Getting Started:
A Toolkit for Local Affordable Housing Advocacy

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Connections for the Homeless
Connections for the Homeless

Mission:
To serve and catalyze the community to end homelessness, one person at a time.

What We Do:
Direct Service
+ Advocacy
Connections for the Homeless

Direct Services to End Homelessness:

- Homelessness Prevention
- Shelter
  - Drop-In Food Showers Clothing Lockers
  - Men’s Shelter
  - Women’s Shelter
  - Medical Care
  - Psychiatric Care
- Housing
  - Permanent Supportive Housing
  - Rapid Re-Housing
  - Rental Assistance
  - Youth Residence

Case Management
Connections for the Homeless

The One Thing All Clients Have in Common:

*They can’t afford the housing that is available to them.*

Advocacy Program
Joining Forces for Affordable Housing

• A coalition of non-profits, faith communities & individuals

• Advocating *against* barriers and *for* solutions to affordability at the municipal, county & state levels

• Providing community education to change NIMBY to YIMBY
Joining Forces for Affordable Housing

Where we can have the most impact: **At the municipal level**

**Issues:**

• Resident representation

• Resident comfort level with advocacy
Joining Forces for Affordable Housing

Key Philosophies:

• Non-profits and community members CAN be the catalyst for change.
• You don’t have to have all the answers.
• Let’s NOT start from scratch!
• Planning at the municipal level is imperative.
• Meet your municipality where it’s at.
AH Advocacy in Municipalities

What We’re Facing
• Housing cost burden is a problem everywhere.
• Municipalities often have no plans or old plans for AH.
• They are usually understaffed and tight on money.
• Staff may not have housing expertise, even if they have interest.
• Most legislators have little interest and are overwhelmed by the topic of AH.
• The community feels helpless related to AH.

This does not mean we should do nothing!
AH Advocacy in Municipalities

Lots of information & solutions online

Good News
Lots of municipal data available
Lots of AH solutions info available
Lots of advocacy info available

Bad News
Data is overwhelming
Solutions info is overwhelming
Advocacy info is generic
AH Advocacy in Municipalities

Where to Start?

Getting Started Toolkit
for AH Advocates
Getting Started Toolkit

What the Toolkit Includes Now (see Intro, p. 1):

1. Learning about the AH Needs in Your Community (pp. 2 & 3)
2. Identifying Where Advocacy Can Make an Impact (pp. 4 - 6)
3. Choosing Your Advocacy Goals (pp. 7 – 8)
4. Tools (pp. 9 – 19)
Other Materials for This Session

Sample Tools Packet:
• Blank Data Collection Worksheet
• Community Review Worksheet filled out for either Wilmette or Carbondale
• Blank AH Assessment Questionnaire
• Advocacy Decision Guide
• Setting Priorities Grid

Data Printouts for either Wilmette or Carbondale
1. Learn about AH Needs

You can’t just advocate for “more affordable housing.”
1. Learn about AH Needs

ACCESSING DATA

For municipalities in the greater Chicago metro area:
• CMAP’s Homes for a Changing Region: Community Data Snapshots
  https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs/local-ordinances-toolkits/homes

Outside the Chicago metropolitan regions:
• The Census Bureau’s Community Facts website
  https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml
1. Learn about AH Needs

COLLECTING & INTERPRETING DATA

Data Collection Worksheet

• Includes questions about the demographics and housing stock in the community

• Provides space for the data needed to answer each question

• Provides space for assessing what the data means

Toolkit
Appendix A
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Samples
pp. 1 - 5
1. Learn about AH Needs

TRY IT OUT

• Use your Data Printout.

• Fill out the Data Collection Worksheet in the Sample Tools Packet.

What are your conclusions about the need for affordable housing?
2. Identify Advocacy Needs

REVIEWING WHAT’S HAPPENING IN THE COMMUNITY

Start with evaluating what’s already been done or is being worked on now.

Where is there a need for advocacy?
2. Identify Advocacy Needs

Community Review Worksheet

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pp. 6 - 8
2. Identify Advocacy Needs

ASSESSING WHAT YOU KNOW

Do you know enough to answer these questions?
• What is the need for AH?
• What still needs to be done?
2. Identify Advocacy Needs

The AH Assessment Questionnaire

• Provides a guide for gathering additional information from municipal staff and others.
• Shows you’ve done your homework
• Gives you a way to shape conversations and interviews
• Brings the research phase to a close

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2. Identify Advocacy Needs

FILLING IN THE GAPS

Meeting with the experts will:
• Fill the gaps in your knowledge
• Pave the way for good advocacy relationships in the future

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pp. 5 - 6
2. Identify Advocacy Needs

TRY IT OUT

1. Review the answers on the Community Review Worksheet provided in the Sample Tools Packet.

2. Use the questions on the AH Assessment Questionnaire to guide your evaluation.

3. Mark where you need more information.
3. Decide on Advocacy Focus

DEFINING GOALS BASED ON RESEARCH

You should now have enough information to make some choices about:

• What is most important?
• Where can you, as an advocate, have the greatest potential impact?
• What actions would have the greatest likelihood of success?
3. Decide on Advocacy Focus

AH Advocacy Decision Guide—like a decision tree

Setting Priorities Grid—weighing potential impact against the likelihood of success

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3. Decide on Advocacy Focus

TRY IT OUT

1. Go through the AH Advocacy Decision Guide.
2. Make a list of possibilities for advocacy action.
3. Plot the possible advocacy actions on the Setting Priorities Grid.
4. Refine and narrow down the options.

5. MAKE A DECISION!
Still Under Development

• **AH Education:**
  - AH101 on Paper
  - Fact Sheets

• **Designing Campaigns for:**
  - Affordable Housing Plans
  - Inclusionary Zoning
  - Other Zoning That Promotes Affordability
  - A Specific AH Development
  - Municipal Programs to Support AH Landlords
  - AH Preservation Programming

• **Developing Affordable Housing Advocates**
Questions/Feedback?

• Your Questions

• My Questions:
  o Do you think this would help community groups engage in AH advocacy?
  o What else would be helpful?