



EVERYONE. EVERYWHERE. ALL THE TIME.

*A 360 degree view of narrative
change*



HOUSING
NARRATIVE
LAB • 

WHAT IS THE HOUSING NARRATIVE LAB



*When we move people,
we move policies.*

The Housing Narrative Lab shifts the public's understanding of housing instability and homelessness, so they support the policies that ensure everyone has a home.

Research

Training/Education

Coalition /Collaboration

Communications Support

A family of five is smiling and posing in front of a white house with a large window. The scene is bright and sunny. In the background, there are decorative dotted patterns: a large orange one in the top left and a yellow one in the bottom center. The text 'WHAT DOES HOME MEAN TO YOU?' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**WHAT DOES
HOME MEAN
TO YOU?**





NARRATIVE ECOSYSTEM



The way you present those community values to shape how an audience receives the information.

FRAMING

**RESEARCH
+
COMMUNITY
VALUES**

The words, images and sounds we use to tell stories that advance narratives.

MESSAGING

FRAMING

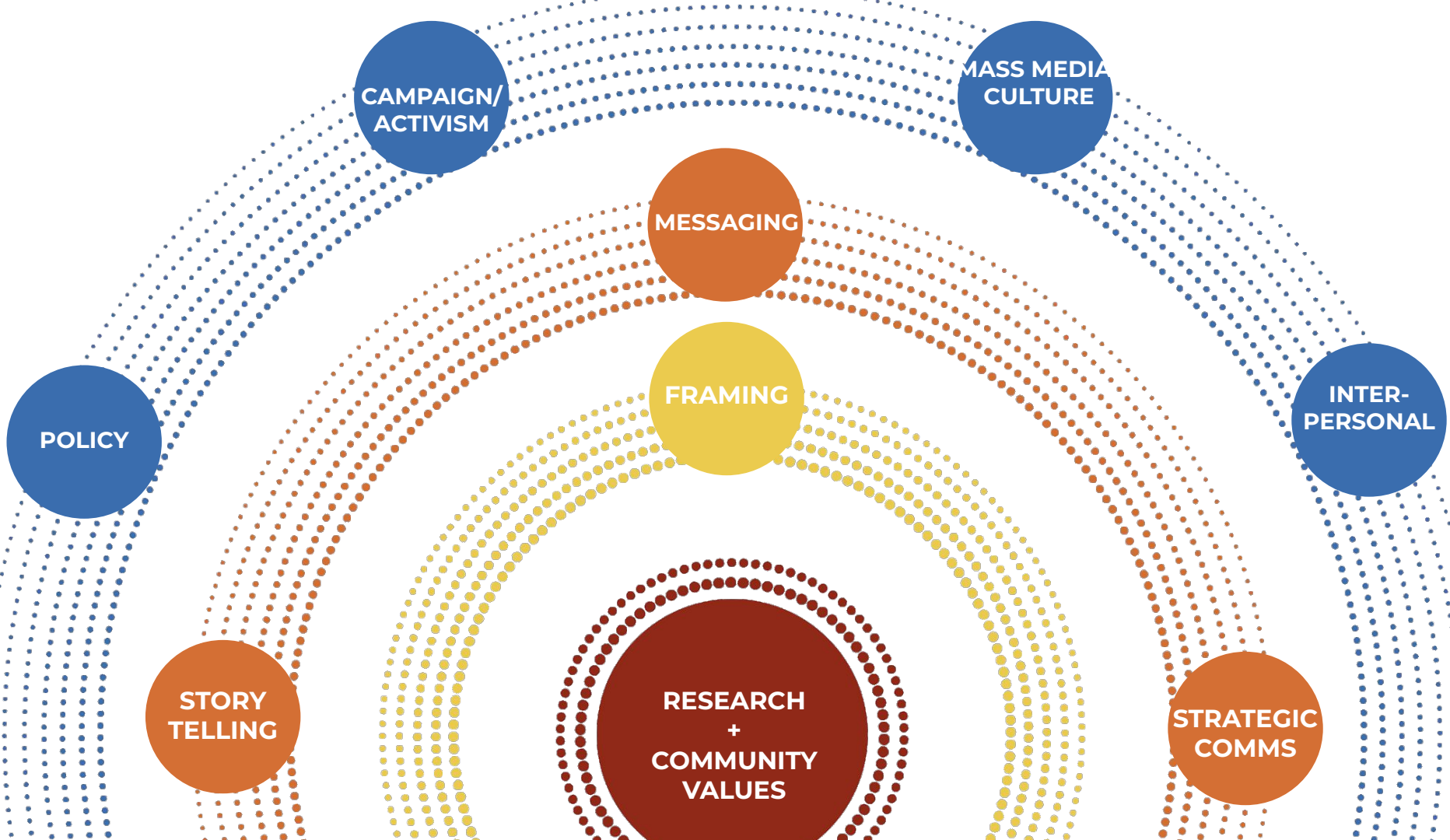
The act of communicating the best messages through the best channels based on your goals.

STRATEGIC COMMS

Stories are how we communicate. Build trust, connection, empathy.

STORY TELLING

**RESEARCH
+
COMMUNITY
VALUES**



CAMPAIGN/
ACTIVISM

MASS MEDIA
CULTURE

MESSAGING

FRAMING

INTER-
PERSONAL

POLICY

STORY
TELLING

RESEARCH
+
COMMUNITY
VALUES

STRATEGIC
COMMS



The **Big Story**.
The collection of stories that
shape how we think feel and
act about an issue and shape
our world view.
Conveyed in politics, policy,
news media, pop culture,
social media, the bbq and
dinner table.

NARRATIVE



**PUBLIC
MINDSET**

**SOCIAL
NORMS**

**PUBLIC
DISCUSSION**

NARRATIVE



HOW NARRATIVES FORM

When you hear the word “narrative,” what comes up?



HOW NARRATIVES FORM

When you hear the word “narrative,” what comes up?

No set structure.

HOW NARRATIVES FORM

When you hear the word “narrative,” what comes up?

No set structure.

They permeate through:

Scale

Consistency

Repetition

HOW NARRATIVES FORM

When you hear the word “narrative,” what comes up?

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Until

Stories become part of our everyday lives. We share them, hear them.

They develop the power to cement a group’s ideas and perceptions. Then they become public attitude.

We are all influenced by narratives.



WHY IT MATTERS

People act based on their beliefs and feelings.



WHY IT MATTERS

People act based on their beliefs and feelings.

They support solutions based on what they believe is the problem.




WHY IT MATTERS

People act based on their beliefs and feelings.

They support solutions based on what they believe is the problem.

If they understand broken systems force people into homelessness/housing insecurity, solutions to fix those systems make sense.

A woman with a large afro hairstyle is shouting into a white megaphone. She is wearing a yellow knit sweater. In the background, other people are visible, some with their arms raised, suggesting a protest or rally. The image has a soft, slightly blurred quality. There are decorative elements: a pattern of orange dots in the top right corner and a pattern of yellow dots in the bottom left corner.

“ Narratives are about invisible power. How perceptions, belief systems, and ideology shape the way people define what is ‘right’ and what is ‘wrong’.”

PHUMI MTETWA,
South African Black Queer Feminist
and Social Justice Advocate

QUESTION

- **WHAT IS ONE WAY A POSITIVE OR HARMFUL NARRATIVE HAS SHOWN UP IN YOUR LIFE OR YOUR WORK?**





THE BAD NEWS

THE NARRATIVES AROUND HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS



We're losing the narrative.

THE NARRATIVES AROUND HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS



We're losing the narrative.

Dominant narrative is one of personal failing, criminalization and scarcity.

THE NARRATIVES AROUND HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS



We're losing the narrative.

Dominant narrative is one of personal failing, criminalization and scarcity.

The public believes everyone should have a home but doesn't believe housing insecurity/homelessness can be solved.

HOMELESSNESS

THE REALITY AND THE SOLUTION



PragerU

a short documentary

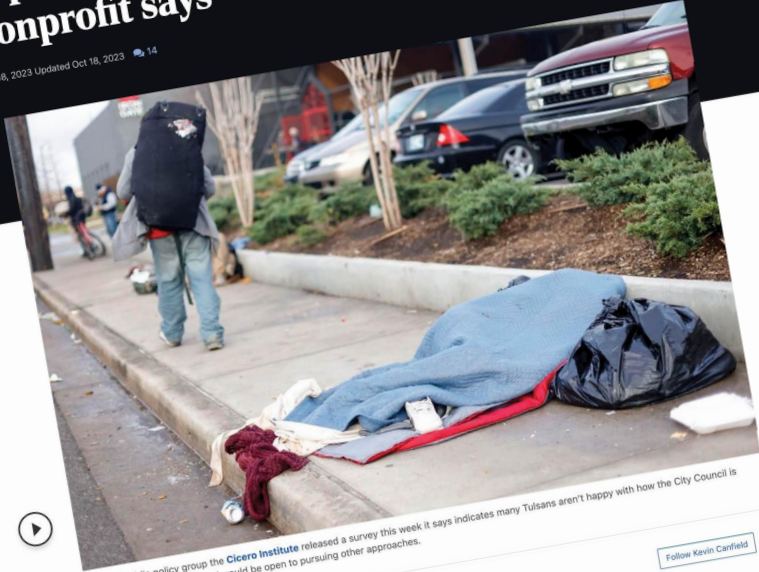
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ALERT FEATURED TOP STORY EDITOR'S PICK

Survey finds Tulsans open to other approaches to address homelessness, nonprofit says

Oct 18, 2023 Updated Oct 18, 2023 14



National public policy group the **Cicero Institute** released a survey this week it says indicates many Tulsans aren't happy with how the City Council is addressing homelessness and would be open to pursuing other approaches.
Mike Simons, Tulsa World file

Follow Kevin Canfield

By Kevin Canfield
Tulsa World Staff Writer

Related Content

COMMENT: Read the 2023 Oklahoma First Congressional District Homelessness Poll

“For decades, we, as a country, have used the housing-first model. And, frankly, while a lot of people are stranded on the streets waiting for permanent supportive housing to be built, to be offered to them, we see a lot of problems and a lot of people not getting the help they need, and we see massive increases of homelessness, associated crime and things like that.”



THE GOOD NEWS

**WE CAN CHANGE THE
NARRATIVE**

NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH SHARED VALUE

“no matter what we look like or where we come from, most of us want to provide for our families and know that hardship won't mean homelessness.”



“Connection and moral empathy are prerequisites to connection. If you want to change hearts and minds you have to understand what’s in those hearts to begin with. Most of us try to bypass this requirement focusing on what’s inside our own heart and our own mind.”

NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH SHARED VALUE

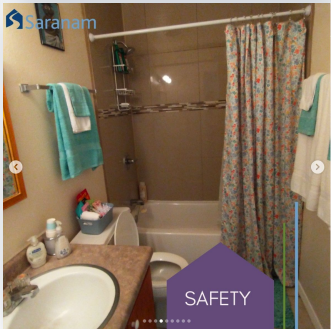
“no matter what we look like or where we come from, most of us want to provide for our families and know that hardship won't mean homelessness.”



NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

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NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

Name race

“Whether we’re
Black or white,
Latino or Asian,
Native or
newcomer”

“Whatever our color,
background or zip
code”

NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

Describe people
working together

“we can make the
better world we
imagine our reality
by joining together”

**COMMUNITIES
ARE STRONGER
WHEN EVERYONE
HAS A
HOME**



NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

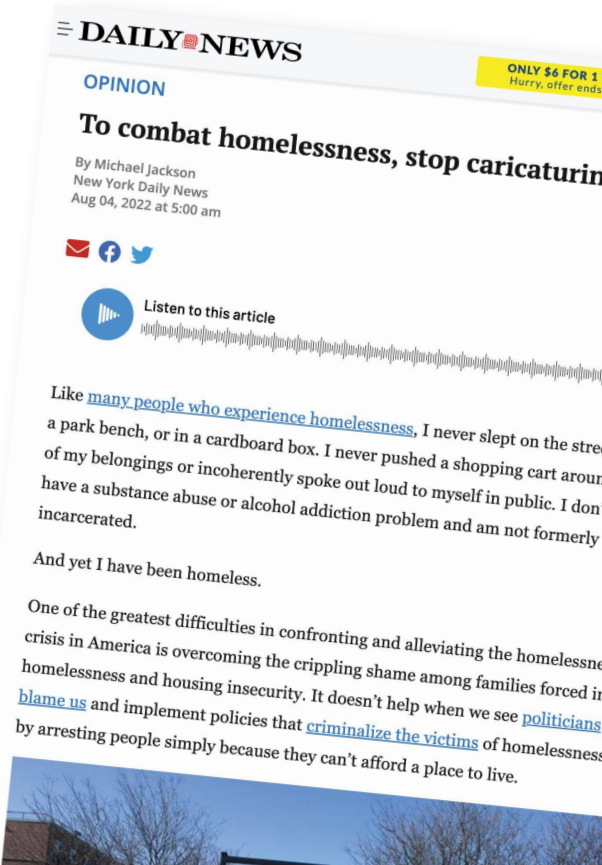
LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

Describe people
working together

“we must come together to rewrite the rules, regulate rents, and build options people can actually afford”

“we can make the better world we imagine our reality by joining together”

“Across the country, we are at a point where the choices we make define our communities. Are we going to see things simply — as though some people just want to live on the street?”



NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS


ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

GO ON
OFFENSE

*Most people experiencing
homelessness in a given area are either*

- ✓ Reframe - don't repeat opposition
- ✓ Avoid wonk, numbers, program names

The image features a white background with decorative dotted patterns in the corners. In the top right, there are several concentric, semi-circular dotted lines in a light orange color. In the bottom left, there are similar dotted lines in a light yellow color. A large, solid blue rectangle is positioned in the upper left quadrant, containing white text.

Housing First is an evidence-based approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed.

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VS

No matter who we are, we all need a home to be safe, healthy and thriving. Providing a home and additional services to those who need a little more support are proven solutions to help folks rebuild their lives.



**There's no place
like home.**

HOW POPULAR CULTURE
TALKS ABOUT HOME



**There's no place
like home.**

POPULAR CULTURE
TALKING ABOUT HOME

VS

**Individuals who have
experienced homelessness and
are placed in permanent
supportive housing are found
to have generally positive
effects on health and wellbeing
as a result of their stable
environment.**

HOW NONPROFITS
TALK ABOUT HOME

NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

GO ON
OFFENSE

SHOW LIVED
EXPERIENCE



- ✓ Reframe - don't repeat opposition
- ✓ Avoid wonk, numbers, program names

Show connection between housing insecurity and:

- ✓ jobs
- ✓ health and wellbeing
- ✓ education
- ✓ public safety

NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

GO ON
OFFENSE

SHOW LIVED
EXPERIENCE

NAME ROOT
CAUSES

- ✓ Show the why.
- ✓ A history of racist and exclusionary housing policies. Connect racial justice to housing justice.
- ✓ Jobs that don't pay enough to meet our basic needs.

"It's the irony of working and making a nice income and still not being able to afford housing. I make \$32 and some change per hour, but even still, I find myself struggling."

Chrystal Audet, 49
From The New York Times
I Live In My Car
October 18, 2023



housingnarrativelab • Follow



housingnarrativelab An expensive car repair, predatory lending, healthcare costs, rent increases. That's how Chrystal Audet - a social worker making \$72,000/year - ended up living out of her car with her daughter (pictured here) in a designated "safe" parking lot.

Lots like this are springing up across the country for people with no other options besides sleeping in their cars. Many sleeping in these lots are employed but just don't make enough to afford rent.

Read the story at the link in our bio.

: Ruth Fremson, The New York Times

5w



18 likes

OCTOBER 18

Log in to like or comment.

NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

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UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

GO ON
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EXPERIENCE

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CAUSES

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FOCUS ON
SOLUTIONS

Show what you can do for. Give people a path to an attainable North Star.

- ✓ Safe and quality housing everyone can afford.
- ✓ Safe and clean temporary shelter.
- ✓ Access to health care.



“...my real recovery began with housing. My homelessness ended when I entered a San Diego Housing Commission rapid rehousing program and found an affordable apartment four years ago. But today we don't have many affordable apartments like that one in San Diego”

NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

GO ON
OFFENSE

SHOW LIVED
EXPERIENCE

NME ROOT
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- ✓ Show the why.
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FOCUS ON
SOLUTIONS

- Show what you are for. Give people an attainable North Star.
- ✓ Safe and quality housing everyone can afford.
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NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

GO ON
OFFENSE

SHOW LIVED
EXPERIENCE

NAME ROOT
CAUSES

FOCUS ON
SOLUTIONS

PROVIDE
COMPELLING/DOABLE
CALL TO ACTION

Show what you are for. Give people an attainable North Star.

- ✓ Safe and quality housing everyone can afford.
- ✓ Safe and clean temporary shelter.
- ✓ Access to health care.

Give your audience something to do, so they can be a hero in the story too.

“together, we can demand proven solutions”



NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

GO ON
OFFENSE

SHOW LIVED
EXPERIENCE

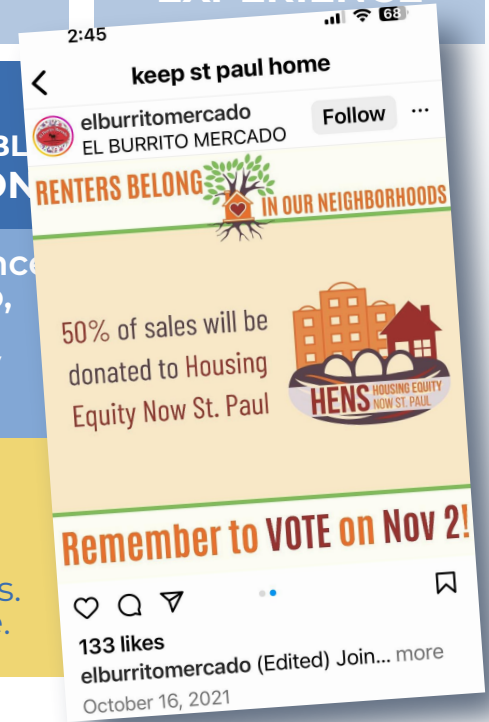
NAME ROOT
CAUSES

FOCUS ON
SOLUTIONS

PROVIDE
COMPELLING/DOABLE
CALL TO ACTION

Give your audience
something to do,
so they can be a
hero in the story
too.

join. learn. vote.
call legislators.
sign petitions.
share social posts.
follow us. donate.



NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
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GO
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SHOW LIVED
EXPERIENCE

NAME ROOT
CAUSES

FOCUS ON
SOLUTIONS

PROVIDE
COMPELLING/DOABLE
CALL TO ACTION

**BE CLEAR
ON:**

Give your audience something to do, so they can be a hero in the story too.

YOUR GOAL(S)

join. learn. vote.
call legislators.
sign petitions.
share social posts.
follow us. donate.

**#1
Takeaway**

NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

GO
OFFER

SHOW LIVED
EXPERIENCE

NAME ROOT
CAUSES

FOCUS ON
SOLUTIONS

PROVIDE
COMPELLING/DOABLE
CALL TO ACTION

**BE CLEAR
ON:**

YOUR GOAL(S)

TARGET AUDIENCE(S)

#1
Takeaway

NARRATIVE ESSENTIALS

ESTABLISH
SHARED VALUE

LEAN INTO
UNITY AND
COMMUNITY

GO
OFFER

SHOW LIVED
EXPERIENCE

NAME ROOT
CAUSES

FOCUS ON
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CALL TO ACTION

**BE CLEAR
ON:**

YOUR GOAL(S)

TARGET AUDIENCE(S)

DIFFERENT
MESSAGES MOVE
DIFFERENT GROUPS



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QUESTIONS?

JOIN US TO SHARE THE STORY OF WHY EVERYONE NEEDS A HOME.

For more information,
contact Housing Narrative Lab
Executive Director Marisol Bello at
mbello@housingnarrativelab.org

HOUSING • 
NARRATIVE LAB

