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.

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

TIPS ON HOW TO TALK ABOUT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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

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

Effective Value Statements

- 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 communities 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

* 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.

(1) AMI in 2016 for Wake, Johnston, & Franklin Counties is $76,650 & 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 Alliance.