



Make the Case

A practical framework for moving housing conversations toward a credible next step

Facts matter, but housing decisions are also shaped by values, trust, identity, fear, timing, relationships, and perceptions of the future. Use the four steps below to connect a credible housing solution to what matters to the people whose support or participation is needed.

HEAR → CONNECT → SHOW → INVITE

1 HEAR

What does this stakeholder value, fear, or want to protect?

Listen for the concern beneath the claim. Past experience, identity, trust, safety, stability, fairness, or predictability may be shaping the reaction.

Acknowledge without automatically agreeing.

2 CONNECT

What authentic shared aspiration can you name?

Find real common ground: safety, stability, opportunity, responsible stewardship, belonging, workforce strength, or neighborhood vitality.

Start from a value you genuinely share.

3 SHOW

How does this specific solution advance that aspiration?

Choose the one or two facts, safeguards, or implementation details that matter most to this audience. Explain what they mean, not everything you know.

Use facts in service of meaning, not as a data dump.

4 INVITE

What reasonable next step are you asking them to take?

Movement may be reviewing a plan, attending a meeting, shaping a safeguard, continuing due diligence, or advancing a proposal with conditions.

Aim for movement, not instant conversion.

A simple response frame

"I hear that _____ matters to you. We share the goal of _____. This solution advances that goal by _____. The next step we're asking for is _____."

Credibility guardrails

DO NOT ARGUE FIRST

Understand what matters before correcting facts.

DO NOT PROMISE ZERO IMPACT

Acknowledge uncertainty and explain how concerns will be addressed.

DO NOT INVENT

Use only information you can support or clearly name as unresolved.

DO NOT CONFUSE MOVEMENT WITH AGREEMENT

A green outcome can mean continued consideration, participation, or conditional support.

THE GOAL: MOVEMENT, NOT INSTANT CONVERSION

A credible next step may be continued consideration, participation, due diligence, or support with conditions.



Build Your Next Case

Use this page before a public meeting, board discussion, funding conversation, or community engagement session.

1 AUDIENCE

Who needs to move? What role are they playing in this decision?

2 WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

What concern, objection, question, or hesitation are you hearing?

3 HEAR

What might be underneath it? What do they value, fear, or want to protect?

4 CONNECT

What authentic shared aspiration can you name?

5 SHOW

Which 1-2 facts, safeguards, or examples matter most to this audience?

6 INVITE

What practical next step are you asking them to take?

7 PRESSURE CHECK

What outside condition, timing, politics, misinformation, funding, or trust could affect movement?

8 WHAT IS UNRESOLVED?

What do you need to acknowledge rather than overpromise?

If the conversation stalls: Reframe & Retry

ASK YOURSELF

- What did I miss about what matters to this stakeholder?
- Which step was weakest: Hear, Connect, Show, or Invite?
- What would I change if I made the case again?

QUICK SELF-CHECK

- ☐ Did I address the actual concern?
- ☐ Did I name authentic common ground?
- ☐ Did I choose relevant facts, not every fact?
- ☐ Did I acknowledge uncertainty?
- ☐ Did I make a credible, specific ask?

Remember what “movement” looks like

GREEN

Moved forward

Enough trust or alignment for the next step.

ORANGE

Moved with friction

Some movement, but a concern, condition, or pressure remains.

RED

Stalled

Not enough trust or alignment yet. Reframe and try again.

KEEP THE TOOL HANDY

Additional resources for The Housing Passport:

<https://wingedwolf.org/the-housing-passport-participant-resources/>

Download the
Quick Reference
Guide

