# Rapid Re-Housing Challenge Marketing Materials

***How to use this tool:*** *These marketing materials – including a sample press release and talking points – can help participants communicate to various stakeholders about the Rapid Re-Housing Challenge.*

# Sample Talking Points

#### General Rapid Re-Housing

* Rapid re-housing is cost effective, and proven to work.
* Families and individuals move into market-rate apartments in the community, and receive temporary rental assistance and services that are tailored to their specific needs, including a case manager to assist with any problems.
* Case managers will help landlords if any problems arise.

#### Rapid Re-Housing Challenge

* # of organizations rapidly re-housed \_\_ households in the past \_\_ months (use outcomes of first half of Learning Collaborative
* This initiative is part of a state-wide effort to reduce homelessness launched in 2017 by (organization)
* Participating organizations set ambitious goals for re-housed families
* A collaborative of # organizations across pooled their expertise to improve rapid re-housing in preparation for the challenge.

# Rapid re-housing challenge Summary

From (date) to (Date), our organization is participating in an ambitious initiative called the Rapid Re-Housing Challenge to place as many homeless families as possible in permanent housing in 100 days through rapid re-housing. Rapid re-housing is a proven and cost-effective strategy that has been used by communities across the country to reduce homelessness. It involves helping households move into housing as quickly as possible after they enter the shelter system, and then helping them maintain this housing through the provision of services and short-term financial assistance as needed.

A collaborative of # organizations has been working since (date) to develop expertise to improve rapid re-housing in preparation for the challenge. The results so far are promising. Changes implemented by participating organizations have resulted in (discuss positive gains by Learning Collaborative).

# Instructions for Pitching Reporters and Sample Pitch Email

**Overview**

Most reporters cover a specific beat (the economy, politics, local news, etc.). There is likely a metro reporter (someone who covers local news), economics reporter, city reporter, national reporter, and local sports reporter on every regional newspaper. Sometimes there are even *social issue reporters*, *lifestyle reporters*, or *investigative reporters* who cover a specific set of issues.

**Tricks for Successful Pitches**

**1. Do your homework.** Don’t blindly pitch every staff writer at your local paper. Look through the paper and see who recently wrote a story about housing and homelessness issues. Or, if no such writer exists, look and see who covers local/community issues. The goal here is to send your email to the writer who is most likely to be interested in covering it. If all else fails, try writing the *Assignment Editor* or the *Metro* or *City Desk Editor* and **ask them to whom you should be talking**.

**2. Show your stuff.** In your email, demonstrate that you know you are writing the right person. Try something like, “I noticed in your last story about homelessness…” or “In your piece about crime in our community…” Referencing the title or date helps (see example below). Make sure to read the article before referencing it.

**3. Embrace brevity.** Shorter is better - try to keep your email short enough that the reader will not have to scroll down to read the entire email.

**4. Craft the subject line.** Don't leave this blank, and avoid writing something vague like "introduction" or "pitch" in the subject line. Write something declarative that would spark interest, such as “Communities Band Together to Fight Homelessness” or reference the article the reporter wrote, “Your article, ‘Once living in the streets.’”

**5. Get to the point.** It may be tempting to explain homelessness and its solutions and spend paragraphs providing the background information, but this is likely to make you lose the reporter’s interest. Get to the point quickly.

**6. Make it happen.**After sending your email, call to follow up. Wait a few days, be polite and considerate on the phone, and get to the point. Try something like: “I don’t want to take up your time, but I’m just checking up on an email I sent two days ago about a new local homelessness initiative; should I resend it?”

# Sample Email

Hi Kristi,

I saw your article about the McGrath family in the *Rapid City Journal* (“Once living in the streets, family now happy for a home,” Nov. 22, 2013.)

While the national numbers of people in homeless families continues to rise, family homeless in Virginia is declining because of new cost effective interventions. Around 3,093 people in families were homeless on a single night in Virginia in 2013, representing a 7.4 percent decrease from 2012. Our organization has joined 34 other organizations across the state, and the National Alliance to End Homelessness, in a statewide challenge to house [#] of homeless families in our [city/community] in the next 100 days.

To do so, we’re going to be using an innovative housing strategy called rapid re-housing, a cost-effective solution to family homelessness that has already led to a decrease in family homelessness in Virginia. We’d love to discuss this new effort with you, and we’d be happy to set up a time for you to speak with a landlord that has helped house a homeless family, as well as arrange an opportunity for you to get photos for your publication.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. I’ll follow up on this email in the next few days.

Name

Phone number

Email

# Sample PRess Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**[Organization] pledges to house [#] homeless families and individuals in 100 days**

By [Your Name]

[Date]

[City], [State] – As part of a state-wide Rapid Re-Housing Challenge, [Organization] announced today that they will house [#] of homeless families and individuals in [community] in the next 100 days. [Organization] joins [#] other organizations across the state in committing to house [overall number] of homeless households within this 100 day period.

[Quote from your organization’s leadership about the Challenge’s positive impact on the community.]

Rapid re-housing is a proven and cost-effective strategy that has been used across the country to reduce homelessness. Families and individuals are housed in market-rate apartments in the community, and receive rental subsidies and services tailored to their needs. [Organization] has worked over the past five months to develop a robust rapid re-housing program that will be tested by the challenge.

The Rapid Re-Housing Challenge will move [community] closer to accomplishing their stated goal of reducing homelessness.

About [Organization]

[Two to three sentences on your organization, mission, and accomplishments.]

[Your website URL]

Contact

To learn more please contact

[Name], [Title]

[Address]

Office: [Phone number]

[Email address]

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