

The Impact of Communication for System Change

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**The Housing
Collective**
Mutual Impact.
Thriving Communities.

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THE HOUSING COLLECTIVE

The Housing Collective harnesses the power of collective impact to provide access to safe and affordable housing and ensure housing stability for all.

Backbone for
organizations and
communities through 3
core initiatives:



**Opening
Doors**



**Centers for
Housing
Opportunity**



**Housing
Innovation
Lab**

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BerlinRosen is a part of Orchestra, the first company built for the future of communications.

Orchestra brings together the leading firms across key disciplines—the most deft storytellers and strategists we know—to offer our clients unparalleled expertise and flexibility for their complex communication needs.

- In this era of information overload, we center storytelling to capture and sustain audience attention.
- We leverage a platform-agnostic approach to connect with audiences through earned, shared and owned channels—all backed by data and analytics.



MESSAGING OVERVIEW

WHY MESSAGING WORKS

- It can change minds or behaviors
- It's succinct and easy to understand
- It meets the audience where they are on the “ladder of engagement”
- For messages to be effective, audiences need to hear them repeatedly, over time

AN EFFECTIVE MESSAGE INCORPORATES VALUES

Threading shared **values** throughout your message helps:

- Reach and move more of your target audience to tangible action
- Remind audiences why collective efforts matter
- Sway audiences to take up your cause as their own and encourage others to join in the fold

**MESSAGING
IN ACTION:
THE
HOUSING
COLLECTIVE**



THE CHALLENGE

For decades, housing advocates and practitioners have been waging an uphill battle against public opinion to create affordable homes because the narrative that affordable housing is good for communities has and continues to fall largely on deaf ears.

- The State of CT has seen a 13% increase in homelessness from 2023-2024
- Fairfield County saw a 19% increase from 2023-2024 & a 7% increase from 2024-2025
- Cold Weather funding has never been guaranteed or annualized until FY25 state budget.
- There was a lack of cohesive messaging around system gaps and needs
- Rents in Fairfield County increased 37.9% from 2020-2024
- Significant increase in unsheltered homelessness, tension between municipalities and providers, and minimal housing inventory (CT was less than 5% from 2021-2023 of housing vacancies)

THE OPPORTUNITY

Demonstrate that housing opportunity will improve schools, improve access to opportunity, reduce traffic, reduce pollution, make communities more desirable, more economically vibrant, and most importantly more equitable.

- Establish The Housing Collective as a leading organization working to expand abundant housing and end homelessness in Connecticut
- Center THC's collective impact model in our messaging and media work by centering our partners
- Amplify the overall mission of THC, CHO, ODI, and HIL in Connecticut, the tri-state area, and across the country
- Advance policy goals by applying pressure on elected officials in the state to make progress on housing affordability and the homelessness crisis
- Share the stories of people who have faced homelessness and housing instability to highlight the need to prioritize policies that create abundant housing options for all and end homelessness.

THE APPROACH

Craft and execute on a thoughtful press strategy, including op-ed suggestions, creative pitches, newsjacking opportunities, brand-building ideas and rallies, to raise the profile of the organization and build steady news momentum

**Messaging and
materials
development**

**Strategic
Communications
Planning**

**Profile-building,
events/speaker
program, opinion
program**

**Stakeholder
coordination and
community
engagement**

**Awards and
recognition**

**Proactive storytelling,
rapid response, crisis
management**

IN THE NEWS



Housing advocates say US Supreme Court decision limiting homeless rights is impacting CT



Fairfield County providers share resources available to support undocumented immigrants



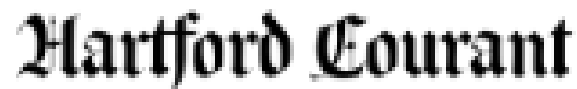
How one group of small-town CT tenants stood up against massive rent hikes



Survey Highlights Financial Challenges Faced By Workers Who Help Unhoused People



People who help CT's homeless are struggling too, report finds



Opinion: Court case highlights need for affordable housing solutions, not criminalization

PRIORITIZING COMMUNICATION FOR SYSTEM CHANGE

Rapid Response to Grants Pass ruling on June 28, 2024:

Op Ed: The Grants Pass v. Johnson Case Highlights the Need for Affordable Housing Solutions, not Criminalization

- Signed and submitted to the media by 7/3/24
- Quoted in media articles released on 7/5/24
- Statewide guidance on how to communicate with local municipalities that criminalization is not the answer to homelessness issued by end of July



POLITICAL ADVOCACY

Regular & consistent messaging improves advocacy efforts (everyone emphasizing the same message)

- Dismantling harmful narratives. Using communication to change outdated ideas or stereotypes.
- Lean into champions to continue pushing your message.
- Reframing mindsets around what is 'normal vs. not normal'



NEWS

With CT's unhoused population growing, Norwalk lawmaker creates 'End Homelessness' caucus in legislature

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

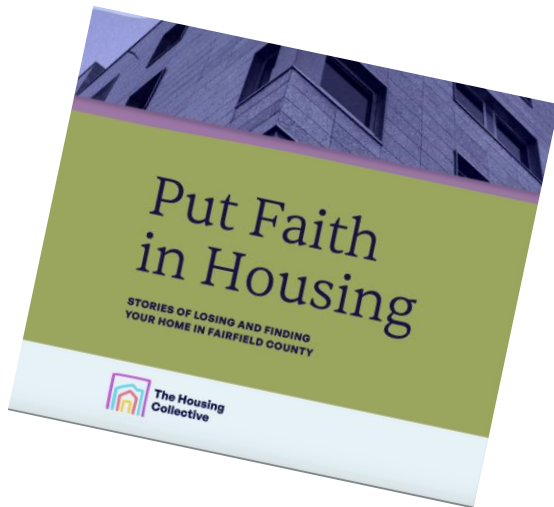
Focus on mutually reinforcing activities to maximize the end result (CI framework)

As new affordable home build begins in New London, faith leaders discuss housing options



Stacey Smith, executive director of the H.O.P.E. affordable housing group, attends a ground-breaking ceremony Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, for a new home at 32 Blackhall St. in New London. (John Penney/The Day)

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Lean into existing systems whose mission focuses on helping others to influence communication around priority issues.

When changing the narrative, it inspires action.

Created a Faith Based Partnership to encourage community conversations around homelessness and housing.

- 5th Sunday in March –
Put Faith in Housing

LESSONS LEARNED

Investment in communication staff plays a critical role in shaping how the organization is perceived- both internally and externally.

- Strengthened relationships with with the media, community, and stakeholders
- Proactive, strategic, and impactful communications materials
- Rebranded the website, logo, and mission statement

Use the media to share the message YOU want!