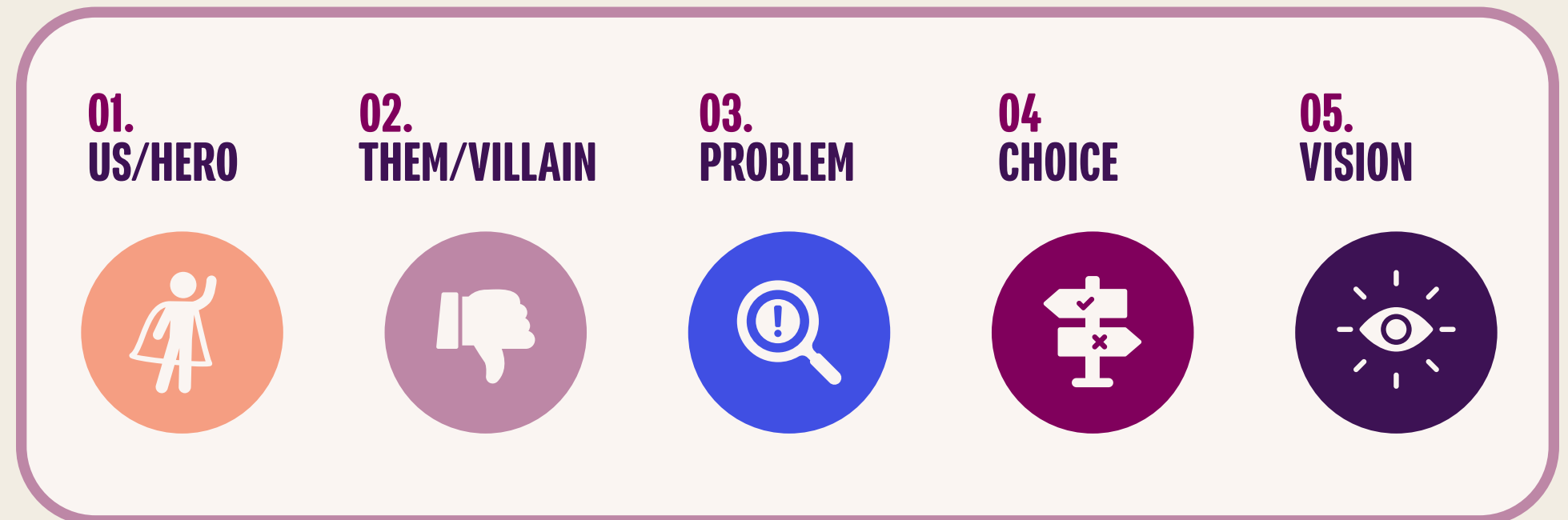


Let’s recap. Research shows us that there’s a strong correlation between people hearing **positive** information about housing with **feeling hopeful, taking action in their community, and supporting large-scale regional policies** – exactly what we need to move the needle towards real, positive change! Achieving this at scale will take all of us collectively amplifying a narrative of hope about the future of housing in the Bay Area.

You have the power to represent and uplift housing justice in **your** communities. We encourage you to utilize campaign metanarrative and messaging included below as a starting point that you can tailor according to your focus area, organizational voice, platform, and audience.

A. The Metanarrative: How we’re building up a big story together

The Begins with Home metanarrative offers consistent structure for the story we’re telling over and over again through the campaign. It consists of five key elements:



On the following pages, we provide the Begins with Home metanarrative as an example to demonstrate how we’re thinking about the story at hand. By using the same elements of this story in multiple places, we can build up a big, inspiring story together about what’s possible in the Bay Area. At the end of this playbook, we provide you with the chance to riff off this example and create **your version of the metanarrative** in accordance with your work, your campaign, your mission ([see pages 20-25](#)).

Citation: Metanarrative is adapted from tools from Momentum Community and Center for Story-Based Strategy



BEGINS WITH HOME METANARRATIVE



01. US/HERO

The people who make up our movement (like you!)

No matter what we look like, how much we earn, or where we lay our heads down to sleep, everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

We are neighbors from every corner of the Bay Area who know that now is the time to make the Bay a place where all of us can afford to live. We're joining together, as neighbors and advocates – renters and landlords, homeowners and people experiencing homelessness – to unlock a new future for our communities where no one is left behind.

From Milpitas to Mill Valley, from Gilroy to Geyserville, we know that when we join together we can win change – because we've done it before. We're building on the foundations of the activists, leaders, and artists who came before us, fought for justice, and challenged us to live up to our ideals.

It's up to all of us to build a Bay Area rooted in justice, community, and possibility. When every family can begin their day in a safe home, we can be the Bay Area we aspire to be. Our future begins with us, and a thriving Bay Area begins with home.



02. THEM/VILLAIN

The forces we are fighting against.

The only impossible problem is the one we don't try to solve. For too long, we've accepted a Bay Area that's out of reach and out of compassion for too many of us. The vast majority of us believe that everyone deserves to have a roof over our head, but our region struggles to make that a reality. We've stopped believing that we have the power to make change happen.

If we give into cynicism, we let a narrow few continue to profit from keeping housing out of reach and unaffordable for too many of us. This moment demands more action from us, from our neighbors in the Bay – all of us who want to see a Bay Area where everyone has a home.

We're living under rules created decades ago – based on outdated priorities, exclusionary and racist policies, and inaction – that have never served everyone, and are failing all of us now. But if we take bold action together, we can show our neighbors that change is possible, and we can change the rules that hold us all back.



03. PROBLEM

The problem we are trying to solve.

The Bay Area is home to nearly 8 million of us, building our lives alongside each other. But the status quo of unaffordable and insecure housing isn't working for any of us.

It feels like with each passing year, it becomes harder for so many of us to afford to build a life in the Bay. Rents are rising faster than our wages. Home prices are rising faster than our families can save. Corporate profits are rising faster than our city budgets. And sometimes, our frustration is rising faster than our compassion.

The Bay Area has led the nation in economic growth, but most of us would never know it. The gap in median household income between the Bay's highest and lowest wage earners keeps getting wider. Every day, one in ten Bay Area families live in fear of eviction, with households of color being almost four times as likely as white households to have rent debt. And we can't ignore our region's streets becoming the waiting room for those of us who need shelter and permanent housing.

We live in a world built on racism and exclusion – some of our nation's most unjust housing policies



BEGINS WITH HOME METANARRATIVE



03. PROBLEM [CONTINUED]

The problem we are trying to solve.

were invented here in the Bay. Now, increasing income inequality is fueling a growing racial wealth gap, exacerbated when people of color, and Black people in particular, are displaced from the communities in the Bay Area they call home.

Decades of bad policy and inaction have led to a status quo that only benefits a narrow few. There just aren't enough affordable homes for everyone working in the Bay Area, and that won't change unless we join together. By failing to adequately invest in future generations, we're not only failing the families who are living here now, but our children too.



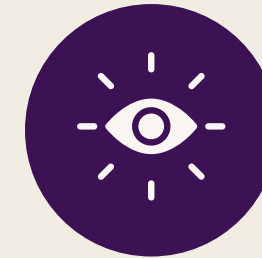
04. CHOICE

The central dilemma that our story poses to our audiences.

If we don't act now – what kind of Bay Area will we leave for the next generation? We can choose a different future, one where we invest in each other and where all of us can thrive.

We have the power to create change – together. And our region has the resources to build a new future – if we choose to use them. It's time to demand that every city, and every community, invest in proven solutions that match the scale of the challenge.

We're choosing to break free from fear and inaction. We're putting down a welcome mat for a future that includes all of us. Will you join the movement to create a more livable and affordable Bay Area where we all can thrive?



05. VISION

Reflects what the world will look like after we've won – it's what we stand to gain from making the right choice (above), and is a hopeful vision of the future.

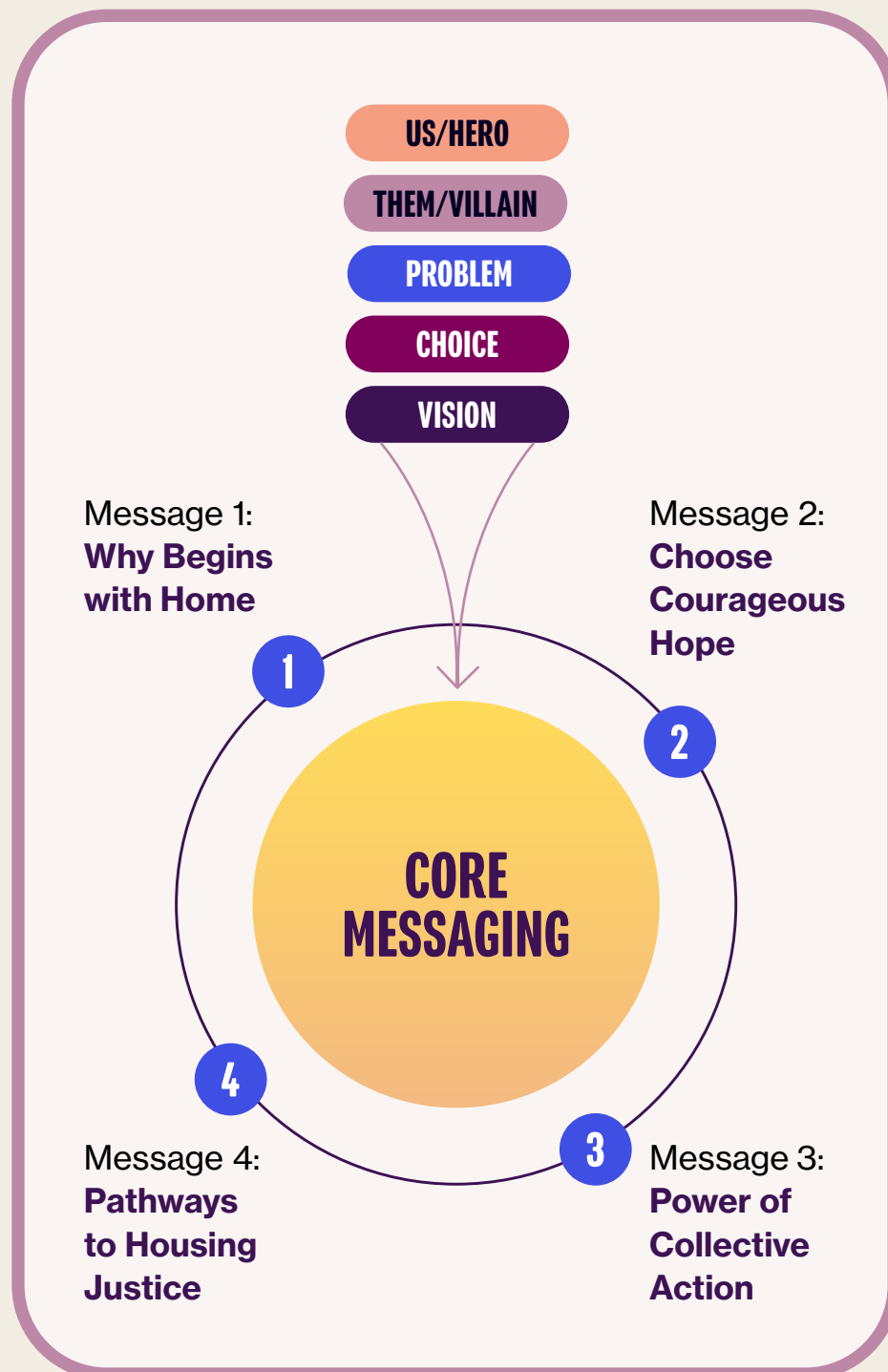
Together, we can build a Bay Area where we value everyone's humanity, where we treat everyone with justice and dignity, and where everyone belongs. Where children can stay in the communities in which they were raised and workers can afford to live in the city where they work. Where we can care for our aging parents and nobody has to choose between paying rent and buying food. Where we have taken steps to repair the harms of institutional racism. And where our homes aren't something that only belong to the highest bidder – but a basic human need.

In our affordable and thriving future, all 8 million of us in the Bay will have a stable place to call home, gather with families, and build the lives we dream about.

When we embrace affordable housing solutions, we open the door to new possibilities for all of our lives. Our future, our Bay Area, begins with home.



B. Begins with Home messaging is designed to help tell our story



Out of the metanarrative comes messaging. Having compelling messaging, arguments, and details to express your story is critical to bringing your audience along and garnering buy-in. The quality of messaging can mean the difference between someone truly understanding our issue or missing the point.

When it comes to effective messaging, these **five elements** are key:

- 1** **Name the moment** we are in and help people embrace the urgency for bold decisive action.
- 2** **Deploy and reinforce values** that have a demonstrated ability to connect people to housing justice.
- 3** **Center equity and systems change** in all messaging and (where possible) socialize new narratives that position equity as the pathway to justice and liberation (as end goals).
- 4** **Associate housing with existing narratives** from other movements that hold promise for expanding our coalition.
- 5** **Call together a broad-based coalition** of renters, homeowners, people experiencing homelessness, impacted communities, activists, and neighbors.

Just as we provided the Begins with Home metanarrative as an example to demonstrate how we’re thinking about the story at hand, below we include the Begins with Home messaging to provide an example of how we’re talking about it with our audiences.



BEGINS WITH HOME MESSAGING

TOPLINE 01. WHY BEGINS WITH HOME

Everything in our lives begins with having a safe, stable place to call home. But the status quo of unaffordable and insecure housing isn't working for any of us. When we take bold action together, we can change the rules that hold us all back. We're mobilizing to have every city, and every community, invest in proven solutions that match the scale of the challenge. It's time for each of us to act, because a better Bay Area begins with us.

TOPLINE 02. CHOOSE COURAGEOUS HOPE

It's time to break free from fear and inaction. We're choosing to put down a welcome mat for a future that includes all of us. Across the Bay Area, neighbors and advocates are already winning solutions to increase affordable housing, keep renters in their homes, and prevent homelessness – even if you don't always hear about it on the news. Now is the time to get off the sidelines and join the movement.

TOPLINE 03. POWER OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

Regardless of our race, income, or where we lay our head down to sleep, when we join our voices together we have the power to make change happen. We're coming together from every corner of the Bay Area because now is the time to make the Bay a place where all of us can afford to live. Our region has the resources we need to build a new future – if we choose to use them. When we organize, take action, and vote our values, we can create a future where we invest in each other and where all of us can thrive. The future of our Bay Area communities begins with us.

TOPLINE 04. PATHWAYS TO HOUSING JUSTICE

Together, we can build a Bay Area where we value everyone's humanity, where we treat everyone with justice and dignity, and where everyone belongs. Where children can stay in the communities where they were raised and workers can afford to live in the city where they work. Our homes aren't something that only belong to the highest bidder, but are a basic human need where we build our lives. Begins with Home is a movement to inspire our communities to embrace housing justice and build support for solutions to make the Bay more livable and affordable for all of us. A thriving Bay Area begins with home.

ELEVATOR PITCH

Most of us want the Bay Area to be a place where everyone has a safe place to call home. But for too long, we've accepted a Bay Area that's out of reach and out of compassion for too many of us.

Now is our time to make change happen. No matter what we look like, how much we earn, or where we lay our heads down to sleep, when we lift our voices together we have the power to build a Bay Area where everyone belongs.

Begins with Home is a movement of neighbors and advocates – renters and landlords, homeowners and people experiencing homelessness – joining together to unlock a new future for our communities where no one is left behind. Our future begins with us, and a thriving Bay Area begins with home.



C. Your cheat sheet: The Begins with Home essentials checklist

We change hearts and minds through stories and human connection, not just facts and data. Because how we feel informs what we believe.

We do that by uplifting and sharing human-centered stories about Bay Area housing that **spark feelings of courageous hope, highlight action towards change, and build momentum for a Bay Area where housing justice is embraced.**

Campaigns, initiatives, and organizing activities will all have their *own* messages – but we have the opportunity to organize short-term campaigns with our collective long-term goals in mind.

We developed the following essentials checklist both to inform our own storytelling – and for you to keep in mind as you create and refine your own campaign messaging, stories, and content:

Call everyone in with our shared values.

Name race, class, and housing status and refer to shared values to show how all of us are in this together. (See examples from the [Race Class Narrative](#))

Emphasize people over policies.

Tell stories about people’s aspirations and how their lives are impacted by our solutions, not the process of passing or implementing new policy.

Uplift the voices of those most impacted by housing issues.

Center lived experience and the solutions coming from impacted communities. Show how the status quo holds all of us back.

Make solutions visible

Highlight specific ways people’s lives have been made better, and specific actions people can take to increase their impact. Keep the focus on systems and structural change.

Be optimistic and hopeful about the future. (Cut the doom, gloom, and crisis talk!)

Be real about the problem, and express outrage when necessary, but avoid crisis language at all costs. Ground your stories in the future we make possible by working together.

Connect housing justice to other social justice movements across the Bay, past and present.

Remind our audiences that we’ve won big, hard things by working together before, and call on the pride of the history of Bay Area activism.

Evoke the diversity of the Bay Area and universal feelings of home.

Avoid portraying the Bay as a monolith – celebrate the diversity of our communities. Avoid portraying a singular version of what houses look like – but call on the powerful emotions of home.

Focus on activating allies – instead of catering to NIMBY and opposition voices, who have a louder presence than they do in numbers.

Make the people we want to be part of our movement the hero of the story.



D. Looking to example stories for inspiration...

VIDEOS

 [Begins with Home Introduction](#)

 [Antioch Video](#)



COMMUNITY BEGINS WITH HOME



“DON'T EVER LET ANYBODY SILENCE YOU.”

– NICOLE ARRINGTON
Antioch resident and organizer



E. Applying narrative strategy to digital organizing

SOCIAL POSTS

Instagram

In 2023, the University of California, San Francisco's Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative released the most comprehensive study of homelessness in the United States since the mid-1990s.

THESE WERE THEIR FINDINGS ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN CALIFORNIA:

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN CALIFORNIA ARE CALIFORNIANS.

90% of California's homeless population lived here already when they were pushed into homelessness.

HOUSING JUSTICE IS RACIAL JUSTICE.

Homelessness disproportionately impacts our neighbors who already face systemic barriers to housing security, with people who are Black, Indigenous, or Latinx over-represented.

PEOPLE CAN BE PUSHED INTO HOMELESSNESS QUICKLY.

10 On average, lease-holders had just 10 days to find another housing option before being displaced.

People without leases had just 1 day.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS A PERMANENT HOMELESSNESS SOLUTION.

89% Nearly 89% of Californians experiencing homelessness say **housing costs are a barrier** to re-entering permanent housing.

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IS EASIER THAN SOLVING IT LATER.

70% of people experiencing homelessness say that a monthly rental subsidy as small as **\$300-\$500 would have prevented their homelessness.**

TikTok



Twitter

Top Artists

1. Increasing Affordable Housing Production
2. Strengthening Tenant Protections
3. Solving Homelessness
4. Keeping More Homes Affordable

Top Songs

1. SB 4
2. SB 567
3. CA's Homekey Program
4. BRIDGE Housing acquisition

Top Genre
Housing Justice

Facebook

VICTORY!

New law creates opportunity to build affordable housing on land owned by faith-based organizations and nonprofit colleges.



E. Applying narrative strategy to digital organizing

ADVOCACY EMAIL

Hi [Insert Name],

What do justice, equity, community, and possibility all have in common? They all begin with home.

Here at Begins with Home, we know that most of us in the Bay Area believe that everyone deserves to have a roof over their head. But our region struggles to make it a reality – because not enough of us are demanding a Bay Area where we all belong, where low-income communities and communities of color stay and thrive.

We're done allowing fear and inaction to block our way to progress. **We're putting down a welcome mat for a future that includes all of us.**

Change starts here and it starts with you.

[Send a message to your mayor asking for their commitment to embrace housing justice and build support for solutions to make the Bay more livable and affordable for all of us.](#)

[IMAGE: Send a message to your mayor!]

The Bay Area has the resources to build a new future – if we choose to use them. It's time for every city, and every community, to believe and invest in solutions that match the scale of the challenge. The future of our Bay Area communities begin with us.

[Take action: Send a message to your mayor urging them to join us in building a Bay Area where we value everyone's humanity, where we treat everyone with justice and equality, and where everyone belongs.](#)

[\[Send a message\]](#)

It's up to all of us to build a Bay Area rooted in justice, equity, community, and possibility.

Thanks for raising your voice,
Begins with Home



SECTION 03: THE APPLICATION



A. Practice: Now it's your turn...



It's time to put this playbook to practice, and write your own story. Because *your* voice is a critical part of this movement – and **YOU** are the expert.

AUDIENCES EXERCISE

First, think about your **audiences**: What is specific or unique to your effort's audience(s) that should inform your messaging?

★ What kinds of folks are in your audiences? Where are they on the spectrum of allies? [\[See page 8\]](#)



★ What do they believe about your issue that holds your work back?



★ What motivates them to take action?



01.
US/HERO

The people who make up our movement (like you!)

1

Tip: Open with a shared value and call in everyone by naming race and class. [\(Learn more.\)](#)

2

Tip: Name a clear, bold vision to unite your people.

3

Tip: Your people are the hero of the story. Remind them what they're capable of.

4

Tip: Call in people with the chance to be part of the solution.

METANARRATIVE EXERCISE

Ground yourself in the Begins with Home metanarrative – and thinking about the specifics of your audiences and campaign, adapt the Begins with Home metanarrative for your work. You might use most of the metanarrative as-is with small changes, or be inspired to put these ideas into words that work for your audiences:

BEGINS WITH HOME METANARRATIVE

1 No matter what we look like, how much we earn, or where we lay our heads down to sleep, everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

We are neighbors from every corner of the Bay Area who know that

2 now is the time to make the Bay a place where all of us can afford to live. We're joining together, as neighbors and advocates – renters and landlords, homeowners and people experiencing homelessness – to unlock a new future for our communities where no one is left behind.

From Milpitas to Mill Valley, from Gilroy to Geyserville, **3 we know that when we join together we can win change – because we've done it before.** We're building on the foundations of the activists, leaders, and artists who came before us, fought for justice, and challenged us to live up to our ideals.

4 It's up to all of us to build a Bay Area rooted in justice, community, and possibility. When every family can begin their day in a safe home, we can be the Bay Area we aspire to be. Our future begins with us, and a thriving Bay Area begins with home.

ADAPT YOUR VERSION

Start with the prompts here to adapt for your work as needed. Build from the Begins with Home messaging however it works for you!

Questions to consider...

- ✦ Who is the 'we' that makes up your movement? Who do you want to join your movement?
- ✦ What values do the people in your movement share?
- ✦ What can make the people in your movement feel pride? What past victories or struggles can you call on?
- ✦ What geography and landscape do your people share?



02.
THEM/VILLAIN

The forces we are fighting against.

1 **Tip:** For Begins with Home, inaction and cynicism are one of our villains, is that true for your work too?

2 **Tip:** Name who benefits from the status quo.

3 **Tip:** Consider if structures, like systemic racism, are part of your villain.

BEGINS WITH HOME METANARRATIVE

The only impossible problem is the one we don't try to solve. **1 For too long, we've accepted a Bay Area that's out of reach and out of compassion for too many of us.** The vast majority of us believe that everyone deserves to have a roof over our head, but our region struggles to make that a reality. We've stopped believing that we have the power to make change happen.

If we give into cynicism, **2 we let a narrow few continue to profit from keeping housing out of reach and unaffordable for too many of us.** This moment demands more action from us, from our neighbors in the Bay – all of us who want to see a Bay Area where everyone has a home.

3 We're living under rules created decades ago – based on outdated priorities, exclusionary and racist policies, and inaction – that have never served everyone, and are failing all of us now. But if we take bold action together, we can show our neighbors that change is possible, and we can change the rules that hold us all back.

ADAPT YOUR VERSION

Start with the prompts here to adapt for your work as needed. Build from the Begins with Home messaging however it works for you!

Questions to consider...

- ✦ Who is benefitting from the status quo you're working to change?
- ✦ Who is actively or passively blocking needed change?
- ✦ What actions is your villain taking? How could your heroes win?



03. PROBLEM

The problem we are trying to solve.

1 **Tip:** Name the problem in simple, personal ways.

2 **Tip:** Many people respond strongly to messages framed in economic inequality or anxiety.

3 **Tip:** Name who is most directly impacted.

BEGINS WITH HOME METANARRATIVE

The Bay Area is home to nearly 8 million of us, building our lives alongside each other. But the status quo of unaffordable and insecure housing isn't working for any of us.

1 It feels like with each passing year, it becomes harder for so many of us to afford to build a life in the Bay. Rents are rising faster than our wages. Home prices are rising faster than our families can save. Corporate profits are rising faster than our city budgets. And sometimes, our frustration is rising faster than our compassion.

2 The Bay Area has led the nation in economic growth, but most of us would never know it. The gap in median household income between the Bay's highest and lowest wage earners keeps getting wider. Every day, one in ten Bay Area families live in fear of eviction, with households of color being almost four times as likely as white households to have rent debt. And we can't ignore our region's streets becoming the waiting room for those of us who need shelter and permanent housing.

We live in a world built on racism and exclusion – some of our nation's most unjust housing policies were invented here in the Bay. Now, increasing income inequality is fueling a growing racial wealth gap,

3 exacerbated when people of color, and Black people in particular, are displaced from the communities in the Bay Area they call home.

Decades of bad policy and inaction have led to a status quo that only benefits a narrow few. There just aren't enough affordable homes for everyone working in the Bay Area, and that won't change unless we join together. By failing to adequately invest in future generations, we're not only failing the families who are living here now, but our children too.

ADAPT YOUR VERSION

Start with the prompts here to adapt for your work as needed. Build from the Begins with Home messaging however it works for you!

Questions to consider...

- ✦ How can you most simply describe the problem(s) the people you serve or work with are experiencing?
- ✦ How can you help other people also feel impacted by this problem?
- ✦ Is there key data that illustrates the problem?
- ✦ What are the consequences for everybody of not solving the problem?



04.
CHOICE

The central dilemma that our story poses to our audiences.

1

Tip: Illustrate the urgency of this moment to help people embrace bold decisive action.

2

Tip: Name the power we have in making this choice.

3

Tip: Describe your solution that people are choosing.

BEGINS WITH HOME METANARRATIVE

1 **If we don't act now – what kind of Bay Area will we leave for the next generation?** We can choose a different future, one where we invest in each other and where all of us can thrive.

2 **We have the power to create change – together. And our region has the resources to build a new future – if we choose to use them.** It's time to demand that every city, and every community, invest in proven solutions that match the scale of the challenge.

We're choosing to break free from fear and inaction. We're putting down a welcome mat for a future that includes all of us. Will you join the movement **3** **to create a more livable and affordable Bay Area where we all can thrive?**

ADAPT YOUR VERSION

Start with the prompts here to adapt for your work as needed. Build from the Begins with Home messaging however it works for you!

Questions to consider...

- ✦ What choice can you put in front of your audiences that creates a fork in the road, with a clear choice to make about the future?
- ✦ What's the opportunity that's in front of us if we make the right choice?
- ✦ What action do you want your audiences to take? Why is it important for them to take those actions?



05. VISION

Reflects what the world will look like after we've won — it's what we stand to gain from making the right choice (above), and is a hopeful vision of the future.

1 **Tip:** This message resonates with many voters. Use shared values to describe your vision.

2 **Tip:** Paint a vivid picture: describe what the world would look like in concrete ways for people's lives.

3 **Tip:** Tie back your vision to the choice your heroes can make now.

BEGINS WITH HOME METANARRATIVE

1 Together, we can build a Bay Area where we value everyone's humanity, where we treat everyone with justice and dignity, and where everyone belongs. **2** Where children can stay in the communities in which they were raised and workers can afford to live in the city where they work. Where we can care for our aging parents and nobody has to choose between paying rent and buying food. Where we have taken steps to repair the harms of institutional racism. And where our homes aren't something that only belong to the highest bidder — but a basic human need.

In our affordable and thriving future, all 8 million of us in the Bay will have a stable place to call home, gather with families, and build the lives we dream about.

3 When we embrace affordable housing solutions, we open the door to new possibilities for all of our lives. Our future, our Bay Area, begins with home.

ADAPT YOUR VERSION

Start with the prompts here to adapt for your work as needed. Build from the Begins with Home messaging however it works for you!

Questions to consider...

- ✦ What would it look like if your vision became reality?
- ✦ What motivates and inspires your people? What are they hoping to win?
- ✦ What does everyone stand to gain from the choice we make now?



B. Using messaging to answer tough questions

You know the messaging and you've heard the push back – the familiar refrain when you talk about housing justice from those who are pessimistic about the future or have a hard time imagining a Bay Area where everyone is able to build a life they love. You can use messaging to counter those narratives and pivot to sharing what *is* possible when we work together.

● The Bay Area has already spent millions, so why haven't we solved homelessness yet?

Decades of bad policy and inaction have led us to a status quo that only benefits a narrow few, while housing becomes out of reach and unaffordable for too many of us. Years of failing to invest in affordable housing at the scale we need, while adding thousands of high-wage jobs in the Bay Area, has driven up rents and pushed more and more people into homelessness.

We can do better. The simplest way to reduce the number of homeless people in the Bay Area and California is to make more homes affordable. Many great policies and programs are already making a difference that we can expand on and replicate – even if you don't always hear about it on the news. We're making critical progress and our neighbors across the Bay Area are winning solutions to increase affordable housing, keep renters in their homes, and prevent homelessness.

Our region has the resources we need to build a new future, if we choose to use them. But that won't happen unless more of us demand that our communities boldly invest in proven solutions that match the scale of the challenge. Ending homelessness will make our communities stronger, more inclusive, healthier, and more resilient. The vast majority of us believe that everyone deserves to have a roof over our head, and now it's time to make that a reality.

● Why is it so hard to build new housing?

It shouldn't be, and that's something you and I can change. This is a political problem, not a practical one. Experts, advocates, and even case studies from other regions show consensus on what works and what we need to do to make the Bay Area more livable and affordable for all of us. The biggest obstacle is that not enough of us are demanding action in our communities. For too long, we've accepted a Bay Area that's out of reach and out of compassion for too many of us.

Now is our time to make change happen and join our voices together for proven solutions. Advocating for housing justice means building more homes that are affordable, but it also means ensuring affordable homes stay affordable, keeping renters in their homes, and preventing people from experiencing homelessness.

When we organize, take action, and vote our values, we can build a Bay Area where everyone belongs. Join us to build more affordable housing, and more equitable housing, so our teachers can live where they work, our elderly neighbors can have stability and safety, and our communities can be resilient and sustainable.



C. Feeling motivated and inspired to take action? Here's what you can do next

Now that you've read through this, if you didn't already, consider yourself a Begins with Home partner. Here's a few quick actions you can take to support Begins with Home and our collective work.



[Join the Begins with Home campaign](#) to receive updates and actions to create a more livable and affordable Bay Area where we all can thrive.



Follow us on social: [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) – and tag us in your next social post!



Have ideas, thoughts, questions, or feedback? We encourage you to reach out to us, the NPH Narrative Team, at hello@beginswithhome.com.

D. Other helpful resources

We want to continue to be helpful to you. Here are a few additional resources around telling the narrative of affordable housing to check out:

- ✦ [How to Talk About Homelessness Messaging Guide](#)
- ✦ [Renter Protections Storybook](#)
- ✦ [Seize the Narrative: a Housing Justice Narrative Playbook for the Bay Area](#)



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

In service of a shared vision to create a Bay Area where everyone has a stable, affordable home, the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH) and All Home are working in partnership with a diverse set of organizations from all over the Bay Area region to advance housing justice.

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