

A MEDIA TRAINING GUIDE

FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVOCATES



the CAMPAIGN *for*
AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Letter from The Campaign for Affordable Housing

Affordable housing—it's a critical need for people and communities. Yet efforts to create and secure this important segment of our nation's housing stock are often limited or delayed by how the media, public officials and the general public perceive—or misperceive—the issues involved.

In response to this situation, we formed The Campaign for Affordable Housing, a non-profit organization working to create a positive impression of affordable housing among the media, opinion leaders, and the public. The Campaign was created with guidance from for-profit and non-profit developers, housing policy advocates, and those in government.

Our message is simple: Affordable housing is not only good for communities, but in fact critical to their well-being and success. Getting that message across to the media, the public, and government officials is the Campaign's full-time activity. We plan to interact with the media directly and to build the capacity of hundreds of local, regional, and national affordable-housing entities to undertake effective media relations. We offer this Media Training Guide as a first step in the process.

Sincerely,

The Campaign for
Affordable Housing

The Campaign for Affordable Housing
gratefully acknowledges the support of
The National Association of REALTORS®
and its
Housing Opportunity Program
for making this publication possible

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I. Introduction

Whatever your housing organization's focus, sooner or later you'll find it necessary to influence the media and public opinion to achieve your goals. Here's why:

- **The media influences public perception.** A news story can sway public opinion either positively or negatively toward your cause. You undoubtedly want your issue to be portrayed in the best possible light. While that's not always possible, doing your part to shape media coverage and public perception can help.
- **The media influences decision makers.** You can use media coverage as a carrot or a stick to pressure decision makers to do the right thing. Targeted media can help light a fire under an issue that would otherwise have been ignored.
- **Your cause gets free publicity.** Relative to the labor you put into it, securing media coverage pays for itself many times over given the thousands, even millions of people you can reach through media. Aside from the almost negligible cost of sending initial e-mails or making phone calls, news coverage of your story is publicity that money doesn't need to buy.
- **The media can warn you about potential negative coverage.** If your story won't be covered as positively as you'd hoped, or if a backlash is imminent, you might get a heads-up from a friendly reporter, enabling you to take corrective action quickly.

Although conducting a media relations campaign might seem a daunting task, this Media Training Guide simplifies the process by providing some essential guidelines and information you need to create a campaign that will get results for your organization. The guide provides step-by-step directions, advice, and examples that will enable you to plan a campaign tailored to your needs and resources. You'll find information here that you can use in your public relations efforts, no matter the size of your staff, your timeframe, or your budget.

The Media Training Guide is modular; if you're already familiar with one communications element, simply turn to the next section of interest. In these pages you'll find:

- An overview of the nine essential elements of a successful media relations campaign, followed by sections that provide in-depth information on each key step;

- Pull-out sections for quick reference;
- A special section, “Resource Guide for Reporters, Editors and Publishers” that you can distribute among targeted reporters and editors; and
- Case studies analyzing how three California newspapers and a Baltimore paper covered affordable housing topics and how their positive exposure can influence the debate and improve communities.

We hope you’ll use this guide, adapt it to your needs, and share your results with others.

II. Elements of a Media Relations Campaign

This quick overview introduces you to the nine key steps involved in a winning media relations campaign. The balance of this guide describes each of these steps in detail.

1. Set clear, measurable goals. What do you wish to achieve through your particular campaign? Is it the passage of a law, the approval of a plan or project, or the acceptance of an idea or new policy? Depending on your type of organization, you'll have different goals, but you should define them all clearly before you begin.

2. Identify your target audiences. Who has the authority to help you meet your goals and what will influence their thinking? All your media relations efforts should be directed at generating the climate necessary to produce the action you want from decision makers and/or the community.

3. Develop compelling messages. Hone your message by thinking first about what will move your target audiences and then boiling down the essential ideas you want to get across.

4. Plan wisely. Plan your campaign for success so you don't bite off more than you can chew while making the most of the resources you have.

5. Specify what people should do. Leverage your media window as an opportunity to mobilize action. Do you want community members to attend a city council meeting? Write to their legislator? The media can be your bullhorn.

6. Strategies and tactics. Which vehicles will be most effective to get your message across and influence your target audiences? We'll walk you through some time-tested communications methods to help you get traction where you need it.

7. Know your media. Reporters are more likely to listen to your pitch if they have a relationship with you. Identify the reporters and editors most likely to cover housing stories in your local media market and develop a plan for getting to know them by becoming a trusted and valued source.

8. Secure media coverage. Develop a targeted media list and map out a timeline and strategy for securing their interest in your story. This includes crafting an attention-grabbing pitch customized to the kind of outlet and reporter you're contacting, having press materials ready for distribution over fax, e-mail or snail mail, and following up with helpful and timely information and interviews.

9. Stay on the media and public radar. Your media relations campaign isn't over after one round of press clips. Social change goals don't happen overnight, and they often don't happen unless there's a steady drumbeat of public pressure. Leverage the opinion pages of your local paper and a host of other community-based forums and media strategies to keep your campaign on the public's radar screen.

1. Set Clear, Measurable Goals

The media has its agenda. Be sure your agenda is equally well-defined. Before you mail a press release or call reporters, make sure you have a campaign plan that is directed by clear and measurable goals. Take a step back and look internally at your own organization and understand your group's goals. Your goals will differ dramatically depending on your type of organization:

- **Housing developer goals:** You might be trying to build your organization's credibility and reputation. Or, perhaps you want to let the community and public officials know about a specific project that's being built.
- **Policy advocate goals:** You might want the community and decision makers to understand the value of affordable housing and why they should approve funding or a specific location for it.
- **Government agency goals:** You might need to educate the public and decision makers about why they should support affordable housing in their community or with their taxes.

Simply writing a few sentences about your organization's long-term and short-term objectives will help you understand how to begin moving forward with a media relations strategy. Your goals should ideally have results you can quantify. Measurable goals enable you to do periodic reality checks throughout your campaign to make sure these objectives are being reached.

Have an agenda

Discuss what you'd like to happen with this campaign. Think about the end result you'd like to achieve, and the steps you need to take to get to that result. Articulating your objectives and how you can meet them will give you a roadmap going forward, even if your goals change along the way.

2. Identify Your Target Audiences

Define the target audience for your campaign. If you think your audience is the “general public,” think again. More likely than not, you will need to persuade a small group of people who can actually change things.

Who are the decision makers critical to your campaign’s success? Whose opinion do you wish to influence—office holders, community members, legislators? The answers to these questions will be essential in determining modes of communication and in determining whether a media relations campaign is indeed the right way for you to reach your audience.

3. Develop Compelling Messages

Now you need to develop messages to make those goals resonate with your target audience. Most nonprofit organizations can’t afford to run focus groups. But you can do less costly forms of research. For example, if one of your goals is to win over a community that’s resistant to affordable housing, you can survey community members outside their local supermarket or library to find out what makes them tick—or what ticks them off. Their answers will give you insight into the messages that should be at the center of your media relations campaign.

Remember that the message you want to deliver should help you reach the goals you’ve set. When assessing media coverage options, ponder the impact you want that coverage to have for affordable housing, your organization, and your organization’s goals.

Customize your message

Your campaign message does not mean a restating of your goals. It means making your case in a way that will be compelling to your target audiences.

Don’t assume your target audiences will agree with your line of argument. Take, for example, the “Don’t Mess with Texas” campaign. The goal of the campaign was to reduce littering and save taxpayer dollars. GSD&M, the agency on the project, knew 15 to 24-year-old men were the primary culprits. They also knew this same demographic is indifferent to messages about scenic beauty, much less the cost of clean-up. Instead, they came up with the winning slogan, “Don’t Mess with Texas,” tapping into something deep in the heart of every Texan: state pride. Ten years into the campaign, littering is down by 76 percent.

Go positive

Here are some specific ways to deliver persuasive messages to broaden the appeal of affordable housing and attract new stakeholders:

- **Speak to shared values.** Your primary message platform should lay out a positive vision that taps into values that Americans already believe in, like fairness, responsibility, safety and getting just rewards for working hard. Some campaigns may require that you take a harder stance against your opponents, but remember to take the moral high ground and sound a message of hope and aspiration.
- **Be inclusive.** Your message should make clear that affordable housing is a necessity for many people, not a small subgroup, whose work is essential for a strong community yet who can't afford to pay market rates in their own hometowns. Describe who these people might be—nurses, police officers, firefighters, farm workers, retail clerks, seniors, and teachers, for example.
- **Consider alternate terms.** The words “affordable housing” has connotations, some positive, some negative, depending on the individual. Think about partnering affordable housing with other life issues that people care about—health care, jobs and education. A new frame like “workforce housing” can also work, or a similar term that capitalizes on the fact that affordable housing is linked to hard-working families who contribute to society and build communities.

Stay on message

The media is a blunt instrument. Remember that most people consume news on the fly—flipping through the paper while riding the bus or listening while they get ready for work or during their commute. There's no room for a nuanced argument. And your goal is to achieve repetition so your message sticks. This means you have to stay on message. Be disciplined and stick with your talking points. Be assertive about making those points in interviews even if the reporter's questions aren't guiding you there.

4. Plan Wisely

Plan within your means

Review your organization's size and resources against the scope of your campaign goals. No matter the size of your group or the resources at your disposal, you can generate effective media coverage. Eye your budget and tailor your campaign to fit that budget. Make sure you have enough resources to see your campaign through to the end.

If you're a small organization, think about:

- Creating a simple press release;
- Sending e-mails to key newspaper staff members; and/or
- Writing an op-ed column.

If you're a large, well-funded organization, you might consider:

- Drafting a report, building an alliance, or some other news-making tactic and holding a press conference to announce it;
- Creating comprehensive materials, such as four-color packets or briefing kits; and/or
- Hiring a public relations firm to hone your strategy and message.

Keep your timeframe in mind

No matter the size of your budget and resources, time can be the determining factor when deciding what type of campaign to embark on:

- **Short timeframes:** A short amount of time to get your message across necessitates a smaller, focused campaign. A two-week campaign to influence legislation, for example, may force you to compress your tactics (sign-on letter, op-ed, editorial board visits, full-page ad) for maximum effect.
- **Long timeframes:** A six-month campaign will require more advance planning to keep the momentum building, and the media and public engaged. This could involve implementing multiple strategies, producing different collateral materials aimed at mobilizing different constituents, etc.
- **Employee time:** Think about how many staff members need to take time away from their current tasks to devote that time to working on the media relations

campaign. Make sure to schedule enough time for those employees or volunteers when thinking about how to move forward with contacting the media.

5. Specify What People Should Do

Many nonprofit groups think of media relations as a tool to “raise awareness.” But to what end? Once you’ve got people pumped up about your issue, the next step is to leverage their awareness toward meaningful action. Think of the media as a megaphone to organize people to support your campaign goals.

For example, if you need to turn people out to a city council meeting, encourage the reporter to include a “side bar” in her story on the when and where of that meeting. If you are interviewed on a radio program, make an agreement with the host ahead of time to promote a meeting or action and remember to plug it yourself. The same goes if you are driving people to your Web site. Many news organizations see their role as serving the public interest and will be receptive to this.

6. Strategies and Tactics

Once you’ve identified your goals and your messages, the next step is to think through how to promote your campaign and generate support.

Often, a media relations campaign is only one part of your overall communications strategy, which can involve public affairs, advertising, and an online component. This media guide focuses primarily on earned media relations, although we touch on advertising and the Internet briefly. The bottom line: The more ways you can get your message across, the more high profile your issue can become. The key to successful communications is repetition. The more often someone sees your message across multiple platforms and venues, the more likely they’ll pay attention and learn.

Have a hook

If you want the media to pay attention, make sure your story is newsworthy. In media terms, newsworthiness is called a “hook”—a main point that catches readers’ interest and reels them in. You’re more likely to get news coverage of your story if you develop a compelling, fresh angle on the issue that needs attention and that the media has yet to explore. Think like a reporter. What’s new and newsworthy about your story? Here are some possibilities:

- **Human interest stories.** Human beings are hardwired to remember stories over statistics. Recruit people from diverse job sectors who need affordable housing to be spokespeople for your campaign. These individuals can work in fields that people readily identify with and value, such as nurses, firefighters, or teachers. Other effective spokespeople are individuals who have improved their lives and achieved economic stability or neighbors who were once opposed to affordable housing but are now proponents of it. Make sure your spokespeople are okay with being photographed and filmed beforehand and prep them with talking points and interview tips.
- **The messenger is often as important as the message.** Affordable housing advocates fall under the category of “usual suspects” on this issue. This means you may have to recruit other third-party validators for your campaign, like business leaders or labor unions. Having the local firefighters’ association come out to say they can’t afford to live in the same communities they’ve been hired to protect can get the attention of the media and decision makers more effectively than if you delivered the same message yourself.
- **New data findings.** How many times have you heard a news broadcast open with, “A new study released today...” Report releases are a media favorite and they’re a great way to package facts that make a persuasive case for affordable housing. Here are some possible research topics to investigate, depending on your campaign goals:

Real stories, real results

When the Homebuilders Association of Maryland organized a Workforce Housing Summit, the Maryland Center for Community Development (MCCD) made sure to turn out a strong showing of local people whose lives were personally affected by the affordable housing shortage.

Speakers included an elementary school teacher who left her job because of the high cost of housing, as well as Maryland police and firefighters forced to look for housing up to 100 miles away from the communities they protect.

These personal testimonies helped communicate the magnitude of the housing crisis, generating headlines which led the Governor to convene a task force to make land use and zoning changes more friendly to affordable housing development.

- **How many units.** Determine how many affordable housing units your community actually needs based on demographic research and waiting lists.
 - **Commute times.** Find out the number of hours those who need affordable housing spend in traffic to get to their jobs.
 - **Property value impact.** Find out how affordable housing affects property values in your area.
 - **Who needs affordable housing.** Find out what average hourly, monthly or annual salary is needed to live in market-rate housing. Compare that to the salaries of nurses, teachers, or other likely affordable housing candidates. While some media might be more interested in reporting hard numbers like salary data, expressing the qualifications of those who will live in affordable housing in terms of occupations in your local economy instead of incomes may attract attention, too.
- **Leverage current trends.** The fact that 16 units of affordable housing are opening in your community may not seem like big news. But if you can tie this opening into the bigger picture of affordable housing needs, or pending affordable housing legislation, you might have a story worth pursuing.
 - **Strong visuals.** Not all of your stories will be made for TV, but be aware that nearly 60 percent of Americans get their news from their local TV broadcasts. Think through how you can tell your story through images. For example, offer to take a TV crew through a tour of crumbling affordable housing units or have them follow a nurse on her daily commute that starts at the break of dawn.
 - **Advertising.** Advertising can be costly, but you get exactly what you pay for. Consider going in on an ad together with allies on your issue to offset costs. An ad in your local newspaper can: 1) Give you an unmediated space for your message in a high-profile setting; 2) Add gravitas and urgency to your campaign. Reporters understand ads cost money and the fact that you took out an ad gives your campaign more weight; and 3) Light a fire under your target.
 - **Online.** Your Web site can be an important site of action. Your media relations and advertising can drive people to your Web site, where you can encourage them to write letters to policy-makers, sign petitions, and other grassroots activities to build your base of support.

7. Know Your Media

In each media market, there are several different types of outlets which vary by medium (broadcast, print) and coverage (national, regional, local), among other factors. Once you have a solid understanding of your media market's lay of the land, it's always a good idea to establish friendly, professional relationships with reporters because these existing relationships can make a difference next time you need to pick up the phone to pitch them a story.

Understanding your media market

National TV

One in five Americans tune in regularly to one of the three national network nightly news broadcasts. While their viewership has been declining in recent years as consumer habits change, network news remains a Holy Grail for media coverage.

The national broadcast networks—NBC, ABC, CBS, PBS—all have evening news broadcasts (e.g. ABC's "World News Tonight with Peter Jennings") and primetime magazine-style news shows (e.g. CBS's "60 Minutes"). The commercial networks—NBC, ABC and CBS—also have morning news and talk shows (e.g. NBC's "The Today Show").

The national cable news channels such as CNN, Fox News Channel and MSNBC, have to fill 24 hours a day with news, talk, and other current event shows. Because they have more time to fill, cable news outlets are often more receptive than their network counterparts to a broader range of news stories and intriguing angles on the hot issues of the day.



TIP: Getting national TV exposure isn't easy. But if your story passes one of these three tests, you have a shot at it:

1. Your story is about a "first," a unique innovation, development or even scandal that has not been attempted elsewhere in the country. Better yet, you have success or failure to show for it.
2. Your story reflects—and adds a dimension to—a broader trend in housing costs or development.
3. Your story folds into a larger feature about a particular policy-maker or legislation that is getting national attention.



TIP: While all the big networks are in fierce ratings competition, it's even more vicious among the three morning shows. To maintain good relationships with producers after they agree to do a story, ask if a story arrangement is an exclusive or if you're allowed to pursue the other morning programs as well.

TV talk shows

This is a rather broad category that includes everything from ABC's "Nightline" and Sunday morning network pundit shows like NBC's "Meet the Press" to more combative cable programming like Fox News Channel's "Hannity and Colmes." Shows where housing advocacy organizations are most likely to receive reception are network morning programs like the "The Today Show" or "Good Morning America," or evening news magazine programs with investigative angles such as "60 Minutes" or "Dateline." Gatekeepers and producers at these highly competitive shows tend to be hard to crack. You'll need a highly compelling story packaged with relevant spokespeople (advocates, policy experts, everyday people affected by a shortage of affordable housing) and a variety of interesting angles that you can pitch as a complete segment.



TIP: Getting on TV is all about having a compelling story to tell complete with unforgettable characters at the center. This means you can't just sell the "issue" in your pitch; you must be able to weave a traditional narrative (tragedy, conflict, hero, and villain) and make a case for your spokespeople as a made-for-TV subject.

Local TV

More Americans (nearly 60 percent) get their news from their local TV broadcasts than from any other news source, which makes them a must-hit if your target audience is middle America. The majority of local stations are affiliated with national networks or national cable. This means that while these channels carry syndicated programming from the national network as well as the network's nightly news or morning programs, they produce their own local news, and depending on the station's staffing and resources, some local feature programs as well.

Most local TV news stations produce and broadcast a morning, afternoon and evening news show. Because a typical evening broadcast lasts only 30 minutes, it is difficult to get in-depth coverage. An evening news segment can last as little as 10 seconds, but rarely lasts more than a couple of minutes. Morning shows will include more feature

segments, including in-studio interviews. Some local TV stations will also have evening “magazine” style programs that include longer, feature stories, usually on the softer, less deadline-driven news.



TIP: Whenever you’re talking to TV newsrooms, emphasize the visual element of your story up front to grab their attention and help them “see” a news segment. This includes describing your spokespeople with colorful detail and why they would make compelling subjects to interview.



TIP: Think like a TV producer when considering location, backdrop, and any props for press conferences and other media events. Take an example from Martha Yager, Housing and Community Development Project Coordinator at the New Hampshire American Friends Service Committee: For Gimme Shelter, an annual “sleep-out” in front of the state house, she arranged cardboard cutouts to represent the number of homeless people in the state along with cardboard gravestones along the sidewalk with names of homeless people who have died in the last few years.

National radio

Radio is a great medium for reaching full-time workers, many of whom tune in during their commute times. The major national radio networks are National Public Radio (NPR), CNN, ABC, CBS, and Clear Channel. These outlets tend to have regular news updates and anchor-driven programming. The Associated Press, Bloomberg and Reuters also produce radio broadcasts with an emphasis on news, rather than radio personalities.



TIP: As with their peers in print, the big radio networks have offices in Washington, D.C. and New York. While many local radio stations are affiliated with the national outlets, it’s still a good idea to pitch the national and local stations separately to cover your bases, especially if you have a story that has both a national and local angle.

Local radio

Each media market is home to several local radio stations, not all of which have actual news reporting staff. Your priority stations should be those affiliated with the major news networks: NPR, CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC, and AP. Most stations feature nearly a dozen different shows and news broadcasts, providing many coverage opportunities. For example, San Francisco’s NPR affiliate, KQED-FM, features

national programming such as “Morning Edition” and “All Things Considered,” punctuated by local news, weather and traffic reports, along with locally produced original programming such as “California Report” and “Forum,” an hour-long call-in interview show, to name a few.



TIP: Talk radio is notorious for below-the-belt debate. Even if you’re not on Rush Limbaugh’s show, remember that radio hosts play up controversy and conflict to keep their listeners tuned in. Before you agree to do a segment, research the radio station and the specific show you’ve been invited onto on the Internet and ask the producer what the show is like and who their audiences are. Some other factors to consider are: Will you be debating on the show with another guest, or is it just you and the host? Is it a live interview, and will listeners be calling in?

Daily newspapers

The top three national newspapers are *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Times*. Other opinion-leading regional papers, such as *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Chicago Tribune* have the power to reach beyond their geographic region as well. At the local level, all but the smallest media markets have their own daily or weekly newspaper.

Here are the sections of the newspaper where your story can be covered:

- **News:** Section “A” is typically reserved for the most important state or local news and national and international news. You will often find longer, investigative features here. Section “B” is reserved for second-tier metro news and for local columnists. Contact the appropriate reporter with your information (see the section below “Who’s Who: Finding the Right person” for ideas about who to contact).
- **Business:** Usually a separate news section in the paper that often includes stories on major development projects and real estate trades.
- **Features:** If you have a human interest or compelling slice-of-life story, a newspaper’s feature section might be the right place to start.
- **Opinion:** This section is where the newspaper replaces objectivity with opinion, including “editorials” (the official position of the paper on an issue), op-eds (opinion pieces submitted from the public usually appearing on the page opposite the editorials, see page 28 for an example), columnists, and letters to the editor. Well-written, timely op-ed pieces by a reputable author can be an appropriate vehicle for affordable housing coverage. The executive

editor or editorial page editor are the people to talk to about opinion coverage.

- **Special interest sections:** Most major papers run separate sections on different days of the week on topics like health, science, religion, food, automotive, technology, travel, etc. Some real estate sections go beyond home improvement and listings, and could be a good option when other possibilities have been exhausted.

Wire services

Wire services are news sources that file articles to newspapers, radio and TV stations across the country. Media outlets subscribe to wire services, paying a fee to receive wire stories along with the right to reprint or broadcast these stories as part of their coverage. Getting covered by a wire service is important because one wire article may get picked up by hundreds of papers around the country.

The Associated Press (AP) is the largest wire service, with bureaus in almost every media market in the U.S. Other wires work like syndication services tied to specific newspaper groups, such as Gannett (*USA Today*), Knight Ridder (*San Jose Mercury News*, *Miami Herald*), Copley (*San Diego Union-Tribune*), Cox News (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*), and Newhouse (*Oregonian*). For example, if a reporter from the *Oregonian* covers your story, the same article by that *Oregonian* writer could appear in other Newhouse papers, such as the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.





TIP: If you strike out at one AP bureau, it doesn't mean the game is up. Try different bureaus in another region where there is a relevant local angle.


Magazines

The number of magazines on the newsstands can be overwhelming. The most appropriate for affordable housing advocates fall under two general categories:

- **News:** These magazines, typically issued on a weekly basis, include *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *National Journal*. Harder nuts to crack because of their feature length formats are: *New Yorker*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Harper's*.
- **General interest:** These magazines specifically feature “real life” stories of courage, perseverance, tragedy, etc. While these are typically not associated with policy change, it could be a way to get readers to write or call their policy-makers about affordable housing. Think *People*, *Reader's Digest*, but also *USA Weekend*, *Parade*, and other Sunday supplements.

 **TIP:** Finding the right reporter at magazines can get tricky. Unlike newspapers, magazines have fewer staff writers and even fewer writers assigned to specific beats. Many rely on freelancers for most of their copy. The exceptions are major news weeklies like *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, which have more permanent staff assigned to certain beats. Remember that some magazines have their own columnists, too.

 **TIP:** Tailor your pitch to a specific section. This is the number one tip magazine editors will tell you: Read the magazine first and pick a specific section to pitch to. Magazines are highly idiosyncratic when it comes to their table of contents. *Newsweek*, for example, runs pages called “Tip Sheets” for health and consumer-related news.

 **TIP:** Be aware of long lead times. Monthly magazines can require three to six month lead times. Most news weeklies hit the newsstands on Monday and it’s safe to assume the magazine is already in production by Thursday. Pitch them well in advance.

Internet news sources

The number of people who say they get their news from the Internet at least once a week more than tripled in the past two years—from 11 to 36 million users. According to the latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press on how Americans consume media, 35 percent of Americans go online for news at least once a week and 48 percent say they “graze” the news, checking it from time to time over the course of the day.

From the convenience of their desks at home or at the office, people link to sites like CNN.com, FoxNews.com and any other number of news outlets. Most “offline” news organizations have online counterparts and can even send members e-mail updates on the day’s news. Slate and Salon.com are among an increasing number of online-only media outlets.

Blogs

News blogs are amateur Web sites that offer regularly updated opinion, news and information and have been gaining credibility in recent years. In 2004, a handful of blogs (including talkingpointsmemo.org) were directly responsible for lighting a fire under the story of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott’s nostalgic reference to Sen. Strom Thurmond’s segregationist leanings. The story was virtually ignored by

mainstream media until it was picked up in response to the online furor and within weeks, Lott was ousted from his post of Senate majority leader.

Blogs are influential because they take advantage of the Internet format and the fact that Americans increasingly like their news with a dose of opinion. Equally important, Washington insiders and members of the news media read blogs.



TIP: Keep in mind that blogs are only likely to respond to a whiff of controversy, a hot tip, or if the mainstream news is legitimately ignoring a hot news story.

Who's Who: Finding the Right Contact Person

Familiarize yourself with your local media so you can target the reporters most likely to cover your story. Watch TV and read the paper with an eye for which reporters are covering what. Look at a paper's masthead or Web site for staff information.

Beat reporter

The appropriate reporter to cover your subject is generally one who specializes in issues such as urban growth, housing, or community affairs, such as a reporter on a City Hall beat.

Depending on your campaign goals, you may also need to target state political reporters who are often based at a state capitol bureau. Real estate reporters and general interest reporters with no assigned beat, yet who have a solid track record of covering housing stories or sympathetic stories about the working class or poor, may also be worth pitching.

Metro or city editor

Sending a news release to the city editor is like sending a piece of mail to "occupant": More often than not your release ends up in the trash. That said, sometimes you need to go to them directly, either because your contacts are away or otherwise unreachable, or you have a story that you only have one day to publicize.

Newspapers have assignment or metro editors on duty all the time. They are responsible for sifting through all the news coming into the newsroom and determining what gets coverage and who covers it. If you're not sure which reporter to pitch, the assignment desk is also the place to start.

Business editor

The business section of the newspaper, which often includes stories on real estate, is a separate department from the general news department with a whole fleet of different editors and reporters. If your story involves a major development, developers, or other strong business interests, this may be the place to go.

Columnist

Newspaper columnists are often former reporters who have a weekly space in the paper to give their take on current events. While some columnists write primarily first-person, human interest stories, others prefer hard political commentary.

Editorial board

The editorial board of a newspaper is made up of editors and writers who convene regularly to determine which issues the newspaper should take a position on and what that opinion should be. The editorial board writer with the most expertise on an issue is usually dispatched to write the editorial.

Opinion page editor

This editor oversees placement and editing of op-eds, columns, and letters to the editor. At larger papers, there are often separate editors for each. The op-ed editor decides which among the hundreds of non-solicited viewpoint pieces the paper will run, and works with the author to edit the piece. For letters to the editor, the editor oversees the flood of letters that comes in response to stories that have appeared in the paper, selects those that represent a variety of opinions in a clear, compelling way, and often edits them for clarity and content.

Bureau chief/correspondent

National media outlets have reporters stationed at bureaus across the country who cover regional news. For example, *The New York Times* has staff writers in most major media markets from Chicago to Seattle who cover news from that area for the national edition.

Publisher

If you have an existing personal or business relationship with a newspaper publisher you can approach him or her initially; the publisher can then pass ideas on to the

appropriate news personnel. The publisher's support is useful and sometimes critical if you envision an ongoing public service partnership.

Assignment editor (broadcast)

Television and radio newsrooms have assignment editors on duty at all times. They are responsible for sifting through all the story pitches coming into the newsroom and determining what gets covered and who covers it. Unlike print media, it can pay to start pitching here because there are less beat reporters, and because TV news moves very quickly, with stories often assigned the morning of the event. If you are calling in advance of an event, you can also ask for the planning editor, who keeps a running log of all the potential stories for the coming week and helps decide which stories to follow up on.

Producer (broadcast)

Television and radio shows all have producers who research stories, decide who to interview, and do all the behind-the-scenes work to get a story on the air. Assignment editors are their gatekeepers, but if you develop a good relationship with a producer on one story, you should feel free to give them a call for the next one.

Booker (broadcast)

A booker is responsible for finding guests for news and cable news talk shows. While bookers mostly take a producer's direction for content, they are also able to put forth ideas and suggest guests.

Using media to increase event turnout

When the Tri-Valley Interfaith Poverty Forum in Livermore, Calif., sent out an e-mail alert to promote an advocacy training, they included a reporter for the Pleasanton Weekly who had just attended one of their board meetings. The reporter, who was already familiar with the housing horror stories about unlawful evictions and landlords refusing to take Section 8 voucher tenants, mentioned the meeting in a story that ran a few days before the training.

As a direct result of the reporter's article, 66 residents showed up to the training, many of whom were newcomers in need of affordable housing. The number and variety in attendance, which ranged from advocates to environmentalists to business people, acted as catalysts for city groups to work together on increasing affordable housing units.

Connect with reporters and editors

Once you determine the correct person to contact, you can initiate a relationship in several ways:

- **Meet in person.** Invite your local real estate reporter or feature editor to lunch. Find out what sorts of stories interest them and develop material to suit their interests. Don't bring a large group with you—try a one-on-one casual meeting in which you familiarize the reporter or editor with your organization.
- **Become a source for other stories.** Be accessible as a regular source of information. If you offer to give them good, solid information for their stories on housing in the area, they will come back for more. Being quoted in a news story helps you, too; it familiarizes readers with your organization, and offers a bit of free publicity.
- **Add editors and reporters to your mailing list.** Ask reporters and editors whether they'd like to be added to your mailing list, so they can be apprised of your organization's news and upcoming events.

8. Secure Media Coverage

A media relations campaign designed to saturate your local media market should include the following targets:

- Local daily newspaper(s)
- Network affiliates for ABC, CBS, NBC
- Cable affiliates for Fox, CNN, and others
- Wire services such as The Associated Press and Reuters
- Regional broadcast networks
- Local neighborhood weeklies, if appropriate
- Ethnic media, such as TV affiliates for Univision, Telemundo, large circulation African American, Spanish or Chinese language newspapers.
- Alternative newspaper weeklies

Keep in mind that most news radio affiliates also offer interview format programming, such as KQED’s “Forum” in San Francisco or “Which Way, L.A.?” on KCRW in Los Angeles. TV affiliates also will feature interview format programming in the morning. Identify the producers for each of these and pitch them separately.

Craft effective press releases

The press release is a media relations tool and often the first thing they receive about your story (a press release template you can use when creating your press release follows this section). You can get your message across quickly and effectively in a press release by adhering to these guidelines:

- All powerful communications have one thing in common—brevity. Limit your news releases to two pages.
- Use short sentences.
- In your headline and lead paragraph, get right to the most interesting news angle of your story without any wind-up, background, or introductory material.
- Quote experts, civic leaders, and other public figures to add credibility and news value to your releases. It’s always good to quote locally prominent people, especially members of Congress, about the benefits of your project to the community.

- Avoid too many dull quotes from agency and city officials. Insist that they say something interesting that's not totally self-serving. Ask if you can supply a quote for them that they can approve. This may give you more control.
- Don't quote boring, self-evident, or vague statements, such as "We are pleased to announce that our firm has been chosen to participate in the redevelopment planning process." This sort of quote adds little to a story.
- If you quote your own staff, have them say something meaningful in an active way. Better yet, quote the tenants who live in the project or the workers who helped build it.
- Send your press release on company letterhead. For second sheets use a quality bond paper.
- Don't include a cover letter with your press release, and don't sign the press release.

Press Release Template

[Company or organization logo]

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Or, you can indicate a specific date, such as FOR RELEASE ON August 19, 2003]

For More Information, Contact: [DATE], 200X

[Name of your company's press representative]

[Name of company]

[Phone number] () (voice)

[Phone number] () (fax)

[e-mail address]

[Insert Brief Headline Here, Initial Cap, Bold]

[CITY, St.] - [Date], 200X - [Insert text here, double spaced, with indented paragraphs].

[In your first few paragraphs, summarize your news event concisely.]

[In your next-to-last paragraph, describe your organization briefly, including any pertinent information readers should know about your background, employees, or services.]

[Conclude the press release with a call-to-action or a reason why the press should contact you for more information.]

[If the press release is more than one page long, center the word:

--more--

at the bottom of the page. On the next page, paraphrase the headline briefly, and insert a page number:]

[Shortened headline] - Page 2

[At the end of the release, signify that your release is complete by using one of two standard symbols, centered at the bottom:]

###

[or]

-30-

Press Release Example

NEWS RELEASE

Rhode Island Housing

CONTACT: CHRIS BARNETT 457-1219 (w) • 823-5775 (h)

\$15 Million Available

To Build Housing for RI's Workforce

New Initiative Attacks Housing Shortage That Is Driving Newport County Rents, Real Estate Prices Sky High

NEWPORT, R.I. (SEPT. 5, 2004) -- Real estate developers have until Oct. 8 to apply for \$15 million earmarked for proposals that create rental housing for Rhode Island's workforce.

Rhode Island Housing estimates the funding will produce as many as 300 apartments with rents affordable to workers in the state's fastest growing industries. Proposals must call for a minimum of 12 units.

"There is a critical housing shortage, and that is driving rents beyond the reach of retail, hospitality and medical workers. Newport County's economy can't grow if the workforce has no place to live," said Richard Godfrey, executive director of Rhode Island Housing.

The initiative comes against a backdrop of skyrocketing housing costs. According to the Rhode Island Association of Realtors, the median sales price of a multifamily home in Newport hit \$320,000 in 2003, a 26 percent increase over the previous year. The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Newport topped \$1,200 for the first time last year.

"This is a simple case of supply and demand. Rhode Island ranks last in the nation in housing growth. With supply so low, it's not surprising we have the nation's fastest growing real estate prices too," said Godfrey.

Many other Newport County communities are also struggling with rising rents. In Lincoln and Cumberland, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment hit record highs in 2003, now nearly \$1,000 a month.

While Godfrey stresses Rhode Island Housing's primary objective is to produce more apartments, he maintains there will be other benefits too.

The agency will give priority to proposals that clean up housing that is contaminated by lead or other environmental hazards, or re-use vacant mills and other abandoned or rundown commercial properties.

-more-

Press Release Example (cont.)

“Almost every city and town has under-utilized land available for building without tapping valuable open space,” Godfrey observed.

Often the structures are in such disrepair that developers can not obtain financing from conventional sources. Rhode Island Housing’s willingness to subsidize the cost of the rehabilitation can make the work feasible economically.

“A lot of the funding we offer is grants and deferred-payment mortgages. Private lenders can’t do it and make the kind of profit their shareholders expect,” he said.

Other funding sources include equity from the sale of federal tax credits, tax exempt and taxable first mortgage financing and assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the state Housing Resources Commission.

The financing is available to nonprofit groups, cities and towns, public housing authorities and for-profit developers. Rhode Island Housing offers technical assistance and short-term loans to help new developers get started.

“We’ll guide them through the construction and the approval process. We want to build experienced teams that can address the state’s ongoing need for housing the workforce can afford,” Godfrey said.

The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates 700 new housing units are required for every 1,000 jobs created. However, Rhode Island added only 415 housing units for every 1,000 jobs created from 1992-2002.

Based on the federal formula, meeting Gov. Donald L. Carcieri’s goal of creating an average of 5,000 new jobs annually will mean a need for roughly 3,500 new housing units per year. However, only about 2,500 new housing units are being built in Rhode Island per year, according to building permit statistics compiled by the Rhode Island Builders Association.

Another 10,000 homes and apartments are needed just to catch up on past production shortfalls, Godfrey noted. Rhode Island Housing is a self-supporting corporation which has financed the purchase, construction or rehabilitation of more than 58,000 houses and 14,000 apartments. For more information, call (401) 457-1269 or visit <http://www.rihousing.com>.

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Find a newsworthy angle

You have three seconds to get an editor's attention. That means you need to play up a newsworthy angle in the headline and first paragraph of your press release. For example, in one firm's release, the first paragraph describes how a state searched for a developer to take over a failed housing project. It isn't until the end of the paragraph that we find out that a local firm was selected, which is the news event being reported. The release would be better if it followed a straightforward news format, such as this: "A team of real estate professionals including two Boston firms was chosen to take over a failed real estate project in Anyplace, R.I., the state housing agency has announced. Redevelopment Experts and Johnson & Co. were selected to participate in a plan to acquire and refinance a distressed 64-unit property..."

If you don't have a strong news angle or if it's old news, use a feature angle. The same story could also be told with a feature approach: "When construction on Anytown Arms stopped two years ago, area residents and civic officials searched for a way to get the project finished. Now a team headed by a Boston firm has been chosen to compete for the badly-needed affordable housing project."

Pitching a story

Now that you've analyzed your goals, defined your message, and written your press release, you're ready to pitch your story.

The most complete coverage of your story will encompass both the news and opinion pages. Landing coverage in the former can help drive the interest of the latter. Below are some tactics for soliciting interest and commitment from both these sections.

Working the news pages

Calling reporters

Sending releases is rarely effective in itself. In most cases, reporters won't remember your release and you'll do far better by telling them about it verbally. Following up by phone on a faxed or e-mailed press release will help you: 1) find out who is mostly likely to cover the story; and 2) convince them to cover the story by pitching a number of angles and addressing their concerns and questions on the spot.

Here are some additional pitch tips:

- **Less is more.** Don't overwhelm reporters with a volume of material to wade through when you first get in touch with them. A few sentences making your main point can suffice for an initial contact; you can always follow up later with supporting materials.
- **Pitch in the morning.** Approach reporters when they are at their desks and

hungry for news. By 1 p.m. they're out on assignment; by 5 p.m. they're on deadline and irritable.

- **Ask permission.** If you get a reporter on the phone, first introduce yourself. (“Hi, this is Jane Johnson, I’m calling with The Campaign for Affordable Housing.”) Then ask right away if the reporter’s on deadline and if they have a minute. If they’re on deadline, ask when a good time is to call back.
- **Cut to the chase.** Let them know what you’re calling about and why it’s newsworthy. Never open with, “Did you get my fax?” Pitch the story right away.
- **Engage reporters in dialogue.** As anyone who has had been on the receiving end of a telemarketer, there’s nothing’s worse than a monologue gone wild. Once you’ve given them the basics of your story, pause and give reporters a chance to respond. You can prod them with questions like, “What do you think of this story?” The more you’re able to engage, the more openings you’ll have to convince them that this is news worth covering.
- **Be flexible.** If the reporter you’ve targeted can’t do your story because they’re busy or out of town, ask for recommendations on who else you should take it to. If they don’t think it’s a good story, find out why. If one reporter turns you down, don’t be put off. Go back to the assignment desk and see if there’s another reporter who might cover it.
- **Leaving voicemail.** If you must leave voicemail, be sure to leave your number SLOWLY and clearly, at the beginning of your message. If you can’t get a reporter in person, try calling a few more times, but don’t leave multiple voice messages. If your pitching time frame is short, your best bet is to keep knocking on other doors.

Working the opinion page

- **Get on the op-ed page.** Many of the same rules for press releases apply here: Start with something that’s been in the news, since readers will be more likely to follow you if you draw them in with something familiar. Each newspaper has its own guidelines regarding length and submission process, so check this first. Standard length is 650 to 750 words.

Getting on The New York Times Op-ed Page

Roland Lewis, executive director of Habitat for Humanity-New York City, placed this piece on the op-ed page of *The New York Times* on the housing crisis in New York City by using the high-profile mayoral race as a news hook. Lewis used the op-ed platform to push the candidates for the hard specifics on their housing proposals, from where housing would go to services for the homeless.

The New York Times

New York Needs a Place to Live

July 20, 2001

By Roland Lewis;

Roland Lewis is executive director of Habitat for Humanity--New York City.

Times are still good in New York City, after a long boom coupled with the benefits of a drop in crime. The next mayor, rightly, is expected to focus on fixing the schools. But another slow-motion crisis threatens to undermine the city's progress.

The growing shortage of affordable housing is threatening to make the city once again unlivable. A year from now, we can expect the housing crisis to be at the center of New York's politics. Consider it the sleeper issue.

The mayoral candidates seem aware of the brewing problem. At candidate forums and in position papers, they have begun to address the housing issue, recognizing that the way the winner deals with it is likely to determine his legacy.

This focus on housing for all New Yorkers can't come soon enough, because the problems in finding a decent place to live have never been more severe for New Yorkers. During the last decade, New York City added 456,000 new residents but built only 82,000 new units of housing. The rental vacancy rate in the city has dropped sharply, to just over 3 percent -- its lowest point in a decade.

There are now 150,000 doubled-up renter households in the five boroughs. Half a million New Yorkers now spend more than 50 percent of their incomes on housing. There is an eight-year waiting list to live in New York City public housing. And there are still 27,000

New Yorkers who will live in shelters on any given night.

This housing crunch affects us all in ways we sometimes don't even see. A recent public opinion poll found that 45 percent of New Yorkers had "seriously considered moving out of the city" because of its high housing costs. The high price of housing is one reason new teachers have been so hard to recruit and retain in city schools. If we do not find a way to provide decent, affordable housing, efforts to improve education, health and law enforcement could be undermined.

But just as we found ways to bring down crime and expand economic development in distressed communities, we can build and keep affordable housing if government acts in tandem with the private sector. The new mayor should double the level of current city spending, now at about \$500 million a year. Additional city subsidies could induce new private investors to create below-market-rate housing. Religious and civic groups can do much to help guide this kind of development, but a substantial government investment will be crucial.

Government has acted successfully before. The city housing program begun under Mayor Ed Koch built tens of thousands of homes and revitalized whole neighborhoods. The program created under New York State's Mitchell-Lama legislation produced 125,000 middle-income apartments from the 1950's to the 1970's. The new mayor must persuade the state and federal governments to increase their share of housing costs, and he must convince New York City's business community that an expanded investment in housing is economically smart as well as morally right.

The good news is that there is tremendous expertise in our city to build the needed homes; neighborhood-based community development corporations, government agencies and private developers all have the right experience. These groups and many others from the business, religious and nonprofit worlds -- more than 150 organizations -- have come together to form a new coalition called Housing First! This coalition is seeking a \$10 billion investment in housing in New York City over the next 10 years that would create 100,000 new homes and preserve an additional 85,000 homes.

Each of the four major Democratic mayoral candidates -- Fernando Ferrer, Mark Green, Alan Hevesi and Peter Vallone -- has proposed his own multiyear, multibillion-dollar housing program. The Republican Michael Bloomberg, the political newcomer in the race, has also discussed housing as a central issue.

For candidates, talking about the need is easy. But voters will have to press them for answers to hard questions: Where will the housing go? How much city-owned land will be dedicated to housing? What types of housing and what services should be provided to the homeless? How should zoning laws be changed to encourage more housing development?

The legacy of the next mayor is likely to depend on how well he focuses on these issues. The housing crisis will drive the city's future and will have an increasing impact on education, crime and poverty. But if the next mayor acts aggressively and imaginatively, it is possible for New York to achieve real gains in housing, just as it has against crime.

- **Write letters to the editor.** Write letters in support of your cause, especially after a related story has run the day before. Policy-makers and their aides pay attention to the letters page because they view it as the “voice of the community.” Use these letters to clarify or add facts that might have been missed in the news pages.
- **Request an editorial board meeting.** Send a letter, no more than a page and a half, to the editorial board editor to request a meeting. Be clear why a meeting would be timely now rather than later, and lay out your central argument succinctly. Also include the names and affiliations of the individuals you intend to bring to the meeting.

Here are some additional tips for a successful editorial board visit:

- **Come prepared.** Bring supporting materials with you, even if it’s just a one-page summary of the main points you want to get across. Take along a few briefing kits, or several pages of background information about your affordable housing story.
- **Offer concrete facts and statistics.** Back up any claims you make with statistics from reliable sources. Use graphics such as graphs or charts if you think they will help drive a point home but don’t overwhelm your presentation with too many distracting props.
- **Bring community supporters.** Show that the neighborhood supports your affordable housing project. Come to the meeting with union members, teacher’s union representatives, and others. Prep them beforehand so the presentation has cohesion and each person has a message to deliver.
- **Bring those in need of housing—or who live in affordable housing.** Editorial board writers appreciate the chance to talk with ordinary people who would be most directly affected by an issue, or who can speak from experience. Invite a few people that your project targets—putting a “face” on affordable housing can send a powerful message.

Understand journalism etiquette

Keep these guidelines in mind when working with the press. They will help you maintain a professional relationship:

- Don’t ask to review a story before it runs; similarly, don’t ask whether coverage was positive or negative.

Developing relationships with reporters

Martha Yager, Housing and Community Development Project Coordinator for the New Hampshire American Friends Service Committee, is a seasoned pro at building relationships with reporters. Because Concord is a small media market, staff turnover at local media outlets is high. Here are some of Martha's tips for overcoming this challenge:

- 1. Make a date.** Whenever a new reporter is assigned to the housing beat, Martha invites them out for coffee and a "tutorial" on local housing issues.
- 2. Become a source for story ideas.** If she gets wind that the planning board is considering a housing development, Martha lets her media contacts know. "I try to be fair. If I know the opponents, I try to name some of the less intense ones as well as give them my contacts. Otherwise all they will hear is the NIMBY reaction."
- 3. Do the reporters' footwork for them.** If you cite data in press releases, make sure to include sources in footnotes so they can run an easy fact check.

- Always ask whether a reporter is on deadline before taking up his or her time. If the reporter is working on a deadline, ask when a better time to talk would be.
- Understand that you can lunch with reporters, but you'll split the bill—it's not appropriate to pay or insist on paying.

Don't make these mistakes

You can save time and make a better impression by avoiding these faux pas when working with the media:

- **Not giving enough lead time.** Don't call right before you need coverage of a story and expect resources to be devoted to your topic immediately. Give adequate notice of your event, but not so much advance time that your story will be shelved. A week to three days' advance notice is a good standard for daily news; longer features will require more extensive lead times.
- **Not having a story.** Make sure your idea is newsworthy in the first place and hasn't already been covered (see the section "6. Strategies and Tactics" for more information about defining your topic).
- **Not explaining the big picture.** Before you dive into the minutiae of your issue, give the reporter context for why it's important by linking to other social or housing trends in your area or on the national level. Help the reporter understand how your particular story adds a fresh dimension to the news they've been following.

- **Not doing your legwork.** Newsrooms today are understaffed, which means reporters are often juggling multiple stories at once under enormous deadline pressure. You can help by offering them sources, charts, statistics, success stories, and contact information.
- **Not respecting a reporter's time.** Try to keep contact with the media to the minimum necessary to get your story covered. Don't badger reporters and editors with repeated phone calls. Send an e-mail or fax pitching your story, and limit yourself to one follow-up phone call before moving onto the next reporter.

Overcome reluctance to cover stories

If a media outlet expresses reluctance to cover your story or you're not seeing follow-through about a topic you feel it should be covering, try these tactics:

- **Make sure your idea is newsworthy.** A newspaper may balk at covering your story because it's not newsworthy enough. Before taking further action to persuade a newspaper to follow up with a slim story, look at your topic and ask yourself if it provides a fresh angle or development. If a reporter turns you down, ask why.
- **Appeal to public service.** Make the case that affordable housing affects a significant proportion of your target media outlet's audience and that coverage on this issue would make a difference in the communities they serve.
- **Appeal to empathy.** Often reporters themselves are equally in need of affordable housing in their own communities. You might get a sympathetic ear.
- **Hit the opinion page.** Encourage the opinion page of your local paper to devote coverage to your issue even if the news side won't. Remember, the opinion page exists to have influence over decision makers or public opinion, which means opinion page editors will be more likely to respond if you offer a timely news peg, like a forthcoming policy decision.

Once you've hooked them, help them

After crossing the first hurdle to media coverage—getting a reporter or editor to agree to cover your story—you can help the story reach the homestretch by making sure you have the following in place:

- **Have a point person ready.** Have a member of your organization available and prepared to handle calls from the press. Your point person should be available on short notice to talk to reporters. When reporters have a deadline, they need to act fast.
- **Line up human interest stories.** Interviews with ordinary people can be the most difficult for reporters to hunt down, especially when they're on deadline. You can be the source for these stories which can also give you more control about the kind of spokespeople who would help you get your message across. Look for people the public can relate to—teachers, police officers, and so on.
- **Be prepared with backup statistics.** Have at hand any information you think will help the reporter cover the story accurately.
- **Offer alternative sources and contact information.** Make the reporter's research easier by pointing him or her to government agencies, local officials, or other people associated with affordable housing in your area (see the section "Resource Guide for Publishers, Editors, and Reporters" for information about sources and issues reporters should be familiar with).
- **Get the info there on time.** Ask reporters when their deadline is to file the story and make sure you send any follow-up information with enough advance time so reporters can use it.

Tips for giving an effective interview

The news media has an obligation to be fair and balanced in its coverage, which means reporting both sides of an issue. Controversy and conflict also makes for better headlines. That said, you can do your part to ensure the most accurate portrayal of your issue and that your own position comes through loud and clear.

When being interviewed, keep these essential tips in mind:

- **Control the message.** Treat each interview as an opportunity to get across your campaign's central message platform and don't be afraid to repeat these points. Bring notes if you need to.
- **Give straight answers.** Don't get wrapped up in the complexities of your issue. Remember that the media is a fairly blunt and direct instrument with little room for shades of gray. If you don't know the answer to a question, just say so; don't try to fake it.
- **Persuade through anecdote.** Bring your message points to life by relaying

stories from real life about a nurse you know who can't afford to live in her community or a firefighter who only has an hour to spend with his kids because of his commute.

- **Be selective with your stats.** Have all the facts at hand, but don't overwhelm. Giving answers that are too brief or not being adequately available when a reporter needs to talk can lead to incomplete coverage—or worse.
- **Be careful what you say.** Assume everything you say to a reporter can be printed. Bottom line: Don't mention information you absolutely do not want to see in print or on the air. It's amazing how many times people feel they can confide in a reporter, not realizing the information will be printed or quoted. Unless you have a long-term relationship with a reporter and feel you can trust him or her, never assume that reporter will protect you or keep your information off the record.
- **Take your time.** If you're pressed for an answer to a question, take a minute to think through your answer carefully. To buy time and prevent dead air, say, "What a great question," or repeat the question back.
- **Don't let the media intimidate you.** Being in front of bright lights and cameras can put anyone on edge. Some reporters will throw hardball questions designed to provoke a quick, off-the-cuff, and, they hope, controversial reply. Remember, you never have to answer questions you don't want to. You can deflect a question with authority by saying, "Isn't the real question here..." and fill in the rest the message you want to get across.
- **Set the record straight.** If you realize you offered erroneous information or forgot to make a point during an interview, call the reporter as soon as you realize this.

Handling negative media coverage

You can try your best to shape media coverage about affordable housing, but you can't always guarantee that media exposure will be positive. Be clear, too, in your news analysis to distinguish between factual inaccuracy and a negative, unfair slant. Below are damage-control measures for both. When you're contacting a reporter to criticize a piece, make a point of thanking them for writing the piece or point out something you thought they did a good job on before diving into your critical remarks. This will make them more open to hearing you out.

Factual inaccuracy

If there is a factual inaccuracy in a story, contact the reporter and his or her editor immediately with a brief, written letter citing the mistake and offering the correct information. Insist on a correction in the next day's paper. Cover your bases and write a letter to the editor reiterating the correction and use the opportunity to get your message across.

Negative coverage

Negative coverage can take several forms: A story can fail to get both sides of the story, or misrepresent your position either by quoting you out of context or, in general, inaccurately portray your intentions. Here's how to address it:

- **Make your objections known, respectfully, to the reporter and editor on the story.** Keep in mind that these are the same people you'll need to rely on for future coverage, so don't burn any bridges. However do point out specific places where you think their story fell down in terms of being one-sided or having misrepresented your position and ask them to set the record straight. Use the opportunity to suggest a follow-up story.
- **Write an opinion piece.** Resist the temptation to frame the op-ed as a slam against the "biased" media. Allude instead to "public misperceptions" as a springboard to set the record straight.
- **Write a letter to the editor.** This format is more appropriate for direct criticism of the news coverage. Give examples of how the story was one-sided, but be careful not to go over the top in your critique.
- **Ask for an editorial board meeting.** Lay out your grievances and concerns in reasonable terms and use them as an entry to secure a meeting with the board. But unless the negative press is egregious, don't turn the meeting into a gripe session. Be critical, but also extend your willingness to work together on future stories to make sure they're framed more accurately.
- **Take it to the ombudsman.** Some newspapers have what's called a "reader's representative" or an ombudsman whose job is to respond to community feedback and act as a check and balance to the newspaper's editorial coverage. You can call, mail, or e-mail this individual. You can also request an in-person meeting especially if you feel that negative or slanted coverage of your issue is a significant and ongoing problem.
- **Don't avoid the press.** Going into hiding after a negative story misses the opportunity to set the record straight.

9. Stay on the Media and Public Radar

Your media relations campaign isn't finished when a news article or opinion piece on your story runs. One of the key principles of effective PR is repetition. Many campaigns also occur over time, which means you have to keep at the media to follow your story. You can maintain public interest in your cause by doing a few things:

- **Keep the media in the loop.** Many campaigns are built around policy-making calendars. It's your job to keep reporters abreast of important dates, key developments and progress in your campaign (i.e., new endorsements, new research, etc.). The goal is to create a sense of momentum so reporters remain invested in the outcome of your efforts.
- **Leverage related media to cycle back on your issue.** Media may do stories that touch on your campaign on rental costs, commuter headaches and other quality of life issues. When you see one of these stories, dash off a letter to the editor, thank them for the coverage and seize the opportunity to bring up the campaign. You can also contact the reporter directly to encourage them to do a follow-up story using your campaign as another hook.
- **Request more housing coverage.** Contact your local paper's reader's representative or ombudsman with a thoughtful and brief argument for why you think the paper should devote more coverage to affordable housing. The reader's representative tallies up responses to newspaper stories and relays those responses to editors and reporters.
- **Sponsor community forums.** Organize public forums featuring experts on all sides of the affordable housing issue to discuss the topic at hand. Ideally, you may secure a local media outlet to co-sponsor a forum. In either case, you should treat the forum as a media opportunity and publicize the event broadly.
- **Schedule speaking engagements.** Get on the agendas of neighborhood associations, city councils, and rotary clubs.
- **Reprint and distribute favorable newspaper articles.** Include reprints of positive press coverage in your organization's materials. Don't wait for the newspaper to reprint the article—get permission to do the reprint yourself.
- **Produce public service announcements or ads.** Think about integrating public service announcements or advertising into your overall communications campaign. If you're a nonprofit, work with the newspaper to receive a discounted nonprofit advertising rate. Spread the cost of advertising around by partnering with local businesses or allied organizations.

Finally, don't forget to maintain relationships with key reporters in your area's most important media outlets to keep the door open for future stories. Be a source for other stories by staying in touch and respond quickly if reporters call requesting information.

III. Resource Guide for Reporters, Editors and Publishers

The following resource guide was created for you to adapt and distribute to members of the news media in your local area, but it can also serve as an in-house guide for your organization. The guide covers basic issues related to affordable housing as well as specific organizations like government agencies that work on the issue.

Overview

The high cost of housing is of paramount concern for many residents. In many parts of the nation, housing prices are so high that many people can't afford to buy a home or rent an apartment. Affordable housing isn't only housing for the homeless or unemployed—it's housing for vital service workers, such as teachers, nurses, police officers, and firefighters. Devoting resources to cover this important issue will not only help you explore a subject of interest to your community; it can also provide a critical public service.

To help you, The Campaign for Affordable Housing has compiled this resource guide to assist you in your affordable housing coverage. The guide includes a short list of expert sources, issues you should be aware of, and questions you may want to ask about affordable housing in your area.

Affordable housing sources

Certain city officials, government agencies, and other sources will prove useful to you as you research the affordable housing situation in your area:

- **Chamber of Commerce:** Look here for statistics about how many new jobs are being created, at what wage levels, how much affordable housing exists in your area, as well as transportation studies regarding how far people commute to get to work.
- **Planning department:** Call your state planning department to find out which cities are in compliance with the housing plan.
- **State housing department:** Call your state housing department to find out which cities are in compliance with the housing plan.
- **Councils of Governments/Regional Planning Agencies:** In many states,

cities, towns, counties and other political jurisdictions are required by law to engage in joint or regional planning. Collections of these political subdivisions may be found in Councils of Government, as in California for example, or other regional planning agencies with specified powers and responsibilities. They will generate useful information on population growth, household information and job growth that affect both housing and transportation needs. In California, the larger of these Councils are the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and San Diego Association of Governments (SanDAG).

- **The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** HUD publishes affordable housing schedules; find the applicable one for your area at www.hud.gov or call 202-708-1112.
- **National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA):** To locate your state Housing Finance Agency (HFA) visit: www.NCSHA.org.
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC):** The NLIHC publishes various affordable housing statistical reports, including data for income and cost of rental housing nationwide (www.nlihc.org, 202-662-1530).
- **National Association of REALTORS® (NAR):** State and local NAR associations are an important source of information on housing supply and affordability in the area.
- **Local housing authority:** Check with your local housing commission at the city or county level for housing programs and economic development information.
- **Universities and think tanks:** For points of comparison with the housing situation in other U.S. cities, getting in touch with housing experts at universities or think tanks can help with a national perspective.

Issues

Some affordable housing laws and situations are unique to your state. In your research, consider familiarizing yourself with these matters:

- **Housing planning laws:** Cities and counties may be required to update their General Plans to estimate housing needs and show how they will meet the need, including the need for affordable housing. If they are a recipient of certain federal funds, they will have to prepare and file a Comprehensive Plan,

which is a public document. Check and see what legal requirements exist in your state, county or city to identify affordable housing needs, identify sites or prepare proper zoning for the approval of an adequate supply of affordable housing.

- **Zoning laws:** Many factors come into play when researching zoning laws. Building on formerly pristine land, or adding housing to an already dense city area often requires a change in zoning laws.
- **Construction liability laws:** Issues of legal responsibility for defects or mistakes in new home construction vary from state to state. Is this an obstacle to the construction of affordable housing? Are there difficulties in obtaining liability insurance at a reasonable cost for home builders and developers? In some states, construction of condominiums and other types of attached housing have declined as builders fear being sued or can't buy affordable liability insurance.
- **Land-use policies:** Preserving scenic areas in some states has closed off parts of the state to new construction, including affordable housing.
- **Population growth:** Population continued to grow between 1980 and 2000, but not enough housing has been built to accommodate this enormous growth. In addition, seniors are living longer and more households consist of a single adult—increasing the housing need and driving up prices.
- **Land cost:** The cost of land is very high in urban areas. It's not always economically feasible for developers to build affordable housing instead of market-rate housing without some type of subsidy.
- **Revenue issues:** Building sales tax-generating shopping centers or commercial property can bring in more revenue for cities and counties than building affordable housing.

Questions to ask about affordable housing

Keep the following questions in mind when you're conducting research or interviews for an affordable housing story:

- What income range qualifies for affordable housing? What occupation does that represent in my community?
- How much public subsidy is being used to build the housing? What form does public subsidy take?

- Where will affordable housing funding come from?
- How much affordable housing already exists in the community?
- How much affordable housing does the community need?
- Without affordable housing in our community, how far do people commute to get to their jobs?
- How have property values changed in areas near affordable housing—have they fallen, stayed the same, or risen?
- What is the typical salary of a worker in your area compared to the salary that worker would need to earn to afford a median-priced home? How much would that worker need to earn an hour to rent a median-priced apartment?
- What are the consequences to the community if affordable housing developments are turned down? Does an inadequate supply of affordable housing affect the economy, wages, commercial vitality, the crime rate or other community concerns?

Nonprofit resources

California Housing Partnership Corp.

Helps preserve affordable housing, consults with nonprofit sponsors and public agencies, and disseminates housing policy information.

www.chpc.net

415-433-6804

The Campaign for Affordable Housing

Works to create a positive perception of affordable housing by providing educational materials to the media and to organizations involved with affordable housing.

www.tcuh.org

323-330-0540

EAH: A Nonprofit Housing Corporation

Develops and manages nonprofit housing throughout California and Hawaii.

www.eahhousing.org

415-258-1800

The Enterprise Foundation

Provides affordable housing for low-income residents of cities nationwide.

www.enterprisefoundation.org

800-624-4298

Housing Assistance Council (HAC)

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) has been helping local organizations build affordable homes in rural America since 1971. HAC assists in the development of both single- and multi-family homes and promotes homeownership for working low-income rural families through a self-help, “sweat equity” construction method. The Housing Assistance Council offers services to public, nonprofit, and private organizations throughout the rural United States.

www.ruralhome.org

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

A community development support organization that helps neighborhood-based organizations transform distressed communities into healthy ones. LISC has offices in many cities across the nation.

www.lisc.org

National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), Housing Opportunity Program

State and local NAR associations are an important source of information on housing supply and affordability in the area.

www.realtor.org/housingopportunity

(800) 874-6500

Or write to:

Housing Opportunity Program

500 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20001-2020

National Housing Conference (NHC)

The National Housing Conference is a coalition of housing leaders from the private and public sectors that believes that every American, regardless of income, should have the opportunity to live in a suitable neighborhood.

www.nhc.org

National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)

Works to eliminate the nationwide affordable housing shortage.

www.nlihc.org

202-662-1530

Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (NRC)

A national nonprofit organization created by Congress to provide financial support, technical assistance, and training for community-based revitalization efforts.

Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, local NeighborWorks organizations and Neighborhood Housing Services of America make up the NeighborWorks system which has successfully built healthy communities for 25 years.

www.nw.org

Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH)

Advocates for affordable housing in Northern California.

www.nonprofithousing.org/index.atomic

415-989-8160

Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing

The Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing (SCANPH) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the development, preservation and management of permanently affordable housing for low-income people.

www.scanph.org

213-480-1249

IV. What Positive News Coverage Looks Like

Below are a few case studies on positive news coverage on affordable housing (see the resources section for a complete listing of articles discussed in this section). We encourage you to draw from the innovative news treatments these newspapers applied to different affordable housing situations for angles to suggest to your local paper.

CASE STUDY 1: *Marin Independent Journal* spotlights workforce housing

Overview

In May 2001, the *Marin Independent Journal* ran a four-day news series, followed by a five-day opinion page series, entitled “Workforce Housing: Hometown Crisis.” This series investigates the shortage of affordable housing in the region and offers a clear-eyed analysis of the crisis, from the reasons behind the astronomical housing prices to opposition to building affordable housing.

Why we like it

A real problem for real people. The series does a fantastic job of telling the stories of how the housing crisis affects vital service members of the community, such as teachers and health care workers. The opinion pages include pieces by teachers, a police chief, a neighborhood committee member, and policy advocates, among others, describing the effect costly housing has had on their communities and personal lives.

Diverse perspectives. The series includes extensive quotes and viewpoints from a broad range of experts and residents including nonprofit groups, policy analysts, local officials and developers. The series begins with an overview article, “Priced out of Marin” featuring interviews with former Marin residents driven out by soaring prices, current residents feeling the housing squeeze, and low-income residents who found creative ways to hang on to their expensive addresses. These stories provide a human counterpart to charts, graphs, and hard numbers detailing the area’s housing situation.

Fair analysis of controversy. The rest of the series digs deeper into the ins and outs of the crisis, including an investigation into controversial in-lieu fees for affordable housing. The series also examines the battle between environmental groups seeking to protect open space and housing organizations hoping to build on those sites; the long-

distance commutes of service workers who cannot afford to live in the communities they serve; a discussion of new laws that could generate affordable housing funds; and an evaluation of Marin's NIMBY ("not in my backyard") attitude.

Spotlight on solutions. The article "A search for solutions" explores options for increased density; re-use; and for building more housing, including infill development. The opinion page featured editorials written by a member of the nonprofit Marin Consortium for Workforce Housing and the president of the Marin Conservation League explaining the need to balance preservation of Marin's natural landscape with the need to build more housing. Letters to the editor continue these discussions.

Media and community partnership. After the series ran, the *Marin Independent Journal* followed up with a community forum co-sponsored by The Marin Consortium for Workforce Housing at the San Rafael City Hall, where housing specialists, local government officials, and activists convened to discuss the region's affordable housing crisis. The *Marin Independent Journal* and Consortium also partnered on a three-month ad campaign featuring workers such as teachers and nurses in need of housing.

The newspaper offered a significantly reduced nonprofit advertising rate, and members of the Consortium, such as realty offices and banks paid for the advertising. The paper also reprinted and distributed its series on affordable housing to local businesses and nonprofit organizations. The entire collaboration, from the series to the community-based public education effort, is a noteworthy example of a newspaper partnering with the community to effect change.

CASE STUDY 2: *Mercury News* investigates Silicon Valley housing shortage

Overview

The *San Jose Mercury News* published an eight-part series in August 2002 entitled "What is Behind the Housing Crunch?" The series was conceived by the newspaper's publishers, who wondered why housing in the San Jose area was so expensive. The *Mercury News* series, while proposed by the newspaper's own publisher and not by outside groups, nevertheless benefited local nonprofit groups and housing developers by drawing public attention to key affordable housing issues in the Bay Area.

Why we like it

Big picture. This well-rounded series gives a balanced assessment of the Silicon Valley housing situation, and the reasons behind the rapid rise in real estate prices—including an analysis of the reasons why housing in the Bay Area remains so pricey and hard to find, compared with the rest of the nation. The final article offers a historical perspective on a similar housing crunch in the area 25 years ago.

Connect the dots. Other articles in the series take an in-depth look at additional reasons for the housing crisis. One piece explores how tax revenues from retail projects benefit cities more than the profit those cities can reap from housing. Another looks beyond the Bay Area at locales such as Denver and Salt Lake City to see how other cities are coping with increasing prices, difficult commutes, and other problems attendant on large municipal growth.

Diverse perspectives. Viewpoints in this series include those of housing developers, local business groups, planning department officials, land-use consultants, and local residents struggling to find affordable housing. Opinion pieces by the county assessor, city planner, a developer, and city councilwoman offer other perspectives on the housing situation. The series also inspired spirited letters to the editor by Silicon Valley residents struggling to find housing.

Personal stories. “Winners and Losers: Lucky Homeowners Reap Rewards; Those Left Out are Feeling Pinch” addresses the human side of the housing situation with snapshots of homeowners who bought before housing prices skyrocketed, a neighborhood association leader who helped lobby for a local housing development, and a policy analyst who described difficulties young people have in buying housing in such a high-priced market.

Spotlight on solutions. “Small Steps Falling Short” explains potential laws, population growth controls, bond issues, and zoning changes being considered to help ease the housing shortage. Other articles profile infill housing in San Jose and describe Manteca, a small town in the Central Valley facing an influx of Bay Area residents seeking less expensive housing.

CASE STUDY 3: *Los Angeles Times* chronicles rise in housing prices

Overview

In 2002, as home buying and rental prices in the Bay Area began to level out, Southern California housing costs started going through the roof. Home prices jumped 17 percent in 2002 over the previous year, and home sales and prices continue to rise. Meanwhile, rental vacancy rates have plummeted, and median housing prices throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties have appreciated rapidly out of reach for many residents who, only a few years earlier, would have been able to afford a home.

The *Los Angeles Times* devoted significant resources and its top reporters to cover this housing crisis in stories that have appeared in virtually all sections of the newspaper, from the front page to the real estate and business sections and the opinion pages.

Why we like it

They did their homework. The newspaper's housing reporter, Jocelyn Stewart, relied on the region's many vocal housing advocates and nonprofit developers to help paint an accurate depiction of the Los Angeles housing situation and for referrals to other housing experts and others who became excellent sources for breaking housing news.

Comprehensive coverage. The *Los Angeles Times* explores the issue from many angles. One article discusses the quandary of lower-income homebuyers who cannot use city and county assistance programs to qualify for home loans due to the escalating price of housing. Affordable housing advocates made their own news by requesting a new law called "inclusionary zoning" requiring developers to set aside a percentage of housing for low-income people. Other stories examine the creation of an affordable housing trust fund and the Enterprise Foundation's work in Los Angeles.

Big play. The *Times* demonstrated its commitment to making housing a news priority by running an April 27, 2003 cover story in the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, "The Battle of Fort Ord," a rich, in-depth feature about the storm of controversy surrounding the closed Fort Ord army base in Monterey County and how best to put it to use. On one side, housing advocates wish to use the base for much-needed affordable housing in the high-priced Monterey area. On the other, developers are pushing for high-priced luxury homes instead. Don Baum analyzes the reasons why affordable housing is so difficult to build both in the Monterey area and in California as a whole.

Both sides now. The paper's editorial pages becomes a virtual town hall for passionate

opinions about the booming Los Angeles-area real estate and rental market from all sides of the housing debate. A pro-rent control opinion piece, “Rents: Free-market system isn’t wrong, but it isn’t working,” generated a flurry of letters to the editor and opposing opinion pieces stressing the need for more affordable housing, rather than rent control. The pieces add a dynamic addition to the newspaper’s coverage of landlords hoping to escape regulations such as rent control and Section 8 to earn more by converting to market-rate rents.

CASE STUDY 4: *Baltimore Sun* gives comprehensive coverage to housing issue

Overview

In August and September of 2004 the *Baltimore Sun* ran a number of articles that chronicled the affordable housing crisis where working people like teachers, nurses, janitors, firefighters and police were being priced out of the housing market in mid-Maryland, forcing them to bear commutes as long as 100 miles and sometimes even crossing state borders. The articles featured stories of real life people with tangible difficulties.

Why we like it

Personal stories. Each article, loaded with anecdotes and family photos, focuses on real individuals who couldn’t afford housing in the communities to which they are contributing valuable services. Suddenly, the issue isn’t just about statistics and policy wonks; it’s about a newlywed firefighter paramedic forced to spend an additional two hours’ commute each way instead of enjoying time with his family at home.

The money trail. The coverage effectively debunked the idea that any middle-class family with two breadwinners at respectable jobs could afford housing. It did so by drawing a side-by-side comparison between median incomes and median home prices in Baltimore, and spotlighting results from a recent survey that showed that the rate of increase in housing prices far outpaced any increases—sometimes even decreases—in salaries.

Economic impact. The articles demonstrate that the growing affordability gap is a concern that stretches beyond working class families. The coverage made a case for how the lack of affordable housing was getting in the way of economic growth by

driving away the labor pool, a key factor for companies in deciding where to locate their businesses.

Effective solutions. The articles pointed to a number of successful programs around the country where a city or county authorized an increase in the number of homes built in a community to demonstrate that, while the affordable housing problem is serious, it can be solved.

V. Resources

Nonprofit contacts

California Housing Partnership Corp.

Preserves affordable housing, consults with nonprofit sponsors and public agencies, and disseminates housing policy information.

www.chpc.net

415-433-6804

The Campaign for Affordable Housing

Works to create a positive perception of affordable housing by providing educational materials to the media and to organizations involved with affordable housing.

www.tcah.org

323-330-0540

EAH: A Nonprofit Housing Corporation

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Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing

The Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing (SCANPH) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the development, preservation and management of permanently affordable housing for low-income people.

www.scanph.org

213-480-1249

Media relations information

Public relations toolkit: How to PR

www.aboutpublicrelations.net/toolkit.htm

Elements for a Successful Press Campaign

home3.americanexpress.com/smallbusiness/resources/expanding/campaign/

Common Sense Media Relations 101

www.gallen.com/MediaRelations101.htm

Now Hear This: The Nine Laws of Successful Advocacy Communications

Fenton Communications

www.fenton.com/resources/nht_report.asp

Examples of positive newspaper coverage

Marin Independent Journal

“Workforce Housing: Hometown Crisis,” news series, May 2001

- “Priced out of Marin,” by Con Garretson
- “Build it or pay,” by Richard Halstead
- “The battle over where,” by Con Garretson
- “A search for solutions,” by Con Garretson

San Jose Mercury News

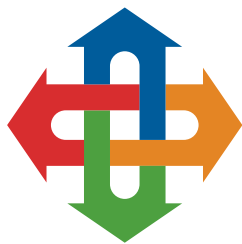
- “Cost of land drives prices,” by Tracey Kaplan and Sue McAllister, Aug. 4, 2002
- “Winners and losers; Lucky homeowners reap rewards; Those left out are feeling pinch,” by Tracey Kaplan and Sue McAllister, Aug. 5, 2002
- “New homes cost cities money,” by Mike Zapler, Aug. 6, 2002
- “Land rush in the West,” by Lori Aratani, Aug. 7, 2002
- “Housing costs: No easy answers; Bigger, costlier measures needed to improve affordability,” by Tracey Kaplan and Sue McAllister, Aug. 8, 2002

Los Angeles Times

- “Affordable housing rule deemed feasible for LA; Requiring developers to include low-income units is good policy, a report concludes,” by Jocelyn Y. Stewart, March 29, 2003
- “The battle of Fort Ord; Monterey County communities fighting over ways to use the abandoned army base are discovering a new truth about the California Coast—It’s for the rich only,” by Don Baum (Los Angeles Times Magazine), April 27, 2003

Baltimore Sun

- “Jobs put homes out of reach; Many public servants can’t afford house here; Survey lists teachers, police; Workers in 5 categories are priced out of market,” by Sheeba Raj, Aug. 1, 2004
- “ ‘Live where you work’ unaffordable for many; Solutions: Builders, housing advocates and others’ ideas include greater density, more incentives,” by Bob Erle, Sept. 26, 2004



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