

Raise Awareness of the Housing Crisis in Your Community

RESULTS volunteers want to help solve the housing crisis. Millions of low-income families are unable to afford even a modest apartment in areas across America. With only one in four eligible families getting housing assistance, new resources from the federal government would go a long way in helping families put a roof over their heads.

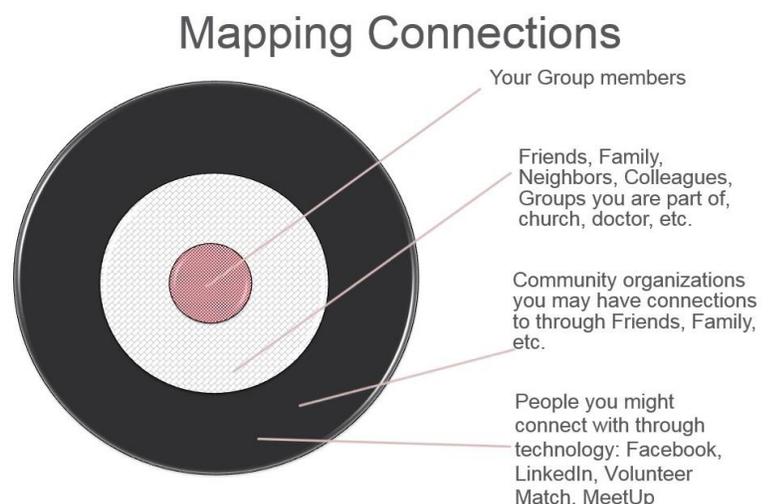
As you work to create the political will for greater access to affordable housing, one of the most effective tools you can use exists right in your community. There are groups and organizations in almost every part of the country who also care about the needs of low-income families. Faith communities, your local housing authority, anti-poverty advocates, tenants' rights groups, educational institutions, and others could be powerful allies in your work. This "grasstops outreach" is fertile ground to share knowledge and skills, gain new viewpoints, share stories, and lobby elected officials. Building political will is a team effort. Take time this month to assemble your local team.

Build Community Allies in the Fight for Affordable Housing

Use the tools below to help "map" potential allies in your community.

- 1. Individually or as a group, make a list using these questions** (see below for resources to find housing allies):
 - a) Who is concerned about affordable housing?
 - b) Who is struggling to make ends meet?
 - c) Who is studying issues related to poverty and/or lack of affordable housing locally or nationally?
 - d) Who is serving people struggling to make ends meet?
 - e) Whose values call them to address poverty?
- 2. Map your connections to people/organizations on your list.**

Who in your RESULTS group, network of friends, neighbors, colleagues, acquaintances may have connections to those on the list?
- 3. Each person take their respective contacts** and set a timeline for when you will contact the people/orgs on your list.
- 4. Before contacting them, research the organizations on your list** to get a better idea of the work they do.



ACTION SHEET

5. **Write down ideas for ways you could work together.** Ideas could include:
 - a) participating in local lobby meetings
 - b) doing letter-writing, media, or lobby trainings
 - c) listening to stories from those directly affected by the housing crisis
 - d) sharing personal stories (with permission) in lobby meetings or other events
 - e) inviting local advocates to attend the [RESULTS International Conference](#) with you
6. **Plan and practice what you plan to say.** Here is a sample conversation/e-mail:
My name is _____ and I'm with an organization called RESULTS. We train people to advocate for the end of poverty. Our belief is that creating "political will" is the best way to create lasting change, and so we train people to shape public policy and influence political decisions affecting poverty in America. In 2019, our focus is on expanding access to federal housing assistance. In reading about your work at _____, I think there are ways we could work together to raise awareness about housing here in our community. Do you have time in the next week to get together?
7. **Contact the organizations and set up a time to meet.** When meeting, bring your list of ideas from #5 above and discuss them. If the meeting seems successful, outline next steps before leaving.

If you are unsure about to whom to reach out, here are some places to start looking:

- Search for [member organizations](#) of the National Low-Income Housing Coalition or the [Opportunity Starts at Home campaign](#)
- Look for [state affiliates](#) of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Search for local non-profits using [Guidestar](#) (type in "housing" or "poverty" and your city to get started)

Participate in "Our Homes, Our Voices" Week of Action

Another way to raise awareness and cultivate community alliances around housing is to participate in the National Low-Income Housing Coalition's ["Our Homes, Our Voices" Week of Action](#), May 30-June 5, 2019. Last year, the week of action generated 120 events around the country to raise awareness of more resources for affordable housing. Groups have flexibility in [what kind of events to hold](#) including rallies, advocacy/issue trainings, lobby meetings, site visits, and local call-in or write-in days.

Plan to participate in the Week of Action. You can host your own event or join one already taking place. Go to their [events page](#) to find existing events or to register your own. The ["Our Homes, Our Voices" website](#) has branding items (they ask that the OHOV logo be used somewhere), educational materials, and how-to's to help you. Also, use RESULTS' new housing slides ([PPT](#) or [PDF](#)) and one-pager ([Word](#) or [PDF](#)) for local events. If you need further assistance, please contact Jos Linn jlinn@results.org.