Everyone needs an affordable, stable place to call home.

That’s why we unite 160+ organizations across Illinois in protecting and expanding access to affordable housing.

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WHAT IS A STORY?
WHY STORYTELLING?
Stories help explain…

- What your organization does
- Why it was created
- Your mission
- Your programs and services
- Your progress and successes
- Why you work there
- What issues you’re tackling
- Specific, local problems
- Broader, systemic issues
- What changes you want to see in the world
Where do your stories come from?

You  Coworkers
Board  Clients
Community  Volunteers
Funders
How are you already telling stories?

- In conversation
- Online
- In print
- Grants & program proposals
- Events
- Fundraising
Who is telling your stories?
• Staff
• Clients
• Volunteers
• Board
• Funders
• Media
• Community members

Who are they telling them to?
• Clients
• Community
• Funders
• Landlords
• Legislators
• Peer organizations
MESSAGING 101
What is messaging?

written and verbal statements that quickly describe who you are and what you do.
What are some examples of messaging?

- Elevator pitch
- Marketing materials
- Press release
- Tagline/Slogan
- Mission statement
- Images
How are messaging and storytelling linked?

• Messaging is storytelling
• When crafting your message, ask:
  • What story do we want to tell?
  • What is the best way to tell this story?
Why is it important?

- Telephone Game
  - Message
  - Delivery
  - Audience
Who is telling your stories?

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- Community members

Who are they telling them to?

- Clients
- Community
- Funders
- Landlords
- Legislators
- Peer organizations
How do you craft your message?

• Every message you create should:
  – Relate back to your mission
  – Support programmatic goals
  – **Quickly describe who you are and what you do**
• TIP: use talking points
Elevator Pitch

tell the story of who you are in 30 seconds
In groups of two…

Hello, my name is __________________________

I work for/with __________________________

You know how… (state the problem)

Well, what we do is… (describe your work, jargon free!)

So that… (community benefit)
In groups of two…

Hello, my name is Timm Krueger,

I work for/with Housing Action Illinois

You know how everywhere in Illinois, families are struggling between paying rent and buying groceries?

Well, what we do is advocate for high-quality, affordable housing

So that no one ever has to choose between paying rent and putting food on the table
In groups of two...

Hello, my name is ______________________

I work for/with ______________________

You know how... (state the problem)

Well, what we do is... (describe your work, jargon free!)

So that... (community benefit)
WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY?
Protagonist

Someone to root for
Tanya knows she'll be cold no matter what she wears, but she does what she can: she pulls on two pairs of pants and two pairs of socks, then layers on two hoodie sweatshirts.

At the warehouse, she buttons up a white lab coat over all of this, winds a scarf around her neck, and covers her head with both a knit hat and a hainmet. Next come plastic sleeves, a mouth mask, an apron, and two pairs of plastic gloves. Finally ready, Tanya braces herself against the frigidity of 35-degree air, and opens the door to the assembly line room.

She takes her place along the line, where she and her coworkers combine chopped lettuce, croutons, and parmesan for Caesar salads and tuck chicken into tortilla wraps. They work for hours, mostly in silence, arms and hands moving with mechanic repetition as they create the grab'n'go foods destined for display cases in Starbucks, Costco, and Wal-Mart.

Tanya never knows much in advance which days she'll work, which hours, or how long her shift will last. Sometimes she's scheduled for an eight-hour shift, but works just four because her assembly line's order is completed early. Other times, she stands for twelve hours on her aching feet and heads home late at night. The unpredictibility of her schedule makes it impossible to go back to school, since she can't commit to any class schedule. She can't plan a budget for rent, food, or transportation since she never knows how much money she'll make.

Tanya's heart sinks as she removes her mask and gloves for the day: it's only been five hours, but her line has finished their order. As she's punching out, her supervisor says, "We don't need you tomorrow."

It's the last thing Tanya wants to hear. She only worked 25 hours last week and needs more hours to be able to pay this month's rent. Tanya earns just $9.25 per hour.
As she’s punching out, her supervisor says, “We don’t need you tomorrow.”

It’s the last thing Tanya wants to hear. She only worked 25 hours last week and needs more hours to be able to pay this month’s rent. Tanya earns just $9.25 per hour.
Because Tanya’s mother died when she was just a baby, her father raised Tanya and her four older siblings on his own. Now, the roles have been reversed: Tanya does everything she can to help care for him. He’s 84 and is battling prostate cancer.

Since she doesn’t earn paid sick days—like 80 percent of low-wage workers—she has had to forgo work to take her dad to his doctor’s appointments, something she can ill afford to do. But Tanya’s father was there when she needed him, and she won’t let him down now.
Journey

What happened?

How did it happen?

What did your organization actually do to help?

Even though her job at the warehouse is temporary, Tanya’s situation is anything but. Since her first job as a cashier at Wendy’s, she’s spent nearly three decades in low-wage jobs. While raising her son as a single mother, she worked as a banquet waiter for a catering company, serving guests at fancy downtown hotels. She whisked away half-eaten salads and steaks during her shifts, but had to rely on food stamps to buy groceries to feed herself and her son. Unfortunately, Tanya’s situation is not unique. It’s a daily reality for millions. Nearly two-thirds of low-wage workers in the U.S. are women, 80 percent are adults, and the majority are primary or co-breadwinners for their families.

Today, instead of heading home after her shift at the warehouse is over, Tanya goes to see her father. Because Tanya’s mother died when she was just a baby, her father raised Tanya and her four older siblings on his own. Now, the roles have been reversed: Tanya does everything she can to help care for him. He’s 84 and is battling prostate cancer.

Since she doesn’t earn paid sick days—like 80 percent of low-wage workers—she has had to forgo work to take her dad to his doctor’s appointments, something she can ill afford to do. But Tanya’s father was there when she needed him, and she won’t let him down now. Tanya knows she’s good at taking care of him, and it’s inspired her to change her life. She wants to break out of the food industry by training to become a certified nursing assistant, and then go on to become a licensed practical nurse.

For Tanya and millions of women like her, a good job—with a living wage, paid sick days, a stable schedule, and opportunities to advance—is a distant dream. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Women working in jobs that we all depend on deserve fair working conditions and wages. Women Employed’s fight for workplace practices and public policies that “raise the floor” for low-paid workers is part of a growing movement for change—one inspired by the hard work and dreams of women like Tanya.

Low-wage working women like Tanya, who can’t afford to take time off while pregnant, can no longer be fired for requesting reasonable accommodations at work. Women Employed advocated for passage of a pregnancy fairness law in Illinois, giving pregnant workers the right to basic accommodations—like a bottle of water, breaks, or a stool to sit on—that allow them to keep working and have healthy pregnancies.

In Chicago, 461,000 workers like Tanya don’t receive a single paid sick day for their own illness or to care for a sick family member. Women Employed is leading the Earned Sick Time Chicago coalition to pass legislation guaranteeing a minimum amount of earned sick time for all workers. We co-authored a new proposed city ordinance and is steadily building support for it in the City Council.
Journey

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Journey

Volatile schedules are a fact of life for millions of low-wage workers like Tanya, but this is an issue that is not well understood by the public. Women Employed is bringing attention to this problem, mobilizing advocates, and developing and promoting recommendations to policymakers.

Did you know that a full-time worker earning minimum wage in Illinois makes just over $17,000 a year? As part of a statewide coalition of advocates, Women Employed is leading the charge to raise Illinois’ minimum wage. WE provided input to a mayoral minimum wage working group that recommended a significant increase. In December, the Chicago City Council voted to raise the wage from $8.25 to $13 an hour over the next five years.
Meaning

What is our takeaway?

What’s the way forward?

For Tanya and millions of women like her, a good job—with a living wage, paid sick days, a stable schedule, and opportunities to advance—is a distant dream. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Women working in jobs that we all depend on deserve fair working conditions and wages. Women Employed’s fight for workplace practices and public policies that “raise the floor” for low-paid workers is part of a growing movement for change—one inspired by the hard work and dreams of women like Tanya.
Framing

What is the overall goal?
THE SHAPE OF A STORY
Jacqueline Smith, 35, has been living at the YMCA shelter in Bridgeport since September. Until the summer, she lived in her own apartment, where she lived with her son, Michael, but when her hours at work got cut, she could no longer pay her rent and started moving from place to place, sleeping on friends’ couches. Eventually, on the advice of her aunt, she moved into the shelter. She’s eager to find her own place again. “It’s been hard in the shelter,” she said. “Some days are rough, but you get over it.”
Case managers conduct monthly inspections of a family’s house to make sure they’re maintaining good living conditions. Many families in the program have never had their own home, so case managers help them learn the responsibilities that go with having a house or apartment.

Because she’s already in a home, Dee’s goals are different from Jacquie’s. One of Dee’s early goals was finding a job, but she did that quickly and now works at Stop and Shop.

“She was applying for jobs when she was in the hospital and had just had her baby,” Lauren said.

Now, Dee’s goals include finding day care for her children, getting her license, and getting her GED. Lauren is helping Dee work through the day care paperwork and has already helped her get into driver’s school. When she’s not working, driving, or watching the kids, Dee, who dropped out of high school when she lost her housing, studies for the GED. She hopes to get her GED by April, go to college, and become a registered nurse.

Supportive Housing for Families helped Dee furnish most of her home—it provides the basics clients need to feel at home—but the living room is still a work in progress. Dee wants a couch, but she’s having trouble finding one that will fit through the door. Lauren has given her a gift card to a furniture store, so she, her mom, and her kids are heading out to look for the right couch.

“They helped with the mattress, the sofa, the Nestling furniture gift card, basically everything,” Dee said. “Lauren has helped me a lot. She changed me. Without all of this, I think I would have been lost.”
"I've never been evicted. I've never even been served an eviction notice. But my application was denied."

- John, Tenant

*Prejudged: The Stigma of Eviction Records*
Because of you, Bridge families accomplished these following successes:

- **April** purchased a condo
- **Cashmere** now makes more than $18.50/hour
- **Jen** moved to daytime shifts at her job and got a raise
- **Rafael** was promoted from temporary to full-time permanent at his job
- **Ivy** moved into her Habitat for Humanity home
- **Maribel** is on track for U.S. citizenship
- **Tatiana** obtained a patient care representative job at a hospital
- **Siomara** started nursing school
- **Gabi** purchased a new house
- **Cynthia** earned her associates degree and is now working toward her bachelors
- **Connie** got a job in customer care
- **Kate** was accepted into the Habitat for Humanity program

- **Buba** accepted a full-time position working at a hospital
- **Tonya** purchased a townhouse
- **Maria** got a 20% raise at work

Congratulations to Bridge kid M, whose tornado project earned him a medal at his school’s science fair!
In just six months, our Housing Counseling Intermediary network helped...

- 558 households prevent or resolve mortgage default
- 192 households buy their first home
- 847 households create healthy budgets
- 6,675 households understand their housing options
- 132 households facing homelessness find temporary or permanent housing

October 2017 - March 2018
Supportive Services

- Housing Subsidies
- Financial coaching and payee services
- Resources & Referrals
- Clothing Closet
- Food Pantry
- Mental & Medical Health Services

Who we serve

Race
- African American (72.73%)
- White (24.24%)
- Other/Multi-Racial (3.03%)
- Transgender (1.01%)
- Couples (0.02%)

Gender
- Men (52.94%)
- Women (35.00%)

Veteran
- Veteran (28%)
- Non-Veteran (72%)

How we do it

- 192 safe, affordable apartments scattered throughout Chicago
- $500,000 provided for client rent and utility assistance each year
- 12 staff members dedicated to our clients’ well-being
COLLECTING STORIES
What program will this support?
Who will the audience be?
How will the story be told?

Prepare
Time to talk
Consent

• Explicit vs. implicit
• Release forms & informed consent
CONTENT STRATEGY
CONTENT STRATEGY

...WHAT IS IT?
What’s a content strategy?

• Planning for the creation, aggregation, delivery, and useful governance of useful, usable, and appropriate content in an experience

• In other words, it’s making sure you have all your ducks in a row
How do you plan a content strategy?

TWO WAYS

Content you want

Content you have
Why are content strategies important?
OUR HOMES, OUR VOICES

THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG FY19 FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

THE ISSUE
Far too many families are struggling to keep a roof over their heads. Nationwide, more people are renting their homes than ever before, but our investments in affordable homes have not kept pace with demand. Overall, more than 11 million families now spend the majority of their income on rent, and family and young adult homelessness rates are rising in many communities. Rents are increasing across the nation, while housing infrastructure deteriorates. Every state and congressional district is impacted. Last year, advocates and Congressional champions secured a 10% increase to federal investments in affordable housing! But threats remain. President Trump's budget proposes to slash affordable housing by $11 billion compared to current levels - a move that could increase homelessness and housing poverty in our community. Lawmakers should ensure the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing in FY19.

THE FY19 BUDGET
The Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF) urges lawmakers to reject President Trump's harmful budget proposal and to continue their commitment to affordable housing and community development. Congress should ensure these programs receive the highest allocation of funds possible.

ON A SINGLE NIGHT IN 2017, 563,742 PEOPLE WERE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, INCLUDING:
- 184,661 people in families with children
- 86,962 chronically homeless individuals
- 40,056 veterans
- 40,799 unaccompanied homeless youth

ONLY 1 IN 4 PEOPLE QUALIFY FOR HUD ASSISTANCE ACTUALLY RECEIVES IT. WHO ARE THE LUCKY 1 IN 4?

36% Elderly
24% Have a Disability
35% Have Kids

IN 2012 ALONE, HOUSING ASSISTANCE LIFTED 4 MILLION PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY, INCLUDING 1.5 MILLION CHILDREN

EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS
A child’s neighborhood and home life have a significant impact on their performance in school. For every additional year a child spends in a better neighborhood environment, their economic outcome as an adult improves, as indicated by measures such as income, likelihood of college attendance, and probability of avoiding teenage pregnancy.

LOW INCOME KIDS LIVING IN A STABLE, AFFORDABLE HOME ARE MORE LIKELY TO:
- Thrive in school
- Attend college
- Earn more as adults

PEOPLE WHO HAVE AN AFFORDABLE HOME ARE ABLE TO SPEND:

5X MORE On Healthcare
3X MORE On Nutritious Food

WHY AFFORDABLE HOMES MATTER
Federal investments in affordable housing have widespread and significant benefits in communities across the country. From employment and economic mobility to health and education, all areas of life are improved when individuals and families have access to a decent and stable home.

Homelessness and Poverty Reduction
Rental assistance has demonstrably reduced homelessness for people with low incomes. It’s also proven that providing housing benefits is one of the most effective ways to help families, children, and youth escape poverty.

IN 2012 ALONE, HOUSING ASSISTANCE LIFTED 4 MILLION PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY, INCLUDING 1.5 MILLION CHILDREN

Strengthening the Economy
Investing in affordable housing infrastructure has numerous benefits for the economy—creating jobs, boosting families’ incomes, and encouraging further development. The shortage of affordable housing in major metropolitan areas costs the U.S. economy about $25 billion a year in lower wages and productivity.

BUILDING 100 AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOMES GENERATES:
$11.7m in local income
161 local jobs in the first year alone
$2.2m in revenue for local govt.

Physical and Mental Health
Safe, decent and affordable housing is critical to an individual’s physical and mental health. When housing is affordable, quality medical care and healthier foods are more within reach for low-income families. Additionally, affordable housing provides a useful platform for delivering health services to vulnerable populations.

OUR HOMES, OUR VOICES
1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-462-1530 | www.ourhomesourvoices.org
Only 1 in 4 people who qualify for HUD assistance actually receives it.

Who are the lucky 1 in 4?
- 36% Elderly
- 24% Have a disability
- 35% Have kids

What challenges face the 3 in 4?
- Only 35 affordable homes for every 100 extremely low income renter households

What does this mean for the 3 in 4?
- 71% of extremely low income renters spend more than 50% of income on rent

Our Homes, Our Voices
www.ourhomes-ourvoices.org
Building 100 affordable rental homes generates:

- $11.7 million in local income
- $2.2 million in taxes and other revenue for local governments
- 161 local jobs in the first year alone

People who have an affordable home are able to spend:

- 3X more on nutritious food
- 6X more on healthcare

Federally-assisted homes improve health outcomes by helping:

- Kids avoid environmental health hazards
- People with mobility issues have an accessible place to live
- People recover from substance abuse and chronic diseases

www.ourhomes-ourvoices.org
Breakout Groups
Mary’s Story: Annual Report

Mary came to The Haven with three goals: stay housed, keep a job, and rebuild a relationship with her children. After seven months in supportive housing, Mary is on track to meet all of her ambitions.

Before coming to The Haven, Mary worked overtime every week to afford a 2-bedroom home for her family. When she suddenly lost her job, Mary’s depression returned. She started abusing opioids and tried everything she could to make ends meet. At the beginning of the next month, Mary was served an eviction notice and her children were placed in their grandmother’s care. Mary spent the next two years trying to find stability, but she struggled to maintain a job and stay healthy without a place to stay every night.

Mary now works part-time at a nearby coffee shop and plans to take a class at a community college in the fall. “I’ve had my job now for months and I plan on keeping it,” says Mary. “I can stay focused when I don’t have to worry about where I’m going home to at the end of the day.”

Mary recently celebrated six months of sobriety and has started hosting her children at her Haven apartment. Every Friday, they come over for a family game night, where they play board games and talk about what they’re learning in school. As Mary explained, “I’m really proud of my place and want to show it off. It makes me feel good to have somewhere I can invite my children or have a friend over.”

“Having my apartment at The Haven has helped me be independent and build a better future—one where I can really be there for my children. Here, my life is back on track.”
Before coming to The Haven, Mary worked overtime every week to afford a 2-bedroom home for herself and her three children. When she suddenly lost her job, Mary’s depression returned. Struggling to find a new job, stay healthy, and keep a home for her family, Mary was evicted and lost custody of her children. After two difficult years in and out of homeless shelters, Mary came to live at The Haven. Seven months later, Mary meets with a counselor regularly, has a part-time job, and hosts family game nights at her apartment every week. Supportive housing gave Mary the opportunity to be independent and build a future where she can be there for her children.

Make a gift to help more people like Mary reach their goals
Mary’s Story: Social Media

**Facebook Post:**
Supportive housing gave Mary the opportunity to focus on managing her mental illness, finding and keeping a job, and rebuilding relationships with her children. With a stable place to live, residents at The Haven access services and work on building the skills they need to reach their goals. Learn more about Mary’s story and supportive housing...

"Having my apartment has helped me be independent and build a better future for my family. Here, my life is back on track."

- Mary, current resident at The Haven

**Tweet:**
#SupportiveHousing helped Mary focus on her health, employment, & family. Learn how The Haven helps people reach their goals...

"Having my apartment has helped me be independent and build a better future for my family. Here, my life is back on track."

- Mary, current resident at The Haven
Mary’s Story: Media Spotlight

We Can End Homelessness. Supportive Housing is a Key Step.

After two years of cycling in and out of homeless shelters, Mary came to live at The Haven. Finally, she had a stable place to rebuild her life. Mary’s main priorities were to stay off the streets, keep a job, and restore a relationship with her children. After just seven months in supportive housing, Mary is taking care of her mental health, has a steady part-time job, and even started hosting family game nights every week. But, according to the Executive Director at Northwest Springfield Haven, Mary’s success story isn’t an anomaly.

Supportive housing combines a stable place to live with access to supportive services, so residents like Mary can work on building the skills needed to reach their goals. (...