



Community Engagement Campaign: Core Messaging Guide

Our Shared Purpose

The Hamilton County Housing Collaborative (HCHC) is committed to ensuring a full range of housing options for every stage of life. Together, we aim to reduce stigma, highlight the economic and personal benefits of attainable housing, and build a stronger, more vibrant Hamilton County.

This is about keeping Hamilton County a place where young families, longtime residents, seniors, and essential workers can continue to call home - not just now, but for generations to come.

Key Messages

1. We Have a Housing Mismatch

- Many who work here can't afford to live here.
- 96% of residents say there's not enough housing for hourly employees.
- Rents and mortgages far exceed what people believe is affordable.

"The people who make Hamilton County work can't afford to live here."

2. We Can Grow Without Losing What We Value

- Half of residents express concerns about density and home values.
- Research shows affordable housing does not decrease property values or safety.
- 73% say affordable housing does not hurt neighborhood culture.

"You can support housing AND protect your neighborhood values."

3. The Majority Supports Action

- 86% say a variety of housing types is important.
- 72% know someone who has struggled with housing costs or has experienced it themselves.
- This affects neighbors, coworkers, teachers, seniors and families.

"Hamilton County residents are ready for more housing options."

4. Housing Variety = Economic Strength

- Businesses struggle to hire when workers can't live nearby.
- Diverse housing supports young professionals, families, and retirees.

- Attainable housing strengthens schools, public services, and local businesses.

“We can’t have a strong economy without housing our workforce.”

5. Seniors Are Being Left Behind

- Seniors on fixed incomes are being priced out of the communities they built.
- Nearly 43% of residents over age 65 in Hamilton County are ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)
- Rising property taxes and rents mean many lifelong residents are forced to downsize or leave entirely.

“Who wants to kick their grandparents out of their home?”

“After decades of contributing, our seniors deserve the dignity of staying in the community they helped shape.”

6. HCHC Is Building Solutions

- We are engaging communities through education and conversation.
- We’re working with partners on real strategies like zoning reform, community land trusts, and employer partnerships.
- Together, we can create lasting change.

“When housing works for everyone, everything else works better.”

Quick Soundbites for Every Conversation

“We don’t have a people problem - we have a housing shortage.”

“Housing options are about keeping Hamilton County livable for all of us.”

“No one should have to leave the community they love just because of rising costs.”

“Who wants to kick their grandparents out of their home?”

“When housing works for everyone, everything else works better.”

Example in Action: EMT Story

Real Life Story

Cody is a Hamilton County EMT, literally putting his life on the line to protect our community every day. After a difficult divorce, he was awarded sole custody of his daughter. But even working full time in this critical role, Cody can’t afford a safe two-bedroom apartment on his \$2,700 monthly income. The only option he has found is a trailer

for \$1,100 a month, leaving little left for food, utilities, and childcare. Right now, Cody and his daughter are living with his parents, but like any parent, he dreams of providing a stable home of their own.

Cody's story is not unique. It shows how even our first responders, the very people we count on in emergencies, are being priced out of Hamilton County.

Sample Soundbite (Cody or Ambassador):

"I give everything I have to protect this community, but I can't even afford a place for me and my daughter to call home. Who would have thought a first responder would be priced out of the very community he serves?"

Learn more and get involved: www.handincorporated.org/hchc
Hashtag: #RethinkHousing #HousingINHamCo