



Common Frames, Reconsidered

Researchers generated and tested a total of six narrative frames to assess how motivating and compelling voters found the frames, as well as the extent to which each frame was effective at achieving persuasion and engagement goals after being exposed to one of the frames.

The target audiences for these narrative frames were a cross section of California voters around the state because voters are the most immediate path to electoral and legislative progress. In order for these narrative tools to be useful for housing advocates in their efforts to advance reforms, the narratives must be effective in electoral and legislative contexts — which means they must be effective with voters. Because voters are often a tougher-to-persuade audience on reforms, we expect what works with voters will also work with the general population. By shifting public will, advocates can open new pathways to advance new ideas and practical solutions and ensure that all Californians have safe, affordable, and stable housing.

The table below details all six frames, as well as their performance among the [mindset segments](#). The research uncovered some surprising things about common housing advocacy frames that are familiar to and in popular use among advocates.

Of special import for groups focused on addressing racial inequities and the discriminatory origins of California’s current housing crisis are [messages that speak specifically to equity](#).

Review the frames below for the language that's most aligned with your organization's current messaging. Then review your audience prioritization and messaging strategies; you may want to rethink some of the frames below if they might be having unintended consequences counter to your advocacy goals. By better understanding the pros and cons of common frames currently in use among advocacy groups, we can see how our message may or may not be resonating with audiences.

The charts below reflect what we found at a high level, testing these particular frames and messages with this audience toward specific outcomes. We share the findings so that advocates may apply the learnings, noting that some of these commonly used frames did have some positive results among certain audience segments, **but overall none were as effective across the board as the California Dream frame.**

Green icons denote a productive outcome, red icons denote a counter-productive outcome, and gray icons denote an outcome that requires strategic consideration. Frames are listed from most to least effective across the greatest number of mindset segments.



FRAME

California Dream = Build What Matters to You

We care less about everyone owning a traditional home, and we care more about making sure everyone can afford to live in communities rich with diversity.

It's about time we redefine the American Dream, and we Californians are the right ones for the job. We need to reboot our idea of the American Dream to reflect the values of our present-day state. Californians know that when we bring people together from all different walks of life, we're able to spark new ideas, pioneer groundbreaking innovations, and solve big problems the Californian way. That's why we need to ensure we build communities where people from different incomes, beliefs, and backgrounds can live, work, and create the California Dream together.

<p>Key Findings</p>	<p>✔ <i>California Dream = Build What Matters to You</i> is the most effective frame for increasing propensity to act. In fact, it is the <i>*only*</i> frame that increases propensity to act on housing issues. Respondents exposed to <i>California Dream = Build What Matters to You</i> were most likely to donate money to a non-profit organization focused on housing and sign a petition related to housing.</p>
<p>Mindsets Segments' Reactions</p>	<p>✔ Pro-government Pragmatists are the most persuadable. They respond well to the widest variety of frames, especially <i>American Dream = Safe & Stable Home</i>, <i>California Dream = Build What Matters to You</i>, and <i>Better Together</i>.</p>



American Dream = Safe, Stable Home

Every Californian deserves a chance at achieving the American Dream, and that starts with having access to a safe and stable home.

Being able to work towards the American Dream starts with having access to a safe and stable home. **Without the necessary security that comes with having somewhere secure to call home and build a life from, it's nearly impossible to plan for your future,** focus on school or work, start a business, or contribute to the community you live in. When we ensure people from all walks of life can afford a place to live, we can make sure that more of us can make our American Dream a reality and contribute to our society's collective well-being.

<p>Key Findings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>American Dream = Safe & Stable Home</i> is the most appealing frame based on self-reported measures (i.e., convincing, inspiring, motivating).
<p>Mindsets Segments' Reactions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓✗ American Dreamers are most convinced, inspired, and motivated by the <i>American Dream = Safe & Stable Home</i> frame. However, this frame also reinforces their belief that housing is “mostly earned.” ✓ Pro-government Pragmatists are the most persuadable. They respond well to the widest variety of frames, especially <i>American Dream = Safe & Stable Home</i>, <i>California Dream = Build What Matters to You</i>, and <i>Better Together</i>. ✓ Equity Enthusiasts are most enthusiastic about <i>American Dream = Safe & Stable Home</i> and <i>Neighborhood Stability</i> frames.

FRAME

Neighborhood Stability

Making sure every Californian has access to a safe and stable home isn't just a nice-to-have, it's key to our collective resilience.

Making sure every Californian has access to a safe and stable home isn't just a nice-to-have. It's the key to ensuring that our towns and cities can maintain resilience during hard times. As we're faced with more social and environmental challenges, the more we see how our well-being is directly tied to our neighbors' stability and well-being. That's why it's our responsibility to make sure people from all different backgrounds and skill sets — from doctors, nurses, and firefighters to school teachers, bus drivers, and couriers — can afford to live side-by-side with one another and support each other during uncertain times.

Key Findings

- ✔ Compared to all other frames, voters were more likely to find the *Neighborhood Stability* motivating.
- ✘ However, motivation did not translate to positive outcomes, as voters exposed to this frame were less likely to believe housing should be guaranteed or is a community issue. Voters are also less likely to express support for production or preservation.

Mindsets Segments' Reactions

- ✘ Rugged Individualists are most repelled by the *Neighborhood Stability* frame which focuses on the importance of ensuring people from all different backgrounds can afford to live side by side during times of crisis.
- ✘ Exposure to *Racial Equity* and *Neighborhood Stability* weakens American Dreamers' support for the 3Ps.
- ✔ Equity Enthusiasts (who are already most predisposed to support reforms) are most enthusiastic about *American Dream = Safe & Stable Home* and *Neighborhood Stability* frames.

FRAME

Racial Equity

Emphasize the current opportunity to rectify historically discriminatory practices in housing policy to close the racial wealth

gap and diversify the mix of housing available to all families.

More than any other place in the nation, California has the best opportunity to create a racially just housing system. Historically discriminatory practices, such as redlining, restricted the growth of many of our towns and cities by keeping millions of Black and brown families from owning their homes. **Today, we have the opportunity to finally make things right. By focusing on solutions that directly address these injustices, we can close the racial wealth gap and diversify the mix of housing available to all families.** Such efforts will ultimately strengthen our state’s economy by ensuring that every Californian can share in the prosperity of our growing neighborhoods.

Key Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✔ <i>Racial Equity</i> has potential to frame housing as a “community” vs. “individual” responsibility.✘ However, it also produces polarizing results across segments.✔ Respondents exposed to <i>Racial Equity</i> were more likely to view housing as a “community” instead of “individual” responsibility.
Mindsets Segments’ Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✘ Exposure to <i>Racial Equity</i> and <i>Neighborhood Stability</i> weakens American Dreamers’ support for 3Ps.✘ Dream Disruptors are harder to persuade with narrative frames and do not find any of the frames to be particularly motivating. Although they already express strong support for the 3Ps, exposure to the <i>Racial Equity</i> frame weakens the strength of their support.✘✔ Among Equity Enthusiasts, exposure to <i>Racial Equity</i> slightly weakens support for the 3Ps; but increases likelihood of donating.

FRAME

American Dream = Access to Success

Focus on empowerment and the opportunity to provide people with access to success.

The crux of the American Dream is about making sure everyone can work hard and build the life they want for themselves. It's our responsibility as Californians to make sure every Californian has equal opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. **Still, it's also up to each one of us to make good choices about our personal housing situation if we want to improve it.**

Key Findings	❌ Voters exposed to the <i>American Dream = Access to Success</i> frame were less likely to find it inspiring or motivating, and this frame was least likely to yield positive views on housing outcomes.
Mindsets Segments' Reactions	✅❌ Rugged Individualists only respond well to the <i>American Dream = Access to Success</i> frame. However, this is the least popular frame among all other segments.

FRAME

Better Together

*Connect individuals with collective benefits.
The sum is greater than its parts.*

Here in California, we believe the sum is more significant than its parts. When we build neighborhoods with a mix of homes for people of all income levels, our communities become richer with diversity and more connected through shared experiences. That's why it's important to ensure housing in cities and towns across our state meet a wide range of people's needs.

Key Findings	✘ Respondents exposed to <i>Better Together</i> were most likely to view housing as a privilege that is “ <i>completely earned</i> ” and “ <i>much less likely</i> ” to vote for a candidate focused on increasing affordable housing.
Mindsets Segments' Reactions	☹ Pro-government Pragmatists are the only group that responds well to <i>Better Together</i> .