

Housing—Writing Prompts

1. What sorts of challenges around housing do you face? Have rents been going up in your neighborhood? Have you had to struggle with your landlord to improve conditions? Have you had to advocate for yourself or others to get access to a shelter or a housing voucher? Describe what you did and whether you linked with others experiencing a similar struggle?
2. At City Life/Vida Urbana, a housing organization in Boston, new people come to the public meetings because they are facing foreclosure, eviction, or bad conditions. They often arrive feeling ashamed—like they have done something to deserve the situation. When they arrive, City Life staff and volunteers tell them, “Welcome. You are in the right place. You can leave your shame at the door.” Then they are invited to tell their story in front of the room. After they learn how they can fight back, City Life organizers ask them, “Are you willing to fight to stay in your home?” And when they shout, “Yes,” the rest of the participants in the packed room respond, “Then we’ll fight with you.” What shift do you think happens for people when they come to a meeting and have that experience? Describe a time you have shifted from a sense of private shame about something in your life to a stance of righteous anger and the possibility of fighting back.



A City Life/Vida Urbana protest.

3. Do you believe housing is a right? How does your community support people and families without housing? Describe how affordable housing could improve our communities.
4. Look at the messages on the signs in the photo above. They say (from left to right): “Housing for people, not for profit,” “Stand Up; Fight Back,” and “Don't Evict, Negotiate!” Do you agree or disagree with those messages? Why or why not?

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 4, 2016. A \$50 stipend will be paid to each adult education student whose work is accepted for publication.

PLEASE SEND MATERIAL TO: Cynthia Peters at cpeters@worlded.org. Questions? Visit our website changeagent.nelrc.org or call 617-482-9485.

DON'T FORGET to include contact information on every submission.