

## Messaging Guide: IMMIGRANTS

### *How to use this messaging guide*

*This messaging guide can be used to talk about the importance of housing issues within Prince George's County. It summarizes key points about why housing matters and unique housing needs or preferences among key populations. At the end of this guide, there are three discussion questions to jumpstart conversation and help collect additional feedback on the ideas presented in it.*

*Your thoughts can be shared directly with Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development staff via email:*

[chs@co.pg.md.us](mailto:chs@co.pg.md.us).

*Your input will shape the ideas in the County's Comprehensive Housing Strategy, which will outline an actionable set of solutions to help guide future housing investments in Prince George's County.*

**Residents of all races, ethnicities, and national origins make up Prince George's County.** Some of these residents were born within the United States, and other residents were born elsewhere but now call Prince George's County home. This diversity makes Prince George's County a great place to live.



**Immigrants—both those born in the United States to immigrant parents and those who moved to the United States—play an increasingly important role in the U.S. economy.** They buy homes; they serve their communities as police officers, teachers, doctors and nurses; and they own and operate

businesses. This is especially true in Maryland, where nearly one in five workers is an immigrant.

**The County's largest population growth has been among Hispanic and Latino populations, with some of the largest growth among residents from Central America.** These residents—particularly those that qualify as low-income—often live in unstable housing conditions in the County, contributing to their housing insecurity. For instance, 1 in 4 Hispanic households experience housing insecurity, meaning they are both low-income and paying more than half of their monthly income on housing.

**More than half of Hispanic and Latino residents are renters who may not understand their rights and obligations from landlords or property managers.** Limited knowledge about their rights as tenants or mistrust of the legal system can create additional barriers for some foreign-born residents and often results in them living in substandard housing conditions.

**For various reasons, these residents don't always feel comfortable reporting health and safety violations in their homes.** Even when they do want to report violations, property managers and County



staff don't always have the language skills or other cultural competency training to effectively assist them.

**Many Hispanic and Latino residents also have an interest in buying a home within Prince George's County.** These households could shape the County's housing market over the next several years by acting as new homebuyers, creating more demand for multigenerational housing products, and generating a need for more culturally competent real-estate and banking practices and programs.

**The County seeks to be a welcoming community and provide inclusive housing options for its increasingly racially and ethnically diverse population.** A few actions the County can take to assist Hispanic and Latino residents are:

- Expand tenants' rights, including support for tenants' rights organizations.
- Increase cultural competence and more Spanish fluency among County staff, property owners and managers, and banking and real-estate professionals.
- Develop proactive systems, such as code enforcement and assistance with fair housing violations and tenant-landlord disputes, to mitigate substandard housing conditions.

## Topics for discussion



- *What issues or concerns would you add?*
- *What other solutions would you suggest?*
- *What is the most important thing the County can do to address current housing needs or attract new residents?*

***Don't forget to share your thoughts!***

*Your thoughts and input can be shared with Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development staff via this email: [chs@co.pg.md.us](mailto:chs@co.pg.md.us).*