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> The San Francisco Foundation Bay Area Regional Recovery Messaging Toolkit Last updated: September 12, 2022

This guide is intended to provide Bay Area advocates with the messaging elements and principles they need to hold policymakers accountable in ensuring an equitable recovery for the Bay Area and our state. Informed by <u>messaging best practices, media scans, landscape</u> <u>observations and stakeholder interviews</u>, these messages are intended to mobilize our base and move the middle to support our vision, goals, and solutions. We must double down on uplifting our base to persuade the middle. Messaging that neutralizes or alienates the opposition is not included here, but is worth considering in the future as the need arises. This guide includes <u>core messaging</u>, supplemented by <u>issue-specific messaging</u> on housing and child care, that leads with values and leaves room to adapt and insert specific solutions and calls to action from your respective organizations and campaigns. We encourage you to use this guide as a foundation for your communications efforts, adding language and stories to bring your work and solutions you are championing to life.

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Messaging Elements and Principles

This messaging toolkit is informed by research-backed principles and best practices to develop strong and cohesive messaging in a broad range of contexts. Central to these elements is an emphasis on messaging best practices when talking about race, racism, and racial justice. These elements draw from resources and guidance developed by Opportunity Agenda, Race-Class Narrative Project, the FrameWorks Institute, and Color of Change to advance racial justice in public interest communications.

- Lead with shared values as points of agreement and shared goals that will resonate with target audiences, tap into their emotions, and motivate them to act.
- **Contextualize the problem as a threat to shared values** to create urgency and show how willful acts of injustice are possible because of structural racism.
- Frame the allocation of COVID recovery dollars so far as a downpayment on the equitable recovery we need as the pandemic continues and to address community priorities for the long haul.
- **Position essential workers as the heroes** who have kept the Bay Area running but have suffered the greatest impacts without a liveable wage, paid sick time, or health care.
- **Define the opposition** as billionaires, greedy corporations, and corporate landlords who have rigged the rules to hoard more profits for themselves. Show how in California, the state with the most billionaires, there is enough wealth to care for all of us.
- Emphasize unity and collective care as an antidote to individualism that will help us emerge from this crisis stronger and healthier.
- Uplift specific community-led solutions and promising approaches that are good for people and their livelihoods as opposed to personifying "the economy" as an entity.
- Demand that Bay Area cities and counties explicitly prioritize racial equity as a goal, guided and informed by community priorities and partnerships in current and future budget cycles.

- **Connect individual stories to systemic injustices**, racism, and a history of disinvestment. Avoid blaming individuals, including elected officials.
- Address the connections between racial divisions and economic hardship. Black people and people of color are not vulnerable they have been targeted, attacked, exploited, and systematically blocked from resources and opportunities.
- Unite under the notion that racism is a tool to divide us all. Surface the specific root causes such as unjust laws. Acknowledge the ways racism is embedded both historically and currently in American law and other systems. Name racial scapegoating or deliberate division as a tool villains use to profit, harming us all.
- Focus on the tangible good and positive examples government has and can deliver rather than feeding a narrative of cynicism and distrust toward government. Applaud immediate wins around relief while demanding long-term and lasting solutions.

Common Phrase Guidance

The language we use to describe the heroes and villains of our story matter and influence how our audience understands our framing of the problems and solutions. Below is a chart with some of the common language used around equitable recovery, housing, and worker justice, as well as guidance on words to replace and words to embrace. The explanations offer more reasoning for why we need to be as specific as possible to strengthen our overall messaging.

Words to replace:	Words to embrace:	Explanation:
"The most vulnerable" "Vulnerable communities"	"Essential workers who have kept the Bay Area running" Those who should be "first in line to receive benefits"	"Vulnerable" is a personal trait most people associate with weakness, pity and charity. It makes people feel less invested in solutions. Define people by their assets and aspirations in an action oriented way. Acknowledge the burden put upon them by oppressive systems.
"Underserved communities"	"Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color" "People struggling to make ends meet"	Clearly define the specific people who have historically and continue to be systematically blocked from resources and opportunities.

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	"People working to provide for their family"	
"The homeless"	"Unhoused community members" "Unhoused neighbors"	Not everyone has a house, but everyone has a home whether that is a tent or other shelter. Helps add context to specific solutions like ensuring folks have permanent housing.
"Big corporations"	"Wealthy corporations" "Greedy corporations"	Size is less relevant of a descriptor than wealth, which corporations accumulate by refusing to pay people the true value of their work, and by not paying what they owe through taxes.
"The economy"	"Economic wellbeing of all of us" "Our elected leaders across the region must lead with courage and put our collective wellbeing first."	When we personify "the economy" as capable of acting or being acted upon, feeling pain or being revived, we fuel opposition framing that positions the wellbeing of "the economy" as separate from and more important than the wellbeing of human beings. Instead, we should specify what we mean, whether that's jobs, families being able to put food on the table, or people's broader economic well-being.
"Leaders have underinvested in a social safety net"	"For decades, wealthy corporations have refused to pay us the true value of our work and what they owe in taxes. That robs our communities of vital resources and ultimately harms all of us."	Be clear about who and what we believe is responsible for the injustices we see. People need to see the injustices of the moment as connected to long-standing injustices. Problems described passively appear to have no known cause and thus no achievable solution.
"Wages have fallen" "Wage gap is growing"	"Wealthy corporations refuse to pay people the true value of our work."	Make clear that corporations choose to pay people less than our work deserves.

	"Wealthy corporations rig the rules to take from working people."	
"Make the rich pay their fair share"	"Make the rich pay what they owe"	"Owe" hints at a broader unmet and overdue responsibility that can encompass not only taxes, but also wages and compensation for the wealth that corporations and the rich take from our collective efforts.

Framing Guidance

In the landscape around advancing an equitable recovery, there are messages that can perpetuate harmful narratives. Using the recommended language below can help you avoid negative framing and language and offers messages to use instead that help get more specific about the root causes, contradictions, and interconnections at play. These messages will help advocates strengthen their calls to action and make the case for permanent, lasting investments.

Instead of saying	We can say	Explanation
COVID recovery efforts have left communities of color behind. We need immediate relief now.	By addressing the needs of Black and brown communities harmed the most by the challenges we face today, as well as the systemic barriers that preceded the pandemic, we can set ourselves up for a better tomorrow where nobody is left out or left behind.	Be specific about what we mean by equity and lean into targeted universalism that shows when we center those most blocked and harmed, we can design a society where everyone gets what they need and create lasting impacts.
Renters need higher wages to afford rent increases.	Housing prices are rising faster than our wages as greedy corporate landlords rig the rules to hoard more profits for themselves. Meanwhile, we are	Name who is responsible for rent increases (i.e. higher wages alone won't address skyrocketing rents) and juxtapose with who suffers the most as a consequence.

	struggling to keep a roof over our heads.	
Communities of color are more likely to lack healthcare and other worker protections.	Wealthy corporations and billionaires have made record profits – all while barely paying us a liveable wage, denying us paid sick time, and not providing health care. Bay Area leaders must join with the working people who have cared for all of us during this crisis – not wealthy corporate executives who have received billions in tax cuts and bailouts.	Call out contradictions of greedy corporations hoarding wealth while denying working people the basic resources they need. Invite Bay Area leaders to make the right choice and care for the working people who have been caring for all of us.
COVID recovery dollars have not reached the communities who need it the most.	COVID recovery funding streams like the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act are a downpayment on the equitable recovery we need and have provided families and working people with much needed support. We need permanent targeted investments for long-term support.	Uplift what works and demand more by focusing on positive examples of COVID recovery funds working rather than feeding cynicism and distrust toward government. Keep pushing for the long-term support needed for these investments to meet scale.
Government leaders are not doing enough and have failed the most vulnerable communities in their response to the pandemic with every decision they make.	Government leaders have the opportunity to enable lasting security and stability for all of us, especially those of us routinely excluded from receiving relief, resources, and opportunities. If government leaders were able to cut through the red tape to support people most in need during a pandemic, they can continue to move quickly and boldly beyond a crisis to make lasting, positive change in the lives of all Californians.	Stay solutions oriented, show a path towards an equitable recovery that centers the needs of the most impacted communities, and the actors who can make change happen. Avoid negative framing that makes people feel like there is no way out of the bad decisions made by the government.

Government leaders have missed a historic opportunity to allocate targeted investments to communities of color.	This initial investment of COVID recovery dollars is a downpayment on the equitable recovery we need as the pandemic continues. These federal funding streams like CARES and ARPA have created an important opportunity to care for all of us by making lasting investments.	Frame the allocation of COVID recovery dollars so far as a downpayment and tie call to action back to shared values of care and interdependence to influence future budget cycles and permanent funding streams.
A thriving Bay Area community depends on ensuring accessible and affordable housing and child care is available to anyone who needs it.	Bay Area leaders must recognize that the shortages in safe and affordable housing and child care are interconnected and negatively impact how our families and children live, learn, and receive care. As these barriers get higher, the doors to good schools and better job opportunities close. With a safe, stable place to call home, we can ensure our children are cared for, can succeed in school, get good jobs, and build their own families here in the Bay Area.	Show how the issues of housing and child care are interconnected and how those impacted by one issue experience a domino effect that limits their access to opportunity and worsens their overall quality of life for themselves and their families.

Core Messaging

Using the Values, Problem, Solution, Action messaging framework by the Opportunity Agenda, this set of core messages leads with shared values to activate emotions and open an audience's minds and hearts. It then frames the problems we seek to solve as a threat to our values. This creates a sense of urgency and connects individual stories to broader systems and dynamics and primes our audience for the solutions we offer, making it clear where the change lies. Lastly, positive solutions leave people with choices, ideas, and motivation, and prime your audience to take action. The solutions and calls to action sections are the place to add stories and data that will resonate with your target audience.

<u>Values</u>: No matter what we look like or where we come from, we all deserve safe places to call home and resources to care for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

- We all deserve to have our most basic needs met, plant roots in the cities we call home, and live with dignity. Public resources make this possible, and in times of crises, we need them more than ever from help with rent to care for our children.
- For the Bay Area to continue to be the thriving place we know it to be, we need to ensure a vibrant future for everyone who lives here. We elect leaders to act in our interests and champion the resources our families and communities need. Our leaders across the region must lead with courage and put our collective wellbeing first.
- Whether we work in hospitals or restaurants, create networks of mutual aid, or take care of children and the elderly, many of us have been doing our part to care for one another throughout this pandemic. Now, we need our elected leaders to care for us.
- As we enter the third year of the pandemic, it is clear that policies to help people live, work, and care for ourselves and our loved ones are essential to build the resilient communities we all need. By addressing the needs of Black and brown communities harmed the most by the challenges we face today, as well as the systemic barriers that preceded the pandemic, we can set ourselves up for a better tomorrow where nobody is left out or left behind.
- The safest and healthiest communities have the most resources, such as well-funded schools, stable housing and access to child care. To build a resilient recovery that values all of us – children and families, Black communities and other communities of color, renters and workers, and everyday people – we need critical investments that improve our lives and wellbeing.

<u>Problem</u>: Bay Area leaders have a choice – to return to business as usual, maintaining systems that don't serve everyone, or to put us on a path to a resilient future, recovering not only from the pandemic, but from a history of disinvestment.

• California is the country's wealthiest state, with the most billionaires than any other state. It is also home to the highest share of people living in poverty, with homelessness remaining the state's number one crisis.

- Housing prices are rising faster than our wages as greedy corporate landlords rig the rules to hoard more profits for themselves. Meanwhile, we are struggling to keep a roof over our heads. For decades, wealthy corporations have refused to pay us the true value of our work and what they owe in taxes. That robs our communities of vital resources and harms all of us.
- Wealthy corporations and billionaires have made record profits all while barely paying
 us a liveable wage, denying us paid sick time, and not providing health care. Bay Area
 leaders must join with the working people who have cared for all of us during this crisis –
 not wealthy corporate executives who have received billions in tax cuts and bailouts.
- Right now and throughout the pandemic, the essential workers who kept the Bay Area running have suffered the greatest harm. The vast majority of these workers are Latinx people, Black people and other people of color.
- Disinvestment in Black communities and communities of color is a root cause of racial inequities in our state. Instead of investing recovery dollars into health, education, and housing, elected leaders have poured millions into systems of punishment that criminalize and fuel violence against Black and brown communities.
- On top of the devastating health impacts and death toll from COVID-19, our communities are also facing high inflation and rising costs of rent, gas, and food. Inflation is now at the highest rate in over 40 years while corporations make record profits and raise their prices. We must invest in housing, education, child care, health care and living wages for working people now, when we need these things the most.
- COVID recovery funding streams like the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act provided state and local regions with an unprecedented level of flexible funding for new initiatives or to replace shortfalls in revenue. The initial investment of these dollars is a downpayment on the equitable recovery we need.

<u>Solution</u>: By directing long-term targeted investments to where they are most urgently needed, we can emerge from this crisis stronger, with systems in place to support us in and beyond future crises.

• The Bay Area can emerge from this crisis even stronger and healthier than it was before. Government leaders have the opportunity to enable lasting security and stability for all of us, especially those of us routinely excluded from receiving relief, resources, and opportunities.

- To address the structural inequities that long preceded the pandemic, we need long-term targeted investments that meet our needs now and in the future. If government leaders were able to cut through the red tape to support people most in need during a pandemic, they can continue to move quickly and boldly beyond a crisis to make lasting, positive change in the lives of all Californians.
- To build a resilient future, we must address past and ongoing harms from centuries of racist policies and practices. That includes theft and destruction of Black people's homes, redlining, and other forms of discrimination and exclusion. Without repair, we will repeat the harm to Black communities, communities of color, and ultimately all of us. Righting the wrongs of the past is necessary to ensure a brighter future for everyone.
- As local governments across the Bay Area decide how to use their COVID recovery dollars, and as we look ahead to the next budget cycles and upcoming opportunities, we will continue to demand what our communities need. The leaders we turned out to elect must provide the relief our families need and invest in a resilient recovery that delivers safety and prosperity for all of us.
- In the state with the most billionaires, there is enough wealth to care for all of us. Our families and communities will have the resources we need when we make billionaires and wealthy corporations contribute as much as they take from our communities. This pandemic has taught us that we must shift away from individual responsibility and demand that everyone has the care we need.
- No matter where we come from, our immigration status, or the type of job we hold, we need a liveable wage, healthcare, paid sick time, family leave, and child care. For many working people of color in low-wage industries like day laborers, domestic workers, and gig workers, flexible work arrangements to meet their caregiving needs are essential to keeping their jobs. While we are glad to see the investments in the state budget that will direct millions toward programs that protect and educate workers against retaliation on the job, we must continue to see funding decisions prioritize quality job standards and a strong enforcement of workers' rights.
- Bay Area leaders must invest in a resilient recovery that allows everyone to share in its benefits. While unprecedented, current COVID recovery funding streams like CARES and

ARPA are only temporary and do not provide guaranteed relief. That is why we need permanent, lasting investments targeted to communities of color to emerge from this crisis stronger.

The Bay Area can follow in the steps of some California cities that have equitably directed COVID recovery dollars to benefit families, working people, and youth. In Santa Ana, a stimulus program will distribute cash payments to 20,000 low-income households. Oxnard made history when it became the first city in the nation to allocate \$2.5 million of ARPA funds to provide essential workers with premium pay. In Merced, youth organizers won \$1.25 million for a youth job training program.

<u>Action</u>: We demand Bay Area leaders center Black people and other people of color in their budget decisions. Bay Area leaders must have the courage to be bold and pass permanent, lasting investments that ensure everyone in our region can truly thrive.

- We urge our elected leaders to center the needs of Black communities and other communities of color, families, working people, and our unhoused community members. We need immediate and lasting relief for communities most harmed by the rising costs of living and the ongoing pandemic. Ensuring all Bay Area counties can share in the benefits will improve our region as a whole.
- As we look ahead to upcoming opportunities such as the federal infrastructure bill, budget decisions must be guided and informed by community priorities and partnerships. Bay Area leaders must partner with our communities and ensure current and future budget processes are transparent and involve the people most impacted. Through participatory budgeting, we can build the power of communities of color whose voices are often left out.
- Long-term targeted investments must reach those who have long been underfunded. Short-sighted budget decisions could deepen racial inequities for years to come. With equity and transparency at the core, Bay Area leaders must rethink the allocation of resources in current and future budget cycles. By targeting the most impacted communities, California can begin to remove structural barriers so investments benefit everyone. This can be a first step toward interrupting inequity and beginning to repair past harms.

- This initial investment of COVID recovery dollars, such as federal funding streams like CARES and ARPA, is a downpayment on the equitable recovery we need as the pandemic continues. These federal funding streams have created an important opportunity to care for all of us by making lasting investments. To meet the urgency of this moment, Bay Area cities and counties must explicitly prioritize racial equity as a goal and address the root causes of current and historic disinvestment.
- The shortages in safe and affordable housing and child care are interconnected and negatively impact how our families and children live, learn, and receive care. As these barriers get higher, the doors to good schools and better job opportunities close. With a safe, stable place to call home, we can ensure our children are cared for, can succeed in school, get good jobs, and build their own strong families here in the Bay Area.
- We demand our elected leaders listen and prioritize our needs and protect the lives of all of us not just the wealthy few. Swift, decisive, effective action is possible. Together, we can demand a government that cares for us and make the Bay Area and California a place where all of us can thrive, no exceptions.

Issue-specific Messaging

Below we include issue-specific messaging for housing and child care to provide examples of how these issues can be inserted into the core messaging above. By adding stories and data, naming specific target decision makers, and adding policy priorities, solutions, and calls to action, you can strengthen these messages with more specificity and make them your own.

Housing

<u>Value</u>: Our homes are the foundation of our lives and help ensure the safety, security and stability that is vital to our wellbeing. Our home is where we can rest and nourish ourselves, care for our families and create community.

- For communities to be safe and healthy, they must have adequate public resources, such as stable housing, well-funded schools, and access to child care.
- A thriving Bay Area depends on ensuring housing is available to anyone who needs it.

• To build a resilient recovery that values everyday Californians – children and families, Black communities and other communities of color, renters and workers – we need to fund, build, and maintain safe and affordable homes.

<u>Problem</u>: We need to address California's number-one crisis: homelessness and housing insecurity. The lack of affordable housing is a result of policy decisions, and has led to growing homelessness and housing insecurity, often leaving people to choose between feeding themselves and their family or having a home.

- More than 32,000 Bay Area residents are struggling to afford a safe and stable home, with the average cost of housing rising as wages remain the same.
- Corporate landlords continue to increase rent despite record profits, pushing working families deeper into debt and hardship.
- Black communities in particular have faced massive displacement and severe disparities in stable housing, caused by generations of exclusionary policies, including redlining, predatory lending, and state-sanctioned housing discrimination.
- Black communities and communities of color are less likely to have generational wealth to fall back on to keep them in their homes. Wage stagnation and the lack of job mobility makes it difficult to keep up with rent, food, and taking care of our families. This makes it impossible to build savings for the future or be adequately prepared for another possible crisis.

<u>Solution</u>: We need permanent, lasting investments targeted to Black communities and communities of color to provide ongoing funding for rent relief, eliminating rent debt, and preventing displacement.

 We need to invest in long-term solutions like social housing – a publicly developed, maintained, and owned housing option that makes it easier for Californians to live where they work, where they're from, and where they feel safest and most supported, no matter how much money they make. Sacramento's CADA apartment is a successful example of social housing's mixed-income model, which helps meet the massive affordable housing need created by the rising costs of housing.

- While ERAP rent relief funds have reached some, we need more funding for rent relief that truly reflects our needs and keeps people in their homes. Preventing displacement and eliminating rent debt will make it possible to keep the Californians hardest hit by the pandemic in their homes.
- The final state budget includes a total of \$2 billion for affordable housing solutions, which is not enough considering the state's historic surplus and what is needed to match our state's housing needs.
- We have already seen momentum around community-led solutions. In 2020, San Francisco voters passed Prop I to double the real estate transfer tax and generate \$100 million annually, which could be directed toward social housing that offers cooperative living spaces and homes for educators and classified staff, no matter how much money they make.
- [Insert your policy priority/solution here].

<u>Action</u>: To truly recover, Bay Area leaders must act boldly and swiftly to care for all of us and provide targeted funding to address homelessness and housing insecurity.

- This initial investment of COVID recovery dollars, such as federal funding streams like CARES and ARPA, is a downpayment on the equitable recovery we need as the pandemic continues. Now, we need lasting solutions such as a permanent rental assistance program that supports renters across the state who are struggling to make ends meet and provide for their families.
- The shortages in affordable housing is a structural problem that [insert specific decision makers] have the power and resources to fix. They can start by closing the loopholes in current policies, reviewing the rental assistance applications that were denied, and approving tenants who were wrongfully denied while also creating a fair, transparent process for challenging those denials. Rental assistance programs should be targeted to communities of color through direct outreach to help combat the long-standing patterns of racial discrimination in housing.
- [Insert your policy priority/call to action here].

Child care

<u>Value</u>: Our communities are stronger when every child is safe, healthy, and cared for. Safe, enriching care should be available to all children, regardless of their mental or physical needs, race or ethnicity, the language they speak, or their family's income.

- Child care is a space for children to learn, grow, and build healthy relationships.
 Whole-child-focused, affordable child care sets the foundation for a child's current wellness and future success, and supports families to be able to meaningfully contribute to their communities.
- Family child care providers, most of whom are women of color, provide a vital service by offering warm, nurturing, engaging care, often in a child's home language, culture, and community. While caring for children, providers are building small businesses; their earnings support their families and communities.
- Child care funding decisions affect all of us, from families who depend on it, to providers who nurture the next generation, and the children who rely on care to learn and grow.

<u>Problem</u>: For generations, the lack of safe, enriching care has been a burden that disproportionately affects women, especially Black women and women of color. Families who need child care have struggled to afford it, while providers have been grossly underpaid, making the profession exploitative and completely unsustainable.

- Even before the pandemic, families earning lower wages often could not find affordable and reliable care, especially for babies and toddlers. For years, there have been little state and local budget investments in child care services and early learning, and as a result, providers are vastly underpaid while children are missing out on critical learning and development opportunities.
- The lack of funding for child care that is affordable, accessible, and adaptable places a huge burden on working families. For many working people of color in low-wage industries like day laborers, domestic workers, and gig workers, being unable to find an affordable child care provider often forces families to make impossible choices.

- Policies affecting child care and early education are outdated, and do not take into account the wide-ranging child care needs of California's diverse families and providers — particularly women, families of color, and families who cannot work from home.
- The care work performed by Black and brown communities is vastly underfunded, and little funding is allocated to support high child care costs. By keeping these outdated policies in place, Bay Area leaders are denying children the nurture and care that is critical to their growth and development.
- In California, as one example, 40% of Latinx parents reported no high-quality, affordable child care centers in their neighborhoods.

<u>Solution</u>: Bay Area leaders can direct more resources toward helping families cover child care costs, and ensuring child care providers are fairly compensated and receive the benefits they need to thrive and care for their own families.

- The expansion of public preschool across California counties is helpful to families of 3and 4-year-olds who otherwise couldn't afford care, but additional funding is needed for child care centers who care for babies and toddlers to be able to pay providers equitably, offer health care and retirement benefits, cover the cost of caring for younger children, and offset expensive child care rates for families.
- Past investments like monthly Child Tax Credit payments of \$300 per child lifted 3.7 million children out of poverty by the time payments ended in December 2021. Recent research has shown that families spent their CTC payments on necessities like food and rent. Black and Hispanic parents were more likely to spend their refunds on paying bills (31% and 28%) compared to white parents (17%).
- The one-year waiver of family fees in the final California state budget takes a step in the right direction, but we need to invest in long-term funding solutions that will guarantee access to affordable, nurturing care when the waiver runs out.
- [Insert your policy priority/solution here].

<u>Action</u>: It's time for all Bay Area cities and counties to make significant, long-term investments toward strengthening child care programs and supporting child care providers.

- This initial investment of COVID recovery dollars, such as federal funding streams like CARES and ARPA, is a downpayment on the equitable recovery we need as the pandemic continues. As we move forward, we need long-term funding to build a lasting infrastructure that guarantees access to high-quality, affordable child care providers in every neighborhood.
- Families and communities who lack access to child care today must be a part of determining what future child care resources and early learning policies look like. With their guidance and partnership, we can begin to move toward a resilient recovery that supports all families, child care providers, and communities.
- [Insert your policy priority/call to action here].