

EASTERN CONNECTICUT HOUSING CONVERSATIONS TOOLKIT



**CENTER FOR
HOUSING
EQUITY AND
OPPORTUNITY**
EASTERN CONNECTICUT

January 2024



Eastern Connecticut Housing Conversations Toolkit

Towns, cities and local organizations in eastern Connecticut fight an uphill battle to create more housing that is affordable. This is due in large part to public perceptions about what affordable housing looks like, how it's built, who needs it, and how it contributes to a community.

Housing advocates and community leaders need to begin changing these perceptions and building public will for affordable housing by making a more effective case.

This document is intended to help you bring to life the recommendations in our playbook, *Stable Homes, Strong Communities: Changing the Narrative Around Affordable Housing in Eastern Connecticut*.

STABLE HOMES, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Changing the Narrative Around Affordable Housing in Eastern Connecticut



January 2024

STRATEGY: HOW ARE WE BUILDING SUPPORT?

At the Center for Housing Equity and Opportunity of Eastern Connecticut, our objective is to produce and preserve housing that is affordable to all residents of New London, Tolland, and Windham Counties. We believe eastern Connecticut should be a place where anyone can make a living, raise a family, and enjoy the beautiful things our region has to offer. To achieve this objective, we need to build more public will for affordable housing.

As we outlined in *Stable Homes, Strong Communities*, homes are the heart of our lives and communities. Too many of our neighbors or would-be neighbors, however, are denied the opportunity to buy or rent a safe, affordable home. Eastern Connecticut residents understand the logical and emotional value of a home, but they don't necessarily see that the lack of equity and opportunity in our housing market impacts all of us and holds our communities back.

With the housing crisis impacting more people than ever before, we have an opportunity to build more support for affordable housing than ever before. Some of our neighbors may not care about or may oppose affordable housing. Others may care, but may not see a path forward out of this crisis. Still, most share a common aspiration for affordable, equitable and stable communities.

As champions for affordable housing, we must attract all those neighbors to our cause and bring them on our journey by demonstrating that their aspiration is achievable, and it depends upon housing. When we can put people's own aspirations in front of them, that's when they will start saying "yes" to affordable housing.

AUDIENCE: WHO ARE WE TARGETING?

As you strive to build public will, ask yourself who needs to be part of your journey. Consider who in your community can build momentum for your cause, including people with lived experience, public officials, unions, faith institutions, chambers of commerce, universities, healthcare systems, and more.

Perform a stakeholder analysis, which is a fancy way of saying "make a wish list" of all the people who have an interest in making eastern Connecticut more affordable, equitable and stable. These are the key stakeholders you need to attract to your cause by engaging and partnering with them and building their trust over time. This toolkit contains sample communications, and your list of stakeholders will be the audience for these communications.

Remember that your stakeholders have different levels of understanding about housing and related issues, so you will often need to tweak your messages for different groups or individuals. This is especially true for concepts like equity and racism. Being upfront about this and talking about the different ways people label inequity can lead to more productive conversations.

You can think of your key stakeholders in different groups:

Influencers & Champions

Influencers and champions are the people who champion the cause of affordable housing. These are the true believers, those who are spearheading affordable housing efforts in your community. If you're reading this, you're likely an influencer or a champion and you are responsible for attracting others to join your journey.

Gatekeepers

Gatekeepers are the agencies, organizations and institutions which hold the keys to power in your community. Without their support, you may not be able to achieve your objectives. The most obvious example are local elected officials, but unions, churches, healthcare systems and chambers of commerce can be gatekeepers, too.

Public at-Large

Members of the public may be for, against, or neutral towards your cause. Your goal is to bring them on your journey. You don't need to convert everyone, but you should strive to connect with as many people as possible in dialogue about your shared hopes for the region. Then, the public can help apply pressure to gatekeepers and encourage them to act.

MESSAGING: WHAT ARE WE SAYING?

To persuade key stakeholders and build public will, housing advocates need to use new and more effective messaging. Our messaging should position housing as a solution to residents' biggest concerns, like health care, education, jobs, and people being priced out or displaced because of rising costs. It should emphasize equity and link the fate of the region as a whole to the fate of those most impacted by the housing crisis.

Our messaging should also uplift the voices of those community members most impacted by rising housing costs. For example, talk to a business owner, a school teacher, a single parent, an employee who works in town, a college student, or a senior citizen about their housing challenges. Amplify their stories when you're talking about housing with your community.

Our messaging should not demoralize or alienate the people we are trying to persuade. Don't try to bang people over the head with data or the negative consequences of the housing shortages. Instead, build residents' optimism by sharing local successes and examples of how other regions have tackled housing issues or are making progress. Offer an aspirational vision for the region, and show residents that they can achieve that vision.

What follows are examples of effective messaging about affordable housing in eastern Connecticut based on the recommendations in *Stable Homes, Strong Communities*. We will need a comprehensive organizing strategy in order to make systems-level change, and sharing messages like these will be a key part of that strategy.

News Media

You can often reach key stakeholders through the news media by submitting letters or opinions to papers, speaking to reporters and being quoted in stories, and commenting on articles online. Pay attention to what's happening in local media and strategically insert housing into those conversations. For example, submit letters linking housing to education during "back-to-school" time, or elevate the voice of people who are homeless when the weather is getting cold.

Letters

A Letter to the Editor (LTE) is a brief communication to a newspaper's editors expressing an idea or opinion, which is then published. They're 100-400 words depending on the paper, and often respond to other articles or letters in the paper. They should be short and courteous. They should clearly state their purpose at the beginning, explain key points in the middle, and provide a summary with future recommendations at the end. [Here is some additional guidance.](#)

Submission Guidelines

- ▶ New London Day
- ▶ Norwich Bulletin
- ▶ Hartford Courant
- ▶ CT Examiner
- ▶ Willimantic Chronicle (does not accept letters but welcomes story suggestions)
- ▶ Tolland County Daily Voice (does not accept letters but welcomes story suggestions)

Opinions

An op-ed ("opposite the editorial page") is a column, generally between 500-800 words, that offers a strong, informed, and focused opinion on a relevant issue. It will have a topic (the person, place, issue, or incident that is the primary focus) and a theme (the big, overarching idea applied to the topic). For example, you may apply the theme of equity to a topic of a specific government policy. The topic should appear at the beginning, while the theme is woven throughout. Generally, op-eds have a thesis, argument, first point, second point, third point, a paragraph where you address counter-arguments, and a conclusion where you circle back to the thesis. The average reader is not an expert on your topic, so use plain language and provide research. [Here is some additional guidance.](#)

Submission Guidelines

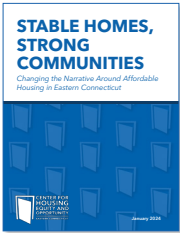
- ▶ New London Day
- ▶ Hartford Courant
- ▶ CT Viewpoints in CT Mirror

Patch

Patch is a unique national news network of more than 1,000 hyperlocal websites covering community news in towns across America. There are [more than 65 Patch papers](#) across Connecticut. The publication has a unique community forum called [Neighbor Posts](#) that connects you to other neighbors—as well as reporters, local officials, nonprofits, businesses and experts in your area. This can be a great place to start a discussion: [learn about how to create Neighbor Posts here.](#)

Letter-to-Editor

Connect housing to things which everyone desires, like economic development or quality education.



PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS
#2. *Clearly establish the connection between affordable housing, jobs, and economic development.*

GENERAL DYNAMICS' HIRING SPREE REQUIRES AFFORDABLE HOUSING

For more than a century, General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton has been the primary builder of submarines for the U.S. Navy and an anchor of eastern Connecticut's economy. They are currently in the process of more than 5,700 workers, which is great news for our region. The bad news? New employees may not be able to find an affordable place to live nearby.

For example, more than 80% of Groton residents commute to the area from somewhere else, partially because of the high cost of housing in the area. This is a concern for local officials. "If people are not living in the communities where they're working, basically, we end up hemorrhaging money," says Groton's Economic & Community Development Manager, Paige Bronk. "That money exits our communities and is spent elsewhere."

New employees at General Dynamics Electric Boat will be looking for homes and apartments at decent prices so they can settle down in the area. Small local businesses will be looking to benefit from the influx of new capital. It's a win-win for our communities: the only missing ingredient is more affordable housing. The next time an affordable housing proposal comes before Planning & Zoning, let's ask ourselves what we can do to support it.

Demonstrate that the fate of the region is connected to the fate of those most impacted by the housing crisis.

PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS
#3. *Introduce equity to housing conversations.*

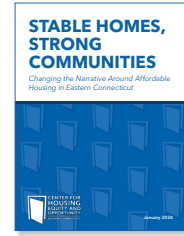
FALLING TIDE SINKS ALL BOATS

If a rising tide lifts all boats, what does a falling tide do? The increasing cost of housing in our town is hurting working class families and dragging down the community as a whole. Fortunately, we can take action locally to stop this trend, provide housing for the most vulnerable among us, and strengthen our communities in the process.

Many of the people our community depends on are the people who depend on affordable housing. Home health aides, teachers and service workers are just some of the groups who usually earn salaries which are below the area median income, which means they would qualify for affordable housing. Often these groups would be considered "ALICE," or Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, earning more than the Federal Poverty Level but not enough to afford the basics where they live.

ALICE workers were celebrated as heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet many cannot find stable housing in our region. What's more, roughly 75 percent of ALICE households in eastern Connecticut are run by single working mothers. If housing costs push these folks out of our communities, it will impact local services and businesses. Will our schools attract quality educators if they can't live nearby? Will our seniors receive the care they need if home healthcare workers are out of commuting range? A falling tide sinks all boats.

Make equity part of your case for affordable housing. Encourage people to challenge inequitable systems.



PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS
#3. Introduce equity to housing conversations.

CREATING EQUAL ACCESS TO THE AMERICAN DREAM

The ability to own your home is a fundamental part of the "American dream," but this opportunity was not always equally available to all Americans, and we see the impacts of this in our communities today. Fortunately, all of us can take action at the local level to address these impacts by supporting the construction of homes that are more affordable.

In Connecticut, families of color haven't had the same access to resources or opportunities to own homes, rent apartments, or find shelter as others in our community.

Some of us will call this "unfair" while others will call it "discriminatory" or "racist." Others may even deny that it's a problem. Regardless of what we call this part of our past, the majority of us agree that we do not want it to be part of our future. To achieve that, we need to proactively address inequality in the housing market.

For example, many homes in Connecticut once had "[restrictive covenants](#)" in their deeds, which prevented them from being sold to anyone who wasn't white. In addition, Black Americans were [unable to take advantage of low-cost mortgages](#) provided by the GI Bill after World War II because banks would not make loans in Black neighborhoods. Homes purchased by veterans have appreciated greatly since then, building wealth for those who owned them. Black Americans were denied this wealth-building opportunity.

Today, more than half of Black and Latino households in Connecticut are housing cost burdened, meaning they spend more than one third of their income on rent, mortgages or other housing-related costs. The same is true for less than a third of white households.

This not only hurts Black and Latino households, but all of us. It makes many of our towns less diverse, which robs us of the benefits of interacting with people of other cultures. Once our children become college students or young professionals, they will

be expected to live, work, and form connections in a diverse and multi-racial world. We should strive to provide them this opportunity when they are growing up.

One way to do so is to support the construction of more housing that is affordable, which would support more homeownership and stability among all households and particularly Black and Latino households.

White Americans hold approximately ten times more wealth than Black Americans, in part because of the private- and public-sector practices like those mentioned above which made it harder for Black households to build generational wealth. As a result, when new homes and rentals come on the market that are reserved for households which make less than the area median income, it can indirectly benefit people of color.

It's important to emphasize that this does not detract from other communities. White households who struggle with the cost of housing will have just as much opportunity to purchase or rent new affordable homes as anyone else. In other words, housing is not a zero sum game. White households don't lose out when Black and Latino households make gains.

Inequality does not always fall along racial lines, but the data show that it often does with regard to housing in Connecticut. If we want to be a place where all people have equal access to the American dream, we should support the construction of more homes which are affordable for those making less than the area median income.

When more households of color can afford to live in more Connecticut towns, it will enrich our communities with diversity and the benefits it brings. This future will not happen without action in the present, however. So the next time someone proposes to build new affordable homes in your community, keep this in mind.

Public Forums

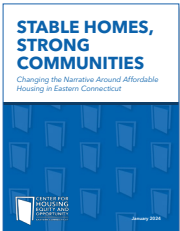
You can often reach gatekeepers and the public at the same time during public forums, like meetings held by local or state government commissions. Meetings about affordable housing are generally held by planning or zoning commissions, where the public can comment on specific developments or proposals. Show up and testify by sharing your positive vision for the community. People who oppose housing often show up to these meetings. If the people who support housing don't show up, only one side of the story gets told

Tips & Best Practices:

- ▶ Meeting schedules and agendas can usually be found on town websites
- ▶ Many meetings now have an option to attend virtually
- ▶ Arrive early to give yourself time to be calm and present
- ▶ Sign up on the sheet for public comment if one is available
- ▶ Public comment or testimony is often limited to three minutes
- ▶ Prepare notes that will help you deliver your key points clearly, and within the time limit
- ▶ When your name is called, identify yourself, give your or your organization's address, and testify
- ▶ Make your case using just one to three key points
- ▶ Consider offering a [personal testimony](#) if you can
- ▶ You can also write your testimony and ask that the recording secretary receive a copy
- ▶ If you cannot attend, learn where, when, and how you can submit written comments

The screenshot shows the website for Old Lyme, Connecticut. The navigation bar includes 'TOWN DEPARTMENTS', 'BOARDS & COMMISSIONS', 'EXPLORE OLD LYME', and 'HOW DO I...'. The main content area is titled 'Planning Commission' and features a 'List of Members' button, a 'Meetings' section with details (5 pm, 2nd Thursday of every month, Old Lyme Memorial Town Hall, 52 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, Mezzanine Conference Room), and a 'Contact Us' section with information for Eric Knapp (Land Use Coordinator) and Kim Groves, CZET (Land Use (Planning, Inland Wetlands)). A sidebar on the left contains 'Forms & Documents' and 'Agendas & Minutes' with a link to 'View Most Recent Agendas and Minutes'.

Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Testimony



PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS
#6. *Navigate away from negative narratives.*

I'm here to encourage the Windham Planning and Zoning Commission to seek more state funding for the construction of affordable housing developments.

Assistance from the state in 2022 led to the creation of 16 new apartments in the historic Murray building in downtown Willimantic that are reserved for people with lower incomes. Projects like this, especially those which safely repurpose our historic buildings, are terrific.

We all know rents are rising in Willimantic. It's forcing some of our working families to move away or struggle with instability, and it's preventing new working families from moving in. Most of us want to do something about this, and some are pointing the finger at our universities, ECSU and UConn.

I understand why people feel this way. It's true that landlords may look at students as more desirable renters than families of lesser means, because the students may have access to student loans, money as dependents, or guarantors of rent.

Yet does anyone want these universities to leave our community? I suspect that few people do, because ultimately the universities are an asset. Could they be doing more as community partners to stop displacement? Likely so. But the people in this room are not responsible for what the universities do. However, as residents we are responsible for what the town does, and the town government can do more to incentivize the construction of affordable housing.

We can be a community with great schools and an abundance of affordable places to live—we don't have to accept a false choice between one or the other! To get there, we need more homes that are affordable to current residents to stop displacement and stabilize our community. These include both starter homes and rental units reserved for those making less than area median income.

The state Department of Housing has funding in-hand and says it's waiting for towns to bring them projects. The P&Z Commission can identify more town-owned parcels that are suitable for residential use, and work with the state and developers to incentivize affordable housing there. I'll do everything I can to support your vision and rally my neighbors to support it, too.

Have you heard of the Serenity Prayer? "God, grant me the wisdom to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Let's consider how we approach the universities on this issue, but let's focus first and foremost on the things we can change, like the type of development that happens in our community.

Social Media

Social media can help your message reach large audiences, sometimes thousands of people at once. Each platform is different, so you need to use each one a bit differently based on who you're trying to reach. Facebook and LinkedIn offer more space for detailed posts, X (formerly Twitter) is ideal for short posts, and Instagram and TikTok are driven by visual content. The former are generally more popular among older generations, while the latter are more popular among younger generations. Generally, it's quick and easy to deploy messages on social media compared to other media. When you read an article about affordable housing, consider sharing it on social media with a constructive message that inspires others to lean in on the issue.

Tips & Best Practices

- ▶ Structure posts appropriately for each platform, considering length, photo or video requirements, and audience preferences
- ▶ Be concise and try to limit your post to just one idea or topic
- ▶ Write a post that someone else would want to share or engage with
- ▶ Include a visual component or a hyperlink, like an article, event, graphic or flyers
- ▶ Include a call-to-action (what you want your audience to do after seeing your post)
- ▶ Encourage feedback and discussion so more people engage with your post
- ▶ Research relevant hashtags and apply them to your post
- ▶ Tag other users in your post to increase the post's reach, especially local officials or organizations
- ▶ Cross post, which means sharing the same content across multiple social media platforms (platforms like Facebook, which owns Instagram, often have options to cross-post videos, articles, or updates)

Facebook

Facebook is the platform where you can most easily reach members of your own community, specifically through Groups. **See next page for more information and sample facebook posts.**

Instagram & TikTok

Instagram and TikTok are driven by visual content because posts need to include a photo or video. People often use these platforms to spread information about social and political topics. For example, the topic of urbanism and affordable housing is popular on TikTok, **attracting hundreds of thousands of mostly young viewers**. If you research relevant hashtags (i.e. #affordablehousing #housingpolicy #housingcrisis #ctpolitics) and apply them to your TikTok post, you can reach thousands of viewers. Consider, however, that most may not necessarily be on your key stakeholder list.

X

X (formerly Twitter) is a good place to share news articles, events and websites related to your affordable housing journey. However, if you only have very few followers your message may only reach a few people. Still, many elected officials use the platform frequently, and if you "tag" them in your posts, they or their staff will see it. So you can engage with gatekeepers directly on this platform but it may be hard to reach the general public in your own community.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a platform oriented towards businesses and the professional class, so it is generally not the first choice for social or political advocacy. Still, if housing or advocacy is your profession it makes sense to leverage this popular platform to share your journey and your efforts.

Facebook Posts

Facebook is the platform where you can most easily reach members of your own community, specifically through Groups. Some Groups have thousands of members, so your posts there can reach many people at once even if you have just a few Facebook friends.

Search your town on Facebook and join relevant groups associated with it. For example, a Facebook search for “New London CT” returned at least four relevant groups with memberships between 300-15,000 people, listed below. These are generally “unofficial” groups managed by residents, not town officials. Consider posting in Facebook Groups and engaging with other posts to spread your positive vision for the town.

- ▶ New London Community Forum
- ▶ Neighbors of New London County
- ▶ New London Local Interest
- ▶ New London Strong

PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION

#5. Focus on solutions, not problems. Emphasize success stories.

Mark McNulty
Just now · 🌐

There's a ton of demand in eastern Connecticut for more affordable places to live. All 68 affordable units in the new Spruce Meadows development in Stonington were occupied almost immediately after they were constructed. Let's work together to meet the demand!

CTPUBLIC.ORG

Affordable apartment complex in Stonington exposes area's housing needs

Like Comment Share

Mark McNulty
Just now · 🌐

The Penomah Lofts in Norwich are a striking example of what affordable housing can be. By repurposing an old factory, we're preserving eastern Connecticut's industrial past while building a more affordable future!

THEDAY.COM

Ponemah Mill stands tall as affordable housing solution
Norwich — It's a fair bet that anyone's first mental image of affordable housin...

Like Comment Share

Mark McNulty
Just now · 🌐

We're building on eastern Connecticut's past to create an affordable, equitable future. In Montville, an old mill is being converted into affordable studio, 1BR, 2BR apartments. They're even restoring the smokestack! Let's do more of this.

THEDAY.COM

Developer resumes construction of affordable housing at former mill in Montville

Like Comment Share

Direct Contact with Decision Makers

To ensure you reach gatekeepers, contact them directly. Find contact details for elected or appointed officials making housing decisions, whether this is your City Council, Board of Selectmen, Planning & Zoning officials, or State Representatives. Contact information for town officials can often be found on your town's website. The Town Clerk's office is often a good source of information, too. You can identify your state lawmakers through the [Find Your Legislators tool](#). You can ask to schedule a telephone or video conference, ask for a personal meeting, or send a letter to the legislator's office.

Before you call, outline your specific points regarding affordable housing, conveying the need for immediate action and potential solutions. Uplift stories of successful solutions in the region. Thank the official and urge him or her to take action. If you are writing a letter, follow the same advice and send your letter to the appropriate office. Communicate your concerns politely, providing concise details, and urging action to increase affordable housing in the region. Elevate the stories of those with lived experience such as the business owner or teacher.



CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Monday, December 18, 2023

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C G A / REPRESENTATION / FIND YOUR LEGISLATORS

Find Your Legislators

Town

Street Name

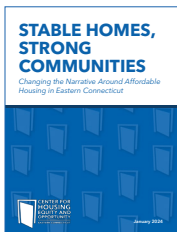
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Flyers & Signs

Flyers and signs quickly advertise a simple idea or event with text and visuals. For example, we've all likely seen lawn signs advertising political candidates or social causes. You can make one advertising your support for affordable housing. The text should be extremely simple—one or two short sentences maximum. If there is an important local government hearing taking place about affordable housing, consider making a flyer encouraging people to testify in support. Include the location, time, and date. If possible, include a QR code so people can scan the flyer with their smart phone and receive more info. Hang these up in gathering places like cafes, community centers or squares.

PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

#4. Demonstrate that affordable housing comes in many forms and serves people of many backgrounds and income-levels.

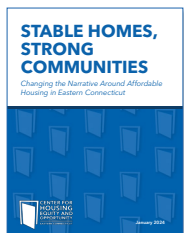


We can preserve our industrial past while building our affordable future.



Tell the first selectman you support redevelopment for affordable housing!

Neighborly Conversation



PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

#6. *Navigate away from negative narratives.*

One way to reach the public, of course, is by speaking directly with your neighbors. Recognize that they may have different views, so try to find points of agreement before discussing the things you may disagree upon. After all, you often want the same thing—an affordable, equitable, stable community. Avoid negative narratives, misinformation or disruptive comments by constantly pivoting back to your own positive vision for the community.

Neighbor: Did you hear that the town is considering building low-income housing off of Main Street?

You: Yea, I actually think it's a great idea.

Neighbor: A great idea? Isn't low-income housing associated with crime, drug use, and other problems? You think our town is the right place for that?

You: "Low-income housing" just means the homes or apartments are reserved for people who make less than the area's average income.

Neighbor: Have you seen some of the low-income housing in our cities? That is not suitable for our town.

You: You know, diversity is important to me. I'd like our town to be more diverse. Right now, we really only offer one or two types of homes, and this prevents us from being more diverse.

Neighbor: Diversity is important to me, too. I'm not saying we keep anyone out, that would be wrong. I don't necessarily care who moves here, as long as they can afford it.

You: I understand where you're coming from. We worked hard to afford our homes here, after all. But if it costs \$500,000 to live here, we won't achieve much economic or racial diversity.

Neighbor: Sure, but people need to earn what they get. We can't just give away things.

You: People would be buying those "low-income" units with real money, just like you or I did.

Neighbor: Yea, but they're less expensive than the rest of the town.

You: I want our community to be a welcoming place, which can happen if we allow some less expensive homes. If we don't change our housing, how can we be diverse and welcoming?

Neighbor: Alright, I kind of see what you mean.



CENTER FOR HOUSING EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY

EASTERN CONNECTICUT

Center for Housing Equity and Opportunity, Eastern Connecticut (CHEO) thanks Dr. Tiffany “Dr T” Manuel and her team at TheCaseMade for their research reflected in this report, based on Dr T’s Strategic CaseMaking™ Framework outlined in her book, *Case Made!: 10 Powerful Leadership Principles that Win Hearts, Change Minds, and Grow Impact*. CHEO also thanks JPMorgan Chase for making this work possible, our Narrative Change Advisory Committee, and all the individuals who contributed to this report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Center for Housing Equity and Opportunity of Eastern Connecticut (CHEO) thanks Dr. Tiffany “DrT” Manuel and her team at TheCaseMade for their research reflected in this report, based on DrT’s Strategic Case-Making™ Framework. CHEO also thanks JPMorgan Chase for making this work possible, its Casemaking Advisory Committee, and all other individuals who contributed to this report.

TheCaseMade JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

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COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF EASTERN CT brings people together to work towards a healthy, thriving, sustainable Eastern Connecticut with greater equity for all. We achieve this by collaborating with partners to put philanthropy into action to address the needs, rights and interests of our community.



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE educates students to put the liberal arts into action as citizens in a global society. The College promotes an understanding of local, regional, national, and international peoples, groups, cultures, and issues, and encourages students to take a life-long interest in them.



EASTERN CT STATE UNIVERSITY engages students from diverse backgrounds in a transformative, liberal arts learning experience that provides knowledge and skills to lead enriching, purposeful lives.



THE HOUSING COLLECTIVE is a CT-based nonprofit agency that applies a Collective Impact framework to deliver solutions to the most pressing housing problems. Focused on ending homelessness and creating equitable access to housing opportunities for all, the Housing Collective provides the leadership and support that enables productive, regional collaboration across organizations and sectors and drives systems change.



REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION is an independent non-profit civic organization that develops and promotes ideas to improve the economic health, environmental resilience, and quality of life of the New York metropolitan area. RPA conducts research on the environment, land use, and good governance, and advises cities, communities, and public agencies.



PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES is a statewide nonprofit policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ending homelessness, expanding affordable housing, and building strong communities in Connecticut. PSC creates and promotes supportive and affordable housing, and community development and connects key state and federal policymakers, local officials, corporate leaders and nonprofit organizations.



UNITED WAY OF SOUTHEASTERN CT'S mission is to inspire and coordinate the generosity and commitment that sustains a united, thriving community. Generous donors and volunteers enable United Way to support a network of health and human service programs and initiatives in New London County that help people in need and improve community conditions in four areas: Basic Needs; Community Wellness; Promoting Independence; and Thriving Children.

To learn more, visit cthousingopportunity.org or write to beth@thehousingcollective.org

