Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

The California Dream

A New Narrative to Engage Californians on Housing Affordability

This white paper outlines research conducted by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative's (CZI) Public Opinion and Survey Science research team, in partnership with CZI's Housing Affordability team, to identify a unifying narrative to shift attitudes and values in support of housing reforms across California. Designed as a resource for housing advocates, we hope this research adds evidence-based depth and breadth to advance pro-housing policies and practices, build on existing expertise from the field, and help ensure every Californian has a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

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Acknowledgments

This narrative research project builds upon an existing body of research and is developed as part of an iterative ecosystem to support advocates working to address housing issues in California. We're grateful for the wisdom and expertise of so many individuals and organizations, including the following:

- The research was designed and conducted by CZI's Public Opinion and Survey Science team, led by Director of Research Laura Lazarus-Gardner, PhD, with invaluable support from Kyle Block of Gradient Metrics and Nina Sabarre of Intention 2 Impact, in partnership with Gradient Metrics. We are indebted to CZI's former Director of Audience Research, Molly Jackman, PhD, for her vision and leadership as one of the creators of this project.

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- Frames and messaging for testing were developed by independent strategist Elizabeth Stroud and Will Valverde of M+R.

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  - United Way Greater Los Angeles
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  - Non-profit Housing Association of Northern California

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- Destination: Home
- East Bay Housing Organizations
- Faith in the Valley
- Fund for an Inclusive California
- Greenbelt Alliance
- Greenlining Institute
- LA Voice
- Landed
- UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation
- Manufactured Housing Action (MH Action)
- PICO California
- PolicyLink
- Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing
- San Francisco Housing Action Coalition
- SPUR
- SV@Home
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- TransForm
- Urban Habitat
- Working Partnerships USA

Thank you to the 200+ organizations that participated in the California Housing Narrative Learning Lab series and all those working to achieve greater housing affordability in California.

About the Project

The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) was founded in 2015 to help solve some of society's toughest challenges — from eradicating disease and improving education, to addressing the needs of our local communities. Our mission is to build a more inclusive, just, and healthy future for everyone. Across our focus areas — science, education, community, and alongside our justice & opportunity partners — we pair technology with grantmaking, impact investing, and collaboration to help accelerate the pace of progress toward a more equitable future.

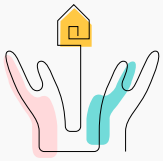
CZI's Housing Affordability program is dedicated to improving housing affordability and access so people from all backgrounds and income levels can live, work, and thrive statewide. We aim to support front-line organizations that are working to dismantle racial and economic inequities in our housing system through grantmaking, policy change, innovative investments, advocacy support, research, and storytelling.

Building political and public will through narrative change is one of the key levers for creating a sustained movement for housing reform. We hope the information offered by this white paper can help advocates implement long-term strategies for narrative change at scale across California.

Our in-house Public Opinion and Survey Science (POPSS) research team designs and executes first-party, rigorous social and behavioral science research in service of CZI's mission. Working with teams across CZI and often directly with grantees, POPSS applies expertise in public opinion, survey science, and advanced statistical techniques to inform and accelerate CZI's strategy and goals.

The solutions to California's housing problems are many, but they will involve the three "Ps" of housing: Production, Preservation, and Protection.

Production
Increase the supply of housing



Preservation
Keep our existing stock of homes affordable

Protection
Protect residents from displacement

Executive Summary

Toward a Broad, Unifying California Housing Narrative

This project set out to identify a unifying narrative and set of corresponding frames and messages to support CZI's grant partners and other housing advocacy groups as they work to shift voter attitudes and values in support of housing reform across California. The ultimate goal was to identify a shared foundational, long-term narrative framework with accompanying messaging to equip housing advocates with communications tools to build greater public and political will. We hope this research builds on existing expertise from the field of housing advocates and offers new tools to advance a range of important advocacy priorities related to housing production, protection, and preservation.

Digging deep into California voters' values and views, CZI's Public Opinion and Survey Science (POPSS) research team has generated and tested a narrative to help advocates position housing as a basic right rather than a privilege. We hope this will open a pathway for advocates to advance new ideas and practical solutions and ensure that all Californians have the safe, affordable, stable housing everyone deserves.

Our rigorous, multi-year research identified a broad narrative, the *California Dream*, that is effective at meeting Californians where they are — across a range of political identities, values, and beliefs.

Meeting — and Moving — People Via Their Values

This research is rooted in an approach wherein advocates are equipped to more effectively meet people where they are, then move their values and attitudes to be more supportive of pro-housing policies and practices, using the most persuasive narrative strategy. Part of this approach means not writing off any large group of voters as unreachable, or heightening existing tensions, and instead focusing on making inroads with all groups over time. Our hope is that the California Dream narrative will support housing advocates to engage the audiences they are actively reaching and pursuing now, while also offering an effective tool to engage and persuade an even wider audience over the long haul.

This approach is necessary to achieve strategic, high-impact housing wins across California — and we believe it's possible given early results from the research. Values-driven narratives can help housing advocates define for audiences across California what housing reform and housing affordability mean. We believe this will make electoral and legislative wins possible while simultaneously working to shift broad public perception over the long term.

Moreover, our research shows that California voters hold conflicting beliefs about housing reform and housing affordability, and these beliefs don't necessarily map onto traditional political identities (e.g. Democrat, Republican, Conservative, Liberal, etc.) or demographic identities of gender, race, ethnicity, or class. This presents a unique opportunity — before housing affordability in California becomes even more polarized — to identify and test a broad, unifying narrative of housing affordability that a majority of California voters will find palatable, compelling, and actionable.

The narrative frame and messages resulting from this research are designed for an audience of California registered voters and tailored to speak to their dominant values with regard to housing reform. The narrative frame and messages are specifically geared toward increasing the likelihood that a broad cross section of California voters will: 1) support policies and solutions that will achieve greater housing affordability across the state; 2) take action on housing affordability policies and campaigns; and 3) see housing as a basic right rather than a privilege.

We chose to test various narratives with voters — rather than a broader cross section of California residents — 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 had to be effective with voters.

The broad and unifying approach offered here is not intended as a substitute for, but rather as complement to, the strategies that housing advocates are already pursuing. In the short term and for specific electoral and legislative efforts, the California Dream narrative can be deployed in support of the wide range of policies and practices that advocates are advancing to improve housing access and affordability across the state. As this

new narrative begins to take hold, we expect that advocates will be better equipped to more effectively engage a broader and bigger group of Californians in future efforts toward housing reform.

Breakthrough Narrative: The California Dream

After nearly three years of planning, deep listening, careful design, rigorous research, analysis, and iteration, we are pleased to share that we've identified a broad, unifying narrative for our grant partners and other housing advocacy groups to use — a narrative that is effective at engaging the range of voters who hold divergent values and attitudes, and moving them toward supporting housing solutions.

We've tested this narrative with California voters who hold multiple, overlapping, and often conflicting beliefs about housing issues. The California Dream narrative is the culmination of our robust research to find an effective narrative that advocates can use to meet a broad cross section of California voters where they are in order to garner more support for housing reforms over the short and long term. The California Dream narrative frame was one of the most compelling in our tests and was most effective at persuasion and engagement when used in messaging. This frame also proved effective for use in advocating a range of solutions on housing.

This narrative — focused on redefining the American Dream in a way that works for Californians — is effective at moving voters to support housing as a basic right, to support production of housing in their communities, and to increase their likelihood to take action in support of housing solutions.

Even in the context of entrenched prior narratives and an increasingly heated public debate over how to best address California's housing crisis, this narrative frame, along with its accompanying messaging, is effective at shifting voters toward actionable solutions.

Our research demonstrates this narrative can be effective in building the broad coalitions our grant partners and other housing advocacy groups need to win housing solutions at scale. By linking this narrative frame with specific messaging on solutions, housing advocates have a powerful new tool at the ready in their ongoing efforts to ensure that all Californians have a safe, stable home in thriving communities throughout the Golden State.

WINNING HOUSING NARRATIVE: THE CALIFORNIA DREAM

> **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.

The California Dream of an inclusive, hopeful future must be open to people from all kinds of backgrounds and all walks of life. Every Californian has the right to a decent place to live, regardless of race or income, so they can be a part of our shared future.

A Modular, Flexible Narrative Tool

The flexibility of this narrative frame is one of its chief advantages. It's compelling to voters at a high level and is effective for a range of persuasion and messaging contexts — more effective than other frames and messages we tested. This may be helpful for housing advocates working to advance a wide range of issues, approaches, engagement, and action amongst diverse audiences throughout California to do so in a way that builds a consistent statewide narrative. Grant partners and their allies across the housing field can deploy the California Dream narrative frame in a variety of ways that are valuable to their efforts, paired with messages to move the outcomes most important to them.

We hope advocates across the state will be able to make use of this broad, unifying narrative throughout their work. Ultimately, this narrative softens the ground to work across many efforts and approaches, supporting advocacy work spanning a range of much needed solutions to the ongoing housing crisis in California.

Narrative Change for the Long Haul

Across California, housing advocates are doing important and impactful work, whether focused on local zoning initiatives, statewide ballot measures, or neighborhood organizing. This work encompasses a wide range of strategies with many different stakeholders, and often with varied solutions to the housing crisis.

But they have also confronted deep-rooted narratives that are counterproductive to their efforts for change. Some of these tropes focus only on the problems, or only on technical solutions without the context of a larger vision. Others construct housing as a market good or commodity, making efforts to secure affordable housing for all more challenging. This results in an uphill battle for many important policy initiatives on housing preservation, protection, and production.

The often localized nature of housing advocacy work — and specifically the targeted messaging it takes to run tailored campaigns, engage with local decision-makers and the general public, and ultimately secure concrete housing wins — means that resources dedicated to strategic communications and narrative work tend to be short-term, campaign-based, and often reactive. Similarly, housing advocacy and messaging research are often focused on one specific policy at a time, or in just one of the three approaches of preservation, protection, and production. In short, these efforts are not designed to converge to change the larger narrative context in which those fights take place.

Housing advocates across California are ready for an effective narrative approach that will help them make progress. Our research suggests there is a tremendous opportunity for a cohesive narrative that helps connect local communities across the state. The evidence-based narrative frame we've identified is both broad and deep; broad in that it can be used to appeal to all kinds of California voters, and deep in that it is informed by and speaks to their values.

Research Methods

Over the last three years, we have collected deep qualitative and quantitative data exploring the perceptions, values, opinions, and ideas California voters hold toward housing in the state. We've tested narrative frames and specific messages by mindset segments across the state and monitored changes in housing-related values and attitudes. As far as we know, this is the first and most comprehensive approach of its kind, and we are eager to share our findings with other narrative researchers and housing advocates who can put these ideas into action. Further details on the research methodology can be found in the appendix on page 35.

The target population for all research is registered California voters and is weighted to reflect that population using the most recent Current Population Survey Census benchmarks. All respondents are provided the option to opt out of the survey at any time. Responses are discarded if they have a high frequency of straightlining responses (e.g., consistently answering the same across multiple questions). All panelists have their identity verified to ensure they are real panelists and not from a bot farm. For those who complete the survey, they are provided with a nominal financial incentive for their participation. Where quantitative results are compared, the differences presented are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.05 or below.

Narrative, Defined

Today, advocates are placing increased focus on narrative as a means of advancing social change. But, as in any evolving discipline, it can be helpful to hone in on shared understanding of terms in practice. The ideas below are offered as a means of clarifying the context for — and usages of — the narrative research offered here.

NARRATIVE

Narrative, says Joseph Phelan of ReFrame, is "a collection or system of related stories that are articulated and refined over time to represent a central idea or belief." It's the story people have in their heads about the way things work, and provides a framework for ingesting new information or forming new attitudes related to an issue. In the advocacy context, narrative is the broad story we're advancing about our issue, constructed and reinforced by frames and messages. By shifting the story from the American Dream that everyone can work hard and achieve a home (and if not, they are lazy or not worthy) to one in which a safe and stable home is a right for everyone (and if not, then something is wrong with our community/society, not the individual), we think people will view the problem and solutions differently.

On the issue of criminal justice, for example, some politicians emphasize the narrative that in order to be safe we need harsh punishment to deter crime — and that includes stripping people of their rights even after incarceration — while others put forth the story that rehabilitation can help keep us safe by approaching those who are incarcerated as people who can be rehabilitated and re-enter society. These two different ways of telling the story about what keeps us safe impacts how one views the criminal justice system, the people in that system, and the solutions to its problems.

DOMINANT NARRATIVES

Dominant narratives, says Dr. Tiffany Manuel of TheCaseMade, are "common explanations, beliefs or ways of thinking that get reinforced through culture (e.g., through the stories we tell and our culture norms) that often make it more difficult for people to see their collective interest in having systems designed to produce equitable outcomes. Because dominant narratives are so normalized through their repetition and authority, they have the illusion of being objective and apolitical, when in fact they are neither."

NARRATIVE CHANGE

Narrative change is a set of strategies for shifting paradigms and discourse over time. The purpose of narrative change is to change dominant narratives and make our ideas and values common sense or mainstream. Meaningful narrative change is not possible without real narrative power behind it. According to Alan Jenkins, co-founder of The Opportunity Agenda, "Narrative change is not about consensus on every policy detail, but rather agreement on the broad values, themes, and directions that the public discourse and public policy should take."

NARRATIVE POWER

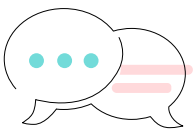
Narrative power is the ability to change the norms and rules our society lives by. ReFrame defines narrative power building as "the long-term effort of advancing, establishing, and reifying/defending narratives through a variety of strategies and tactics." Narrative power is built through the practice of strategic communications, further defined by ReFrame as "consistently and persistently saying the right thing, to the right people, at the right time, to mobilize social power and advance your narrative, to accomplish short-term objectives and set up long-term victories."

The goal of this research is to provide advocates with a tested narrative frame and messages that over time, help advance narrative change and build narrative power toward housing solutions in California.

FRAME

"A frame is a guide," according to FrameWorks Institute. "It directs people where to look, but more importantly, helps them interpret what they see. Every message — whether written, spoken, illustrated, or signed — is presented through a frame of some kind." Because all frames reinforce or undermine some narrative, in this paper, we use "frame" and "narrative frame" interchangeably.

The frame is what we're emphasizing in the story we want to tell, and the messages are the words and phrases we place within that frame that will connect with our audiences to move them toward our goal. Messages are nested in frames that prime and reinforce narratives. Conversely, narratives are formed and solidified through frames and messages. Used effectively in concert, they can result in narrative change.



Research Findings

This project included a number of research approaches in iterative phases that culminated in generating, testing, and selecting the California Dream narrative. By drawing on multiple methods and stages of research, our approach has resulted in rich insights into the narrative landscape of housing in California, as well as opportunities to shift that landscape toward housing solutions.

The appendix includes additional details of the research findings, including a deeper dive into the formative research summarized below, as well as methodology, additional data points, and reflections from the "fresh findings" outlined below.

Formative Research (Phase 0–2)

The findings described in this paper build upon several types of vital formative research:

Phase 0: Field Listening

First and foremost, the Public Opinion and Survey Science (POPSS) and Housing Affordability teams sought to root the research in the field we serve. To inform the research design and ensure its utility and applicability for the field, CZI began the project by convening a multidisciplinary group of advisors to bring the perspective of field practitioners to the fore. A formal Steering Committee — composed of seasoned housing advocates from across California — advised the project at every step of the way, and we are so grateful for their wisdom, guidance, and continued partnership. By building on input from advocates as the core foundation of the research, CZI sought to ensure the resulting recommendations were driven by field needs and would yield the tools housing advocates need most to advance their work.

Phase 1: Media Monitoring

We partnered with Protagonist to conduct media landscaping in order to understand the existing public conversation on housing in California — in both social and traditional media. The goal of this phase of research was to better understand and assess the current conversations on housing taking place across California in the media. This landscape analysis gave us vital contextualizing input and a foundational understanding of the narrative circumstances California's housing advocates are operating within.

Phase 2: Foundational Qualitative Research

This phase of research collected qualitative input from everyday Californians across the state to generate hypotheses about the values and attitudes that California voters have toward housing affordability. In this phase of research, we sought to understand the breadth and depth of California voters' underlying values and attitudes toward housing reform — as well as the contradictions they hold. In the subsequent research described below, these hypotheses were then tested in the quantitative mindset segmentation that followed.

Mindset Segmentation (Phase 3)

GOAL OF THIS PHASE OF RESEARCH

Given the goals of this narrative research to identify a unifying narrative frame that can appeal across a wide range of California voters, we sought to capture the distinct and varying views that California voters hold toward housing affordability and housing reform. Rather than viewing the electorate as a monolithic unit or only through traditional differentiators like demography, partisanship, or geography, a values-based mindset segmentation surfaces the unique ways that voters think about housing affordability. The mindset segmentation offers a generalizable and representative picture of how voters in California come to the table on housing affordability.

METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

- **Field dates:** November 5–18, 2019
- **Data source:** AmeriSpeak from the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago
- **Target population:** Registered California voters
- **Languages:** English, Spanish
- **Sample size:** n=1,078
- **Analytical notes:** Segments were derived through a non-negative matrix factorization. All reported differences are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.05 or below. POPSS has continued to track segment sizes twice annually since the original segmentation was completed.

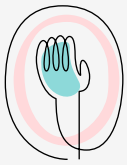
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There are five distinct mindset segments that describe California voters on the issue of housing affordability.
- These mindset segments transcend the traditional differences of demography and political affiliation, reinforcing that housing as an issue is not yet bogged down by partisan tribalism among the electorate; for voters, there's no clear "left" or "right" on many aspects of this issue.
- The mindset segments offer housing advocates a fresh, deeper understanding of their audiences within the California voter population in order to meet voters where they are on the issues.

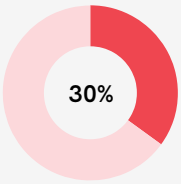
The following table summarizes the mindsets, which can be explored in greater detail in the appendix on page 26.

Meet the Mindsets

November 2021 proportions | Margin of error +/- 3.84%



Rugged Individualists

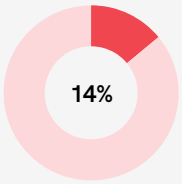


"Housing security — and other financial achievements — need to be earned. It's every person for themselves."

Housing is a privilege, not a right.

Not everyone can afford a place to live, and that's not my fault or problem.

American Dreamers

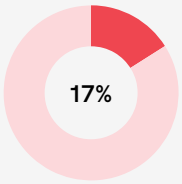


"The American Dream is attainable if you buckle down, work hard, and take care of your community."

Values insular community, although ultimately looks out for themselves.

Expensive housing is a sign of success that we should all strive for.

Pro-Government Pragmatists

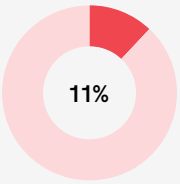


"People need to work hard to achieve housing security, but the government should help create a system that provides opportunity for everyone."

Everyone deserves to live somewhere.

However, owning a home is something you must work for.

Dream Disruptors

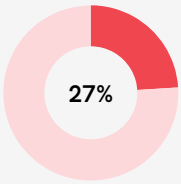


"We shouldn't rely on legacy ideas and systems to solve modern day problems.

Neighborhoods need to adapt to changing realities.

The market is to blame for the housing crisis.

Equity Enthusiasts



"Everyone should be able to achieve their version of the American Dream; A rising tide lifts all boats!"

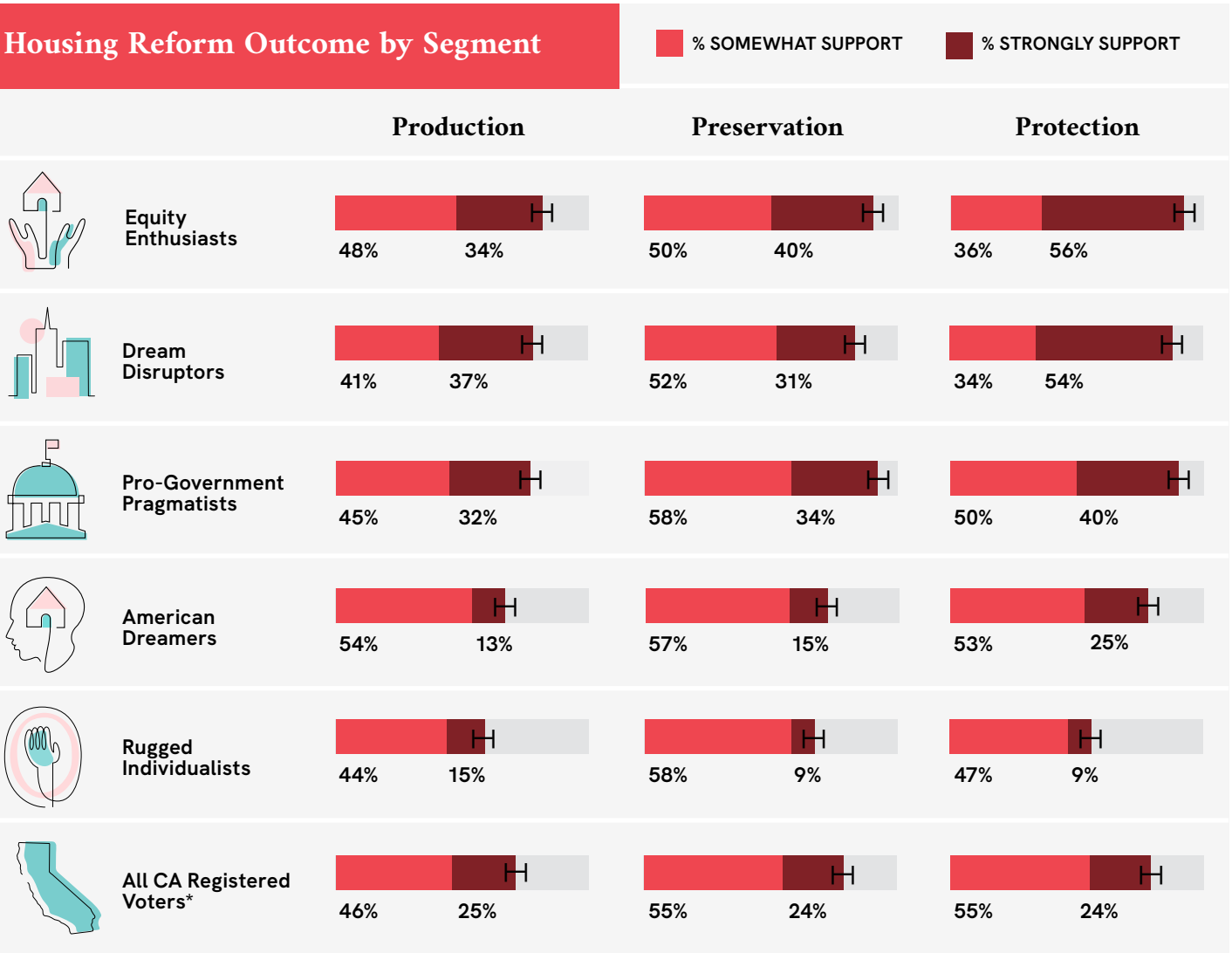
Housing is a basic human right.

Individuals born with more opportunities are responsible to ensure everyone has a roof over their head.

When looking at the breakdown of California voters' views on housing issues, an important note for advocates is that — given expected movement in mindsets, turnout likelihood, level of political engagement, and other contextual constraints — movement toward statewide policy solutions will likely require a coalition across mindset segments.

The data also yields useful information on how each of the mindset segments views specific housing reforms. It's worth noting that voters in each mindset segment respond fairly predictably based on the underlying values that define each — which further validates the mindset segmentation as a means of understanding audiences. It's also worth noting that all mindset segments are generally supportive of reforms in the abstract, signaling opportunity across all mindsets.

Housing Reform Outcome by Segment



* Represents total population of voters, not a segment.

Frame Generation and Testing (Phase 4–4.5)

GOAL OF THIS PHASE OF RESEARCH

Rooted in the fresh understanding of our audience offered by the mindset segmentation, the goal of this phase was to identify a broad unifying narrative frame to buoy the case for housing reforms across the widest possible audience of California voters by developing and testing a set of six frames.

Methodology in Brief

FOCUS GROUPS

- **Virtual discussion field dates:** June 2–June 5, 2020
- **Group composition:**
  - Two focus groups with each of the five segments for a total of ten focus groups.
  - Groups represented voters from the Bay Area and Southern California.
  - Recruited participants completed a typing tool that classified them into one of the mindset segments.
  - Each group had 8–10 participants for a total of 86 participants.

QUANTITATIVE TESTING

- **Field dates:** January 3–February 8, 2021, with a pause from January 7–27, 2021, to avoid data collection following the insurrection of the U.S. Capitol on January 6. (Responses collected before January 7 and those collected after January 27 were compared to ensure no systematic differences existed.)
- **Data source:** YouGov
- **Target population:** California registered voters
- **Languages:** English, Spanish
- **Sample size:** n=5,734
- **Analytical notes:** All reported differences are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.05 or below

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- From the focus groups, we heard that most California voters do not believe that the standard American Dream of home ownership is possible — or, among some mindset segments, even desirable. One common theme that emerged was, despite the state's difficulties in terms of housing costs, traffic, and political dynamics, nearly all participants felt like California had the ability to solve its problems. Respondents reflected on how innovative, creative, and forward-thinking California is with respect to its economy and setting national trends, and that these qualities could be leveraged to solve the housing affordability crisis. This theme served as the initial genesis of the California Dream narrative frame.
- Along with this *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame that emerged from the focus groups, we also tested five other frames in a large-scale survey of California voters that assessed 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. Full language tested for each frame can be found in the appendix on page 31. Many of the frames performed in predictable ways across the mindset segments, two of the frames — the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* and *American Dream = Safe & Stable Home* — had the most positive effects across the segments overall with the least amount of backlash.

FRAMES

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILITY

Key Findings
Compared to all other frames, voters were more likely to find the *Neighborhood Stability* frame 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.

Mindset 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 3Ps (the production of more housing, the preservation of existing housing, and the protection of residents from displacement).

Equity Enthusiasts are most enthusiastic about *American Dream = Safe & Stable Home* and *Neighborhood Stability* frames.

AMERICAN DREAM = ACCESS TO SUCCESS

Key Findings
Voters exposed to the *American Dream = Access to Success* frame were less likely to find it inspiring or motivating, and this frame was least likely to yield positive views on housing outcomes.

Mindset Segments' Reactions
Rugged Individualists only respond well to the *American Dream = Access to Success* frame. However, this is the least popular frame among all other segments.

CALIFORNIA DREAM = BUILD WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

Key Findings
California Dream = Build What Matters to You is the most effective frame for increasing propensity to act. In fact, it is the only frame that increases propensity to act on housing issues. Respondents exposed to *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* were most likely to donate money to a nonprofit organization focused on housing and sign a petition related to housing.

Mindset Segments' Reactions
Pro-Government Pragmatists are the most persuadable. They respond well to the widest variety of frames, especially *American Dream = Safe & Stable Home*, *California Dream = Build What Matters to You,* and *Better Together*.

BETTER TOGETHER

Key Findings
Respondents exposed to *Better Together* were most likely to view housing as a privilege that is "completely earned" and "much less likely" to vote for a candidate focused on increasing affordable housing.

Mindset Segments' Reactions
Pro-Government Pragmatists are the only group that responds well to *Better Together*.

AMERICAN DREAM = SAFE, STABLE HOME

Key Findings
American Dream = Safe & Stable Home is the most appealing frame based on self-reported measures (i.e., convincing, inspiring, motivating).

Mindset Segments' Reactions
American Dreamers are most convinced, inspired, and motivated by the *American Dream = Safe & Stable Home* 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 *American Dream = Safe & Stable Home*, *California Dream = Build What Matters to You*, and *Better Together*.

Equity Enthusiasts are most enthusiastic about *American Dream = Safe & Stable Home* and *Neighborhood Stability* frames.

RACIAL EQUITY

Key Findings
Racial Equity has potential to frame housing as a "community" vs. "individual" responsibility. However, it also produces polarizing results across segments.

Respondents exposed to *Racial Equity* were more likely to view housing as a "community" instead of "individual" responsibility.

Mindset Segments' Reactions
Exposure to *Racial Equity* and *Neighborhood Stability* weakens American Dreamers' support for 3Ps (the production of more housing, the preservation of existing housing, and the protection of residents from displacement).

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 *Racial Equity* frame weakens the strength of their support.

Among Equity Enthusiasts, exposure to *Racial Equity* slightly weakens support for 3Ps but increases likelihood of donating.

Frame and Outcome-Specific Message Testing

GOAL OF THIS PHASE OF RESEARCH

In this phase, we sought to further hone in on the most effective narrative frame housing advocates could use to engage, persuade, and motivate the broadest cross section of California voters toward housing solutions. To identify a clearly dominant frame between the two most promising candidates, the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* and the *American Dream = A Safe and Stable Home* frames, the team developed issue-specific messaging to test against specific outcomes.

METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

- **Field dates:** May 29–June 17, 2021
- **Data source:** YouGov
- **Target population:** Registered California voters
- **Languages:** English, Spanish
- **Sample size:** n=5,023
- **Analytical notes:** All reported differences are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.05 or below

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* emerged as the frame with the greatest potential to move California voters to support and engage with pro-housing ideas and outcomes.
- *The California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame was more effective for moving respondents to view housing as a right, to act on housing issues, and to support production of housing when compared to other frames and messages.

High-Level Summary of Outcome-Specific Messages

Frame and message combination had a positive effect on outcome

Frame and message combination had a negative effect on outcome

		OUTCOMES				
		Right v. Privilege	Individual v. Collective	Propensity to Act	Support for Production	Likelihood of Voting
CALIFORNIA DREAM FRAME AND MESSAGES	Right v. Privilege	■				
	Individual v. Collective			■		
	Propensity to Act		■	■	■	
	Support for Production			■		
AMERICAN DREAM FRAME AND MESSAGES	Right v. Privilege	■		■		
	Individual v. Collective					■
	Propensity to Act	■		■		
	Support for Production		■			■

The California Dream

FRAME: 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 together.

The California Dream of an inclusive, hopeful future must be open to people from all kinds of backgrounds and all walks of life. Every Californian has the right to a decent place to live, regardless of race or income, so they can be part of our shared future.

DESIRED OUTCOME: Housing is viewed as a fundamental human right (to be guaranteed) and not a privilege (to be earned).	**DESIRED OUTCOME:** Higher propensity to act (e.g., donate money, write to officials, sign petitions) in support of housing reform.	**DESIRED OUTCOME:** Increase support for producing additional housing in one's community.
MESSAGE: Californians know how important an inclusive, hopeful future is for people from all kinds of backgrounds and all walks of life. These values drive innovation, keep businesses and communities thriving, and bring Californian's unique culture to life. Let's make sure all Californians have the right to a decent place to live, regardless of race or income, so they can be part of our shared future.	**MESSAGE:** Californians know how to dream big, innovate, and lead the way. We know housing is a top priority for our community, and it's up to us to use our voices, our votes, and our dollars to make it a priority for lawmakers. Let's take bold action to solve one of the most urgent problems of our time and make sure everyone has a decent place to live.	**MESSAGE:** Rising housing costs are driving business, workers, and young people out of our communities, and if we wait to take action, the problem will only get worse. Let's expand housing options right here, right now, to protect the good jobs, great schools, diverse communities, and unique opportunities that matter to our families and neighbors.

Our research to date suggests that when advocates can nest their ideas within this frame, they are more likely to be successful in moving California voters toward solutions to our shared housing crisis.

In addition to the aggregate results displayed above, the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame produced favorable results among key demographic groups, while — importantly — doing the least harm among others. This ability to persuade key audience segments without igniting backlash among others is a key reason the California Dream frame rose to the top.

- Women exposed to the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame express more favorable views on housing outcomes.
  - More likely to believe housing is a right (58%, compared to 53% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 54% control).
  - More likely to believe housing is a collective issue (57%, compared to 50% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 49% control).
  - More likely to vote for a housing candidate (58%, compared to 53% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 56% control).

- Voters over 50 years old exposed to the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame express more favorable views on housing outcomes.
    - More likely to believe housing is a right (55–64 years old 50%, compared to 38% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 44% control; 65+ years old 48%, compared to 40% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 45% control).
- When it comes to race/ethnicity or education, there were no statistically significant effects based on exposure to different frames.

- Voters between 18–29 years old exposed to the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame express mixed results.
    - Younger voters exposed to the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame are more likely to believe housing is a community issue (69%, compared to 55% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 54% control).
    - However they are also more likely to believe housing is a privilege (44%, compared to 39% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 27% control).

Mindsets' Reactions to Frames

A key motivation for the mindset segmentation research was to identify a frame that advocates could use to unify voters across values, and move them toward pro-housing solutions. The data below further signals the success of the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame in doing so.

- Among the more movable segments, those exposed to the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame express more favorable views on housing outcomes.
    - American Dreamers exposed to the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame are more likely to believe housing is a community issue (52%, compared to 43% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* & 37% control)
    - Dream Disruptors exposed to the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* are more likely to vote for a housing candidate (78%, compared to 66% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home*).
    - Pro-Government Pragmatists exposed to *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* are more likely to vote for a housing candidate (72%, compared to 65% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 62% control).
    - Rugged Individualists remain predictable and unphased by narrative frames. For example, they exhibit no significant difference between *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* and *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* in their belief that housing is a fundamental human right (9% *California Dream = Build What Matters to You*, compared to 10% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 12% control).

What's Next

We plan to engage in further study to see how this narrative performs in practice. Additional research, networking, and capacity building efforts in the works include:

Further Research

- **Regional Pilot Testing:** Two key regional partners from the Steering Committee — Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability and United Way of Greater LA — will put these narrative recommendations into practice for regional and issue-specific message testing. These pilots will help us further understand the conditions under which this narrative performs well, and provide a roadmap for how partners can try this research on for size in their own work.

- **Statewide Randomized Controlled Trial:** Simultaneously, working with Housing California, a key statewide partner from the Steering Committee, we'll conduct a statewide, randomized controlled study to evaluate the effectiveness of the narrative frame in the field and at scale. This randomized controlled trial will involve fielding a statewide creative campaign themed around the California Dream to roughly a million voters across the state.

  Both the pilot testing and the randomized controlled trial will provide a roadmap and further information for advocates on how the California Dream narrative frame can be used to achieve their goals.

- **Racial Equity Message Testing:** Additionally, we'll link the California Dream frame with messages that specifically center and address racial equity to see how voters respond. Hopefully this will yield additional guidance for advocates on how to weave an analysis of race into their communications toward housing solutions while using the California Dream narrative.

- **Regional Segmentation:** In 2022, we expect to design and execute additional values-based segmentations of California voters that are specific to different regions of the state. We heard loud and clear from advocates — and know from prior research — that values and attitudes vary significantly from region to region, and we hope these additional segmentations will be of use to advocates working on region-specific campaigns and solutions.

- **Research to Identify What Makes the California Dream Frame So Effective:** Based on the research we've done to date, we cannot say empirically why the California Dream frame is effective across a diverse set of audiences. In future research, we plan to test different elements of the frame in order to pinpoint its success, thereby making it easier for advocates to use different pieces of the narrative that work for their purposes and goals in different contexts.

Toolkit for Advocates

The findings and recommendations from this research will be compiled into a practical suite of tools on a website that housing advocates can use and remix in their work. The site will be an accessible resource that organizations across the state can rely on for easy-to-use messaging materials to support their day-to-day work.

Housing Narrative Researcher Convening

CZI's Movement Capacity Building team and advocacy partners will gather researchers from across the country to develop a shared understanding of the larger housing narrative landscape, distill key research insights for advocates, and identify opportunities to collaborate and strengthen our collective findings.

Funder Coordination Efforts

CZI's Movement Capacity Building Team and advocacy partners will convene other funders to offer some needed clarity, rigor, and coordination about the resources necessary to effectively shift the narrative for housing over the long term. We hope to secure additional funders to make the needed investments to scale this narrative power and infrastructure building work statewide in 2022 and beyond.

Investing in Narrative for the Long Term

Informed by our research, CZI is excited to invest in the leadership, skills, and infrastructure needed to build and implement long-term narrative power. This will include supporting housing advocates working to experiment with and implement narrative research designed to build public and political support for housing, as well as supporting campaigns and strategies to build and shift new narratives on housing.

Using This Research

This narrative research is designed to be used by California housing advocates across the state. We hope this research adds evidence-based depth and breadth that builds on existing expertise from the field of housing advocates and results in strategies and tactics that can be used to shift existing narratives — and establish new ones that resonate with the individual needs and values of the communities they serve. The ideas, frames, narratives, and messages surfaced in this research can be applied by advocates in numerous ways:

- Pair the tested frames and messages with calls to action that drive your organization's specific goals.

- Use the segmentation results to develop a deeper understanding of your organization's audiences and/or your community's attitudes and beliefs about housing.

- Use the language verbatim in public statements, emails, speeches, social media posts, op-eds, and more.

- Tailor the language, adapting it in ways that will work best for your constituency and community.

Please use and apply these ideas freely! We view this framework as a tool for advocates to adapt and experiment with, tailoring it to your organization and your specific issues, your geography, your context, and your community. We hope that you will try it out in your work and find that it produces results. Tinker with it, stretch it. We look forward to further opportunities for collaboration with other researchers who are also exploring how to advance narrative change efforts. We know that shifting long-entrenched narratives is key for the policy changes necessary to make sure that all Californians have a safe and stable home.

Appendix to The California Dream

A New Narrative to Engage Californians on Housing Affordability

Appendix to The California Dream: A New Narrative to Engage Californians on Housing Affordability

This appendix includes additional details and reflections on each phase of this research project.

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Summary of Findings

PHASE 0

Phase 0: Core Foundation of Field Input

GOAL

To inform the research design and ensure applicability for the field, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative's Public Opinion and Survey Science (POPSS) research team began the project by convening a multidisciplinary group of advisors to bring the perspective of field practitioners to the fore. By building on input from advocates as the core foundation of the voter narrative study, CZI sought to ensure the research was driven by the needs of the field in order to give advocates the tools they need most to advance their work.

METHODOLOGY

Input from the field was gathered through one-on-one meetings and interviews and via a series of convenings to collect input on the research design.

TIMING

Early 2019 and ongoing through the pilot testing phase.

Because the research effort was sparked by the clear call from advocates for data-driven narrative tools, CZI wanted to ensure that the research agenda was informed by advocates themselves. We invited advocates to participate at two levels:

- A broad, informal group of stakeholders was engaged in April 2019 to inform our research scope and design. This network of advisors included more than 25 organizations and leaders within the housing movement, all of whom generously lent their ideas and expertise to inform this voter narrative study. The full list of advisors is available in the acknowledgments section.

- From this network, a smaller and more formal six-member Steering Committee was convened in June 2019 to inform research design and to continue to provide deep-dive reflections and reactions to the initial findings in the early stages of research. These subject-matter experts — many of whom are leading-edge practitioners in housing advocacy across California — offered strategic insight and recommendations. Initially planned for a six-month consultation, the Steering Committee continued to offer guidance and insight to inform the project through February 2021, when researchers honed in on a core narrative. Even after the formal sunset of the Steering Committee, three core members are continuing in active partnership with the POPSS research team, in fall 2021, to host pilot tests of the initial narrative recommendations. These pilot tests will evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed narrative in practice, within the context of active advocacy efforts. The full list of Steering Committee members is available in the acknowledgments section.

The Steering Committee was guided by Dr. Tiffany Manuel, as senior strategic advisor on the project. "Dr. T" is a nationwide expert, working at the nexus of housing narrative research and capacity building for advocates. Connecting housing research and putting it into practice in the field, she regularly guides advocates to shift and unseat dominant narratives, replacing them instead with narratives that advance housing solutions that work for everyone. Her leadership has been invaluable, connecting CZI's research to the existing library of research on housing narratives, to ensure that together as a field we're expanding our shared knowledge.

The feedback of the advisory network and the steering committee was critical to ensure these narrative research efforts continue to be informed by — and responsive to — the needs of the field. Over the course of 2020, members of both groups were also invited to participate in a series of Learning Labs, joining a broader network of some 200 of their colleagues from a wide range of California housing advocacy organizations. wand engagement efforts. Through a mix of presentations, advocates to learn about and digest the early research findings and reflect on how their narrative shift efforts

might be shaped by the early findings within their own communities and constituencies. CZI's POPSS and Housing Affordability teams are deeply grateful for the advocates who lent their perspectives to shape this effort, and we are hopeful that the resulting narrative will be actionable and effective in helping them advance their important efforts toward affordable, safe, and stable homes for all Californians.

Phase 1: Media Monitoring

GOAL

With guiding input from the steering committee, we partnered with Protagonist to conduct media landscaping in order to better understand the public conversation on housing in California. The goal of this phase of research was to assess the current conversations on housing taking place across California in the media (traditional and social).

METHODOLOGY

Content was reviewed from national, local, and regional media (such as The Atlantic, LA Times, Mercury News, etc.), as well as blogs (Curbed LA, Bold Italic, etc.), and Spanish-language media (La Opinion, El Tecolote, etc.) to determine where and how frequently narratives appeared. The narrative landscape analysis also included first person expressions from Twitter and Reddit forums specific to housing in key California regions.

TIMING

January–June 2019. These results are a snapshot in time, and we acknowledge that narratives around housing access and affordability have become more urgent since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Media monitoring findings revealed numerous key insights, including ten core narratives shaping California's housing debates, and how they reflect a spectrum of stances toward housing production and the role of government in addressing California's housing crisis. The analysis offers insight into how these narratives play out differently in specific communities across California.

For example, the most common housing-related topics varied across the state and by dissemination platform, as did potential solutions and how communities feel about them.

Phase 2: Foundational Qualitative Research

GOAL

This phase of research collected qualitative input to generate hypotheses about the values and attitudes that California voters have toward housing affordability. In this phase of research, we sought to understand the breadth and depth of California voters' underlying values and attitudes toward housing reform — as well as the contradictions they likely hold. While this provided deep and nuanced insights, they are not generalizable to the population. As such, these hypotheses were then tested in the quantitative mindset segmentation that followed.

METHODOLOGY

- Four focus groups with a total of 33 participants
- Online diaries with 25 participants
- In-depth interviews in the homes of 12 participants in the Bay Area, Los Angeles Area, and San Joaquin Valley.

TIMING

April–May 2019

The qualitative research was characterized by deep listening to a sample of Californians to understand their ideas, attitudes, deep values, and underlying beliefs about our housing crisis and its root causes in a personal, nuanced way.

From listening deeply to a cross-section of California voters, POPSS noticed some common themes:

1. People hold multiple, overlapping, and often conflicting narratives about housing issues.
2. Everyone agrees rent and prices are too high, but they don't necessarily connect this with a housing shortage.
3. People blame developers, landlords, and the government for housing costs.

A key outcome of this phase was to identify the breadth of views that exist among Californians as an input into the quantitative mindset segmentation that followed it. We heard that Californians have diverging, sometimes conflicting, views on:

- Whether or not all Californians have a right to affordable housing.
- The role government should play in the housing market.
- The costs and benefits of addressing the affordable housing shortage.
- The role of housing in exacerbating inequality.
- Openness to living in communities that are both racially and economically diverse.
- The pros and cons of neighborhood change.
- The relationship between individual and collective interests.

Additional themes emerged that highlight the tensions and challenges that housing advocates regularly confront:

- **Low-income housing itself is not necessarily named as a threat to the neighborhood — but some voters associate this type of housing with "behaviors" they do express concerns about.** Some California voters hold deep-seated fears that housing opponents can easily tap into. Most renters and owners we heard from expressed that they are wary of affordable housing solutions in their neighborhood, citing worries that it will result in crime, noise, litter, illegal dumping, and a general lack of property upkeep. Owners expressed this more as a quality of life issue than a property value issue — but property value concerns seem to lie just under the surface.

- **Voters' fears are linked to mental images of potentially threatening people and places.** Voters readily identified specific people and places they perceive to be threatening. Phrases used to describe these mental images included "gangs," "homeless people," "riff raff," "bad neighborhoods," and "underpasses."

- **Some see benefits in gentrification, others see threats.** Many voters perceive gentrification as welcome improvements in their neighborhood: a store like Starbucks or Target nearby, improved parks and transportation, neighborhood watch groups, and families and children enjoying safe sidewalks and streets. For market-rate renters, these can be exciting even as they raise flags about their own long-term stability to afford housing as the neighborhood changes around them. For owners and price-stabilized renters, the sense of threat or loss comes later when the neighborhood becomes wealthier and often whiter, and the neighborhood tips toward a new majority. At that stage, longstanding neighbors of various income levels and races are pushed out, small businesses struggle, and groceries and other day-to-day items become too expensive.

- **It's hard for voters to imagine stable, thriving mixed-income neighborhoods.** Most voters we met are accustomed to thinking of multi-income/multi-class neighborhoods as unstable and transitioning — either gentrifying or in decline. This is reinforced by a tendency to think of their towns and communities in terms of geographies of class. These mental geographies inform their ideas of where they'd like to live and where they can afford to live. This also informs ideas about locations that they consider unstable borderlands where different classes have existed side by side but may be starting to collide.

- **When it comes to housing, class is the least comfortable dimension of diversity**. Nearly all voters we met broadly embraced diversity as a current or aspirational feature of their neighborhood. Many voters, both progressive and conservative, speak proudly of neighbors who are dissimilar from them in age, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity. But they are wary of neighbors who are significantly different from them in class. Discomfort living among different economic classes was expressed across all income levels; low-income and high-income people alike often express distrust — or even distaste — for their neighbors with differing economic circumstances.

Phase 3: Mindset Segmentation

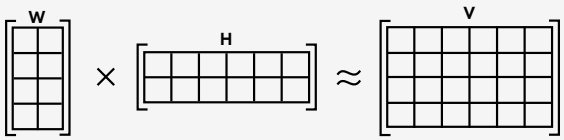
GOAL

Given the goals of this narrative research to identify a unifying narrative frame that can appeal to all types of California voters, in this phase, the research team sought to capture the distinct and varying views that California voters hold toward housing affordability and housing reform. Rather than viewing the electorate as a monolithic unit or only through traditional differentiators like demography or geography, a mindset segmentation surfaces the unique ways that voters think about housing, grounded in the values that inform their worldview. The mindset segmentation offers generalizable and representative data and analysis on what voters across the state actually think and feel about housing.

METHODOLOGY

This phase of research generated values-based quantitative audience segmentation using survey data resulting in voter personas reflective of the statewide population. The research team first developed mindset segmentation questions informed by the formative research and expert input. The questions were designed to sort voters according to their own deeply held values toward housing and their communities. The research team administered the survey using AmeriSpeak. The research team then ran a cluster analysis that takes as input responses to 88 values statements and identifies the unique clusters of mindset segments that exist within the data. Using responses to the values statements to understand preferences toward housing reform, POPSS ultimately developed the rich personas below, with the distinctions between the mindset segments rooted entirely in voters' values.

- **Data source:** AmeriSpeak, an online, probability-based panel developed by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago
- **Sample size:** n=1,078
- **Field dates:** November 5-18, 2019
- **Sampling methodology:** Survey fielded to self-identifying registered voters in California; Margin of Error: ±3.94% for full sample.
- **Weighting benchmarks:** Post-stratification weighting was performed to account for response bias and demographic imbalance. Weighting benchmarks included county, gender, age, income, education, and race/ethnicity and were based on proportions from the 2019 Current Population Survey.
- **Analytical process:**
  - Using the response data from 88 Likert scale statements, ran a cluster analysis using non-negative matrix factorization (NMF). Non-negative matrix factorization is a method used to represent the model matrix (respondents X variables) with 2 new matrices, where one segments respondents and the second groups variables into clusters of highly correlated features. This method is often applied to high-dimensional datasets where the number of features exceeds 20. With this approach, we were able to cluster segment respondents according to their mindset segmentation variables and specify the variables that define each cluster. The known challenge within this method is the proper specification of the number of segments used in the factorization, which is supported by statistical validation methods designed for clustering problems



- The best performing solution in both statistical (as determined by model diagnostic scores such as Silhouette and Dispersion metrics) and practical terms was the 5-segment option.

  Note that anywhere comparative values are presented, differences are significant at a p=value of 0.05 or below.

  Our analysis identified an option with 5 segments (of balanced sizes)

Clusters (k)	5	**Dispersion**	0.66
Methodology	NMF	**Largest segment %**	28.2%
Silhouette score	0.39	**Smallest segment %**	17.2%

The mindset segments identified in this phase of research are outlined in greater detail below and current as of November 2021.

RUGGED INDIVIDUALISTS

Comprising 30% of California voters, Rugged Individualists are voters who believe that having a home is something that needs to be earned. It's not something that people should expect to be provided for them. Focused on the individual, rather than the collective, Rugged Individualists expect people to either pay more as housing costs increase or to move to a cheaper area.

Themes that emerged as defining beliefs and values of Rugged Individualists include:

- Housing is a privilege
- Too expensive? Pay more or move to an affordable area
- Opposes government intervention
- Home ownership is an avenue for wealth generation
- Does not value diversity
- Prefers living in close-knit community with similar people
- Does not feel responsible to think of affordable housing for others
- Homelessness is a result of bad personal choices
- Individualism over collectivism

It's also worth noting where Rugged Individualists' demographics were statistically different from overall California voters, as they were more likely to be:

- Older than 60 years old (43%)
- White, non-Hispanic (81%)
- Republican (45%)
- Independent (24%)
- Homeowners (76%)

AMERICAN DREAMERS

American Dreamers comprise 14% of California voters. Similar to Rugged Individualists, American Dreamers believe that housing must be earned. American Dreamers are more likely to be renters and lower income. American Dreamers are community-oriented as far as their immediate insular community goes, but ultimately focused on individual needs and outcomes, likely out of necessity.

Themes that emerged as defining beliefs and values of American Dreamers include:

- Housing should be earned
- High housing cost is a sign of success
- Values and trusts insular community
- Ultimately looks out for themselves
- Feels less safe in communities with lots of different types of people
- Prefers to live among people with similar race/ethnicity and economic class
- It's a shame when neighborhoods evolve over time
- Does not really understand the government's role in creating affordable housing
- Open to government intervention if it helps them

It's also worth noting where American Dreamers' demographics were statistically different from overall California voters, as they were more likely to be:

- Female (60%)
- Asian (28%)
- Undecided political views (8%)

PRO-GOVERNMENT PRAGMATISTS

Comprising 17% of California voters, Pro-Government Pragmatists believe that everyone should have a decent place to live, but they know that right now not everyone can. Pro-Government Pragmatists think the government should intervene to provide housing opportunities for more people and that owning a home is a wealth-generating opportunity.

Themes that emerged as defining beliefs and values of Pro-Government Pragmatists include:

- Housing is both a right and a privilege
- Everyone should have a decent place to live, but not everyone can right now
- Government should intervene to provide affordable and safe housing for everyone
- Owning a home is an opportunity for wealth generation
- Values close-knit community and diversity
- Would be proud to live in a community with affordable housing
- Would choose a neighborhood further from jobs, as long as housing prices are within budget
- Prioritizes collectivism over individualism

It's also worth noting where Pro-Government Pragmatists' demographics were statistically different from overall California voters, as they were more likely to be:

- 45–59 years old (34%)
- Black, non-Hispanic (10%)
- Undecided political view (6%)
- No high school diploma (26%)
- High school graduate or equivalent (30%)

DREAM DISRUPTORS

Reflecting 11% of California voters, Dream Disruptors are supportive of most housing reforms but unattached to and skeptical of the current housing system and market. Unconcerned about home ownership or property value, Dream Disruptors envision a future where everyone has a home, but no one has more home than they need. They're pro-change, pro-diversity, and pro-innovation.

Themes that emerged as defining beliefs and values of Dream Disruptors include:

- Supportive of housing reforms, but skeptical of current system
- Unconcerned about home ownership or property values
- Envisions a future where everyone has a home, but no one has more than they need
- A community's success has nothing to do with high housing costs
- Americans should be able to achieve financial security without owning a home
- Does not express strong community ties
- Most open to change in neighborhoods
- Healthy neighborhoods need to adapt to changing realities

It's also worth noting where Dream Disruptors' demographics were statistically different from overall California voters, as they were more likely to be:

- American Indian / Alaskan Native (7%)
- Asian (25%)
- Democrat (74%)
- 18–29 years old (36%)
- Have some form of college education (47%)

EQUITY ENTHUSIASTS

Equity Enthusiasts make up 27% of California voters. Similar to Dream Disruptors, Equity Enthusiasts believe that everyone has a right to a home, and are highly supportive of every housing reform tested — the most supportive of all 5 segments. Unlike Dream Disruptors, Equity Enthusiasts see value in home ownership, and want that opportunity for everyone. Collectivist to their core, Equity Enthusiasts believe that individuals born with more opportunities in life have a responsibility to ensure everyone has a roof over their head. Equity Enthusiasts are pro-government intervention, pro-community, and against the free market determining who can live where.

Themes that emerged as defining beliefs and values of Equity Enthusiasts include:

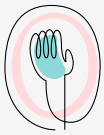
- Housing is a basic human right
- Highly supportive of housing reforms
- Sees value in home ownership, and wants that opportunity for everyone
- Collectivist to their core
- Individuals born with more opportunities have a responsibility to ensure everyone has access to housing
- Providing decent housing is the key to addressing homelessness
- Thinks of others before themselves
- Most willing to make personal sacrifices and use their own resources to help strangers

It's also worth noting where Equity Enthusiasts' demographics were statistically different from overall California voters, as they were more likely to be:

- 18-44 years old (54%)
- Mixed race (7%)
- Democrat (73%)
- Bachelor's degree or above (51%)
- Renter (40%)

The Mindsets Segments

Unpacking Mindsets



Rugged Individualists

American Dreamers

Pro-Government Pragmatists

Dream Disruptors

Equity Enthusiasts

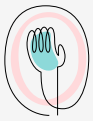
	Rugged Individualists	American Dreamers	Pro-Government Pragmatists	Dream Disruptors	Equity Enthusiasts
COLLECTIVE	●○○○○	●●●○○	●●●●○	●●○○○	●●●●●
DIVERSITY	●○○○○	●○○○○	●●●●○	●●●●●	●●●●●
BASIC RIGHT	●○○○○	●●○○○	●●●○○	●●●●●	●●●●●
OPEN TO CHANGE	●●○○○	●○○○○	●●●○○	●●●●●	●●●●○
HOUSING REFORM	●○○○○	●●○○○	●●●●○	●●●●●	●●●●●

Another key finding of note is the very high salience of housing issues among California voters: across all mindset segments, housing and homelessness were consistently ranked among voters' top concerns.

This is good news for housing advocates, who don't need to raise awareness about the problem or stoke the call for solutions — California voters already see these issues as urgent and important.

Personal Concerns Ranked Across Segments

NUMBERS FROM DECEMBER 2019
* STATISTICALLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN ITEM BELOW



Rugged Individualists

1. Homelessness *
2. **Housing Affordability**
3. Nonviolent Crime
4. Drugs *
5. Violent Crime
6. Healthcare
7. Poverty *
8. Unemployment
9. Undocumented Immigrants
10. Traffic *
11. Transportation
12. Public Education *
13. Pollution
14. Access to Healthy Food
15. Climate Change
16. Racial Tension *
17. Access to Recreational Areas

American Dreamers

1. **Housing Affordability**
2. Homelessness
3. Drugs *
4. Violent Crime
5. Healthcare
6. Poverty
7. Unemployment
8. Nonviolent Crime
9. Traffic
10. Public Education *
11. Transportation
12. Pollution
13. Access to Healthy Food
14. Climate Change
15. Undocumented Immigrants *
16. Access to Recreational Areas
17. Racial Tension

Pro-Government Pragmatists

1. Homelessness
2. **Housing Affordability** *
3. Poverty
4. Healthcare
5. Violent Crime *
6. Drugs
7. Unemployment *
8. Nonviolent Crime
9. Climate Change *
10. Public Education
11. Access to Healthy Food
12. Transportation *
13. Pollution
14. Traffic
15. Racial Tension
16. Undocumented Immigrants *
17. Access to Recreational Areas

Dream Disruptors

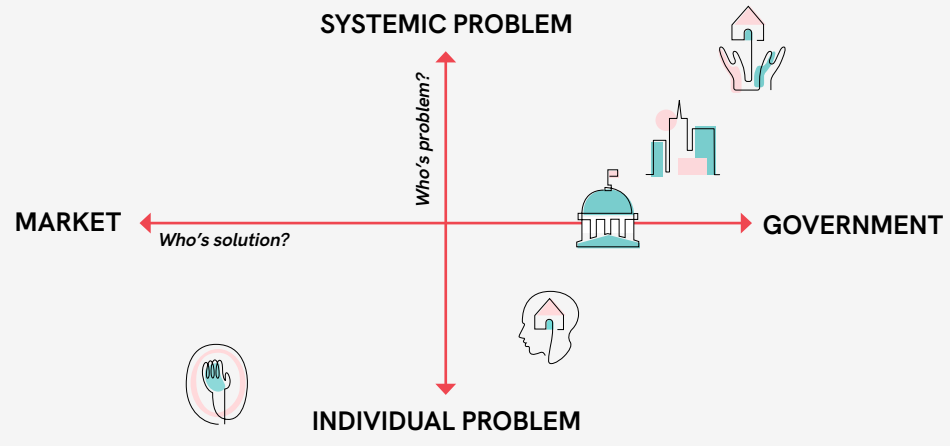
1. **Housing Affordability** *
2. Healthcare
3. Poverty *
4. Homelessness
5. Unemployment *
6. Climate Change
7. Violent Crime
8. Nonviolent Crime
9. Drugs
10. Access to Healthy Food
11. Public Education
12. Transportation
13. Pollution
14. Racial Tension
15. Traffic *
16. Access to Recreational Areas
17. Undocumented Immigrants

Equity Enthusiasts

1. **Housing Affordability** *
2. Poverty *
3. Homelessness
4. Healthcare
5. Climate Change *
6. Unemployment *
7. Violent Crime
8. Drugs
9. Nonviolent Crime
10. Access to Healthy Food
11. Traffic
12. Transportation
13. Racial Tension
14. Pollution
15. Public Education *
16. Access to Recreational Areas
17. Undocumented Immigrants

What the mindset segmentation data further indicates is that while California voters can agree there's a serious problem, they are not aligned on the source of the problem, or the solutions to address it.

Individual or Systemic Problem? Market or Government Solutions?



Phase 4: Frame Generation and Testing

GOAL

Rooted in the fresh understanding of our audience offered by the mindset segmentation, the goal of this phase was to identify a broad unifying narrative to buoy the case for housing reforms across the widest possible audience of California voters by testing a set of six frames.

METHODOLOGY

This phase of research included two sub-phases: 1) focus groups to generate narrative frames that speak to the values that surfaced from the mindset segmentation and quantitatively test the appeal and persuasive power of each frame; and 2) survey experiments to test the extent to which each narrative frame can move California voters overall and by Mindset Segment on key outcomes such as viewing housing as a human right and increasing their propensity to act in support of housing reform.

Focus Groups:

- Two 90-minute online focus groups with each of the five segments for a total of ten groups.
- One group for each segment was completed among voters in Southern California and one among voters in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Recruited participants completed a typing tool that classified them into one of the mindset segments.
- Each group had 8–10 participants for a total of 86 participants.
- Virtual focus group dates: June 2–June 5, 2020.

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

For the survey experiment, the sample was randomized into seven groups of roughly 800 people, and each group was exposed to one of the six frames below (with the seventh group as the control). Voters were first asked about their baseline attitudes toward housing, including issue salience, perception of housing as a right or privilege, perception of housing as an individual or collective issue, as well as support/opposition for the 3Ps (the production of more housing, the preservation of existing housing, and the protection of residents from displacement). After exposure to the frames, participants were again asked attitudinal questions, with statistically significant differences in attitudes and motivation attributed to their exposure to the frames.

- **Data source:** YouGov, an online survey panel with a sample frame developed by targeted quota recruitment followed by a random selection of units within each quota cell.
- **Target population:** California registered voters
- **Sample size:** n=5,734
- **Field dates:** January 3–February 8, 2021, with a pause from January 7–27, 2021, to data collection following the insurrection of the U.S. Capitol on January 6. (Responses collected before January 7 and those collected after January 27 were compared to ensure no systematic differences existed.)
- **Languages:** English, Spanish
- **Weighting benchmarks:** Gender, age, education, and race/ethnicity
- **Analytical notes (significance):** All comparative statistics are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.05 or below

The table below outlines the six frames that were tested in this phase:

FRAME	SUMMARY	LANGUAGE
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.
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.**
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.
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 toward 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.
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.
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.

Phase 4.5: Frame and Outcome-Specific Message Testing

GOAL

In this phase, we sought to further hone in on the most effective frame housing advocates could use to engage, persuade, and motivate the broadest cross section of California voters toward housing solutions. To identify a clearly dominant frame between the two most promising candidates, the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* and the *American Dream = A Safe and Stable Home* frames, the team developed issue-specific messaging to test against specific outcomes. This phase sought to test if the frames are effective at a high level and also when deployed in service of specific outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

During this phase, researchers crafted outcome-specific messages for each of the narrative frames, in a way that stayed true to the tenor of the frame while being more direct in the outcome of interest. Respondents were randomly assigned to be exposed to one of eight frame and outcome pairings, a competing narrative frame, or a pure control, and then posed a series of outcome questions. After exposure to a frame any statistically significant differences in an outcome variable is attributed to exposure to the frame.

- **Data source:** YouGov, an online survey panel with a sample frame developed by targeted quota recruitment followed by a random selection of units within each quota cell
- **Target population:** Registered California voters
- **Sample size:** n=5,023
- **Field dates**: May 29–June 17, 2021
- **Languages:** English, Spanish
- **Weighting benchmarks:** Gender, age, education, and race/ethnicity
- **Analytical notes (significance):** All comparative statistics are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.05 or below

In addition to identifying the winning frame, this phase of research also found that the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* frame can be even more effective when paired with outcome-specific messages. The table on the next page outlines the outcomes the researchers hoped to achieve, the messages that audiences were exposed to, and the results.

OUTCOME	MESSAGE	STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RESULTS
Housing is viewed as a right (rather than a privilege)	**Californians know how important an inclusive, hopeful future is for people from all kinds of backgrounds and all walks of life.** These values drive innovation, keep businesses and communities thriving, and bring California's unique culture to life. Let's make sure all Californians have the right to a decent place to live, regardless of race or income, so they can be a part of our shared future.	California voters exposed to this message were significantly more likely to believe that housing should be "completely guaranteed" (27% vs 21% of California voters overall).
Higher propensity to act (e.g., donate money, write to officials, sign petitions) in support of housing reform	**Californians know how to dream big, innovate, and lead the way.** We know housing is a top priority for our community, and it's up to us to use our voices, our votes, and our dollars to make it a priority for lawmakers. Let's take bold action to solve one of the most urgent problems of our time and make sure everyone has a decent place to live.	24% of California voters exposed to this message indicated they were more likely to share housing-related messages on social media (vs 21% overall).
Increase support for producing additional housing in one's community	**Rising housing costs are driving businesses, workers, and young people out of our communities, and if we wait to take action, the problem will only get worse.** Let's expand housing options right here, right now, to protect the good jobs, great schools, diverse communities, and unique opportunities that matter to our families and neighbors.	This message was somewhat effective, as California voters exposed to this message were more likely to "somewhat support" production in their community (35%, compared to 31% overall).

Why Not the American Dream?

It's also worth noting the outcomes related to the other frame researchers were testing at this stage, *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home*.

The *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* message intended to increase propensity to act was damaging. California voters exposed to the message were more likely to say "I do not plan on doing any of the above actions" (57%, compared to 52%).

- Researchers saw similar damages toward the likelihood of voting for housing candidates, with a significant decrease in "more likely" to vote for housing candidates (21%, compared to 26%).
- This message was further damaging on the "housing as a fundamental human right" outcome, with voters exposed to this message significantly more likely to believe housing should be "completely earned" (22%, compared to 17% overall).
- These damaging effects were particularly notable among Independent voters exposed to the *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* frame, which results in these voters expressing less favorable views on housing outcomes, including:
  - More likely to believe housing is a privilege (64%, compared to 54% *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* and 48% control)

- More likely to believe housing is an individual issue (64%, compared to 55% *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* and 52% control)
- Less likely to vote for a housing candidate (35%, compared to 43% *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* and 49% control)

Mindset Segments' Additional Reactions to Frames

During this phase of the research, the data also affirmed the mindset segments, deepening the research team's confidence in the personas as a means of understanding audiences.

A primary finding is that housing views of the mindset segments did not shift based on exposure to frames.

- Regardless of frame, Equity Enthusiasts and Dream Disruptors have more favorable views of housing outcomes, while Rugged Individualists have the least favorable views. American Dreamers lean in opposition and Pro-Government Pragmatists remain most neutral.

- Rugged Individualists remain predictable and unphased by narrative frames. For example, they exhibit no significant difference between the *California Dream = Build What Matters to You* and *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* in their belief that housing is a fundamental human right (9% *California Dream = Build What Matters to You*, compared to 10% *American Dream = Safe, Stable Home* and 12% control).

Methodology

Overall Methodology Statement

Across all phases of this research, we used the most representative data sources and sampling methods available — given constraints like necessary sample size and modal requirements — to carry out each phase. All surveys were completed online due to constraints of some of the survey questions. The source for quantitative data was either the AmeriSpeak probability panel developed by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago or YouGov; the latter was used only for survey experiments.

The AmeriSpeak probability panel uses address-based sampling to recruit its panelists and provides the survey technology to those panelists who do not have regular access. We used AmeriSpeak for the audience segmentation because we wanted this segmentation to describe the California registered voting population as precisely and fully as possible.

YouGov's recruitment method relies upon sourcing panel participants who fill specific demographic quotas and then developing a sample frame for each survey that matches the demographic distribution of the target population. Given the high number of experimental conditions of the frame testing surveys, the research team required more than n=5,000 quality responses from registered California voters, which exceeds the available sample frame from AmeriSpeak or other high-quality probability panels. In addition, the analytic setup and goals of the experiments differed from the audience segments such that the research team felt confident using data collected by YouGov.

The target population for all research is registered California voters and is weighted to reflect that population using the most recent Current Population Survey Census benchmarks. All respondents are provided the option to opt out of the survey at any time. Responses are discarded if they have a high frequency of straightlining responses (e.g., consistently answering the same across multiple questions). All panelists have their identity verified to ensure they are real panelists and not from a bot farm. For those who complete the survey, they are provided with a nominal financial incentive for their participation. Where quantitative results are compared, the differences presented are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.05 or below.

Phase-by-Phase Summary

Phase 1: Media Monitoring

From January to June 2019, Protagonist reviewed content from national, local, and regional media (such as The Atlantic, LA Times, Mercury News, etc.), as well as blogs (Curbed LA, Bold Italic, etc.) and Spanish-language media (La Opinion, El Tecolote, etc.), to determine where and how frequently narratives appeared. The narrative landscape analysis also included first person expressions from Twitter and Reddit forums specific to housing in key California regions.

Phase 2: Foundational Qualitative Research

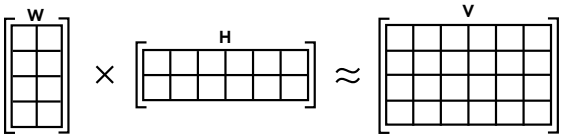
- Conducted from April to May 2019.
- Facilitated four focus groups with a total of 33 participants representing various regions of California and demographic characteristics.
- Managed online diaries with 25 participants with structured prompts about their perspective on the affordability housing crisis and possible solutions.
- Facilitated in-depth interviews in the homes of 12 participants in the Bay Area, Los Angeles area, and San Joaquin Valley.

Phase 3: Mindset Segmentation

The research team first developed mindset segmentation questions informed by the formative research and expert input. The questions were designed to sort voters according to their own deeply held values toward housing and their communities. The research team then ran a cluster analysis that takes as input responses to 88 unique values statements and identifies the unique clusters of mindset segments that exist within the data. Using responses to the values statement to understand preferences towards housing reform, POPSS ultimately developed the rich personas, with the distinctions between the mindset segments rooted entirely in voters' values.

- **Data source:** AmeriSpeak, an online, probability-based panel developed by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago
- **Sample size:** n=1,078

- **Field dates:** November 5–18, 2019
- **Sampling methodology:** Survey fielded to self-identifying registered voters in California; Margin of Error: ±3.94% for full sample
- **Weighting benchmarks:** Post-stratification weighting was performed to account for response bias and demographic imbalance. Weighting benchmarks included county, gender, age, income, education, and race/ethnicity and were based on proportions from the 2019 Current Population Survey.
- **Analytical process:**
  - Using response data from 88 Likert scale statements, ran a cluster analysis using non-negative matrix factorization (NMF). Non-negative matrix factorization is a method used to represent the model matrix (respondents X variables) with two new matrices, where one segments respondents and the second groups variables into clusters of highly correlated features. This method is often applied to high-dimensional datasets where the number of features exceeds 20. With this approach, we were able to cluster segment respondents according to their mindset segmentation variables and specify the variables that define each cluster. The known challenge within this method is the proper specification of the number of segments used in the factorization, which is supported by statistical validation methods designed for clustering problems.



- The best performing solution in both statistical (as determined by model diagnostic scores such as Silhouette and Dispersion metrics) and practical terms was the 5-segment option.

  Note that anywhere comparative values are presented, differences are significant at a p=value of 0.05 or below.

Our analysis identified an option with 5 segments (of balanced sizes)

Clusters (k)	5	**Dispersion**	0.66
Methodology	NMF	**Largest segment %**	28.2%
Silhouette score	0.39	**Smallest segment %**	17.2%

Phase 4: Frame Generation & Testing

Focus Groups

- Two 90-minute online focus groups with each of the five segments for a total of ten groups.
- One group for each segment was completed among voters in Southern California and one among voters in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Recruited participants completed a typing tool that classified them into one of the segments.
- Each group had 4–5 participants.

Quantitative Survey

For the survey experiment, the sample was randomized into seven groups of roughly 800 people, and each group was exposed to one of the six frames below (with the seventh group as the control). Voters were first asked about their baseline attitudes toward housing, including issue salience, perception of housing as a right or privilege, perception of housing as an individual or collective issue, as well as support/opposition for the 3Ps. After exposure to the frames, participants were again asked attitudinal questions, with statistically significant differences in attitudes and motivation attributed to their exposure to the frames.

- **Data source:** YouGov, an online survey panel with a sample frame developed by targeted quota recruitment followed by a random selection of units within each quota cell.
- **Sample size:** n=5,734

- **Field dates:** January 3–February 8, 2021, with a pause from January 7–27, 2021, to avoid data collection following the insurrection of the U.S. Capitol on January 6. (Responses collected before January 7 and those collected after January 27 were compared to ensure no systematic differences existed.)
- **Languages:** English, Spanish
- **Margin of Error:** ±1.4%
- **Weighting benchmarks:** Gender, age, education, and race/ethnicity
- **Analytical notes (significance):** All comparative statistics are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.05 or below

Phase 4.5: Frame and Outcome-Specific Message Testing

During this phase, researchers crafted outcome-specific messages for each of the narrative frames, in a way that stayed true to the tenor of the frame while being more direct in the outcome of interest. Respondents were randomly assigned to be exposed to one of eight frame and outcome pairings, a competing narrative frame, or a pure control, and then posed a series of outcome questions. After exposure to a frame, any statistically significant differences in an outcome variable is attributed to exposure to the frame.

- **Data source:** YouGov, an online survey panel with a sample frame developed by targeted quota recruitment followed by a random selection of units within each quota cell
- **Sample size:** n=5,023
- **Field dates:** May 29–June 17, 2021
- **Margin of Error:** ±1.6%
- **Weighting benchmarks:** Gender, age, education, and race/ethnicity
- **Analytical notes (significance):** All comparative statistics are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.05 or below