**HOUSING WORK GROUP COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

This is an overview of objectives, strategies, and tactics for the Housing Work Group communications plan. Audiences include: individual groups’ constituents, housing-related groups not involved with Work Group, public at large, media, lawmakers.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Reframe housing issue in Minnesota to be more market facing.
- Respond to urgent communications needs for legislative session; look at long-term communications needs for Minnesota housing community.
- To provide united, consistent and broad messaging for the Minnesota housing community.
- Support and promote the Housing Policy Work Group’s policy agenda.
- Raise awareness of housing issues, and the importance of affordable housing options for people along the entire housing spectrum.

**STRATEGIES**

1. Develop and execute a communications action plan to coincide with the MN legislative session.
2. Develop communications deliverables to support Housing Policy Work Group’s policy agenda.
3. Identify media targets and pitch key housing issues that support the Housing Policy Work Group’s policy agenda.
4. Develop long term communications plan to keep housing issues front and center throughout the year, and position group to start communications action plan three months before next year’s legislative cycle.

**TACTICS**

1. **DEVELOP AND EXECUTE A COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN TO COINCIDE WITH THE MN LEGISLATIVE SESSION.**

   A. Housing Communications Work Group will develop a communications matrix based on the communications channels that each individual organization has at its disposal. (ie: Email and print newsletters, websites, CapWiz, etc.)

      - Each member of the Communications Work Group will forward Sharon a list of available communications channels and their deadlines by Wednesday, January 7.
• Communications work group will develop brief survey monkey questionnaire for Housing Policy Work Group to assess additional communications needs and gather information about upcoming meetings.

• Sharon will update the communications matrix and forward the completed action plan by the end of the day, Friday, January 09, 2009.

B. Housing Communication Work Group will disseminate messages that were developed by the group, utilizing their individual communications channels.

2. DEVELOP COMMUNICATIONS DELIVERABLES TO SUPPORT THE HOUSING POLICY WORK GROUP’S POLICY AGENDA.

A. Refine and finalize talking points; frame content to be market-facing.

B. Develop internal Q & A.

C. Develop one-pager for public & policy makers.

D. Create story templates for print and email newsletters.

E. Get feedback from Policy Work Group about their communications needs; develop other deliverables as needed.

F. Create sample letter to your legislator template.

3. IDENTIFY MEDIA TARGETS AND PITCH KEY HOUSING ISSUES THAT SUPPORT THE HOUSING POLICY WORK GROUP’S POLICY AGENDA.

A. Develop list of key spokespersons from different housing groups; have them on standby when media outreach commences.

B. Pitch the following news outlets in early January with an issues-based story about the state of housing in Minnesota; drawing connection between the fact that the current housing crisis stems from a lack of affordable options for all people along the housing spectrum:

- Star Tribune
- Pioneer Press
- Associated Press, Minneapolis-St. Paul Bureau
- Minnesota News Network
- MPR
- WCCO Radio
- KARE-11
- WCCO-TV
- KSTP
- FOX 9
- KCCO (CBS - Alexandria)
- KSAX (ABC - Alexandria)
- KAAL (ABC - Austin)
- KBJR (NBC - Duluth)
- KDLH (CBS - Duluth)
- KQDS (Fox - Duluth)
C. Be ready to pitch story to the media list about specific housing investment levels (floor recommendation & preferred recommendation).
   • Develop press kit with one-pager on legislative position (this can be tweaked from one-page used for public/lawmakers); backgrounder on the Housing Policy Group.
   • Draft press release template with basic position information – tweak as needed.

D. Compile list of existing “Housing Day at the Capitol” events to help raise public awareness.

E. Create letter to the editor sample/guide.

4. DEVELOP LONG TERM COMMUNICATIONS PLAN TO KEEP HOUSING ISSUES FRONT AND CENTER THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, AND POSITION GROUP TO START COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN THREE MONTHS BEFORE NEXT YEAR’S LEGISLATIVE CYCLE.

   A. Broaden communications outreach to include more housing communications representatives.

   B. Revisit language in talking points and handouts to ensure that it remains market-facing.
C. Meet monthly throughout the year to keep momentum going.

D. Pitch stories on a monthly basis when session is out to keep public engaged.

E. Refine talking points, backgrounders, and one-sheets.

F. Research possible funding mechanisms to support public awareness campaign.

G. Track housing media clips & how group is using messages.

**NEXT STEPS**

A. Flesh out Communications Matrix and finalize deadlines for the Communications Action Plan.

B. Finalize key messages that will be used throughout this legislative session. (Done)

C. Sharon Rolenc and Susan Haigh will deliver communications group report to the Housing Policy Work Group.

D. Develop list of key spokespeople, with contact information.

E. Discuss logistics of press releases, communications, etc.

F. Next meeting: immediately following Session Preview at Wilder, January 12.