

ENGAGEMENT

Be proactive – start early and often.

Neighborhood concern often starts very early in the process. Don't try to "sneak the project by" the community.

Partner with community experts to shape your outreach strategy.

This is an effective way to gain information that might make community outreach easier.

Avoid large group meetings.

Consider housing tours, small focus-group style meetings and small group meetings with local leaders.

MESSAGING

Tips

- Avoid "permanent" and use "supportive housing"
- Use clear, direct, and jargon-free language
- Describe building units with humanizing words like "homes" and "apartments"
- Avoid describing building amenities and focus instead on supportive services.

Messengers Matter

Partnering with community leaders and trusted voices is key to successful outreach. The strongest messengers are trusted friends, community leaders and voices that are perceived to be impartial.

Key Messages



Humanize Homelessness

- Break down the stereotypes of homeless people as "undeserving" and "bad."
- Use messages that draw on compassion.
- Describe the factors and circumstances that lead to homelessness.



Emphasize Community Safety

- Share that people experiencing homelessness are often victims of crimes and need a safe community.
- Emphasize the presence of qualified staff on-site and, if it exists, a neighborhood liaison.
- Explain that tenants have leases with rules and standards that they must follow.



Explain Supportive Services

- Detail the types of services provided to residents, especially those with mental health diagnoses and/or addiction.
- Highlight employment programs and job training.
- Consider providing a "day-in-the-life" story of a tenant living in the building.



Clarify Tenant Selection

- Highlight that tenants are prioritized based on their level of vulnerability, such as mental and physical disabilities.
- Explain that efforts are made to place people in the same communities where they were experiencing homelessness.
- Share that new tenants must undergo a background check, sign a lease, and follow building regulations.