Advocacy 101

MINNESOTA
NAHRO

Agenda

- Introductions
- Advocacy Basics
- Advocacy Wins & Lessons Learned
- Building Relationships with Policymakers

Introductions



Melissa Taphorn

Executive Director
Washington County CDA

MN NAHRO Legislative Committee Co-Chair



Allison Streich

Executive Director
Carver County CDA

MN NAHRO President



Dave Dunn

Housing Director
Olmsted County and
Olmsted County HRA

MN NAHRO Vice President for Community Revitalization & Development

How Much Capacity Do You Have for Advocacy?



Question: How small/big is your Agency?

Less than 5 Employees

6-10 Employees

11-30 Employees

31-50 Employees

More than 50 Employees

Advocacy is for Everyone!



What Counts as Advocacy?

- Sharing information, experience, and solutions with decision-makers
- Informing policy—without needing to be the expert on everything
- Possible at the federal, state, county, city, and agency levels



Pop Quiz #1: Where Does Advocacy Fit?



Question: An HRA wants to change a federal program requirement that is creating delays locally. What is the best first step?

1. Wait until Congress introduces a bill
2. Contact only the mayor
3. Share the implementation problem and a specific fix with the federal agency and elected officials
4. Post about it online and hope someone sees it

Federal Process: The Big Picture

Idea → bill introduced in the House or Senate

Committee hearings and amendments

House and Senate passage

Differences resolved; final version approved

President signs or vetoes

Federal Process: The Fun Picture

Watch for: Introduction, Committee Review, Votes, and Executive Action

Ask: Where could an advocate influence the outcome?



Minnesota: From Idea to Law

- An idea needs a legislative author; companion bills may move in the House and Senate
- Bills are referred to policy committees and, when needed, finance or tax committees
- Committees hear testimony, amend bills, advance them, or include provisions in larger bills
- Both chambers must pass the same language
- A conference committee may reconcile differences
- The governor signs, vetoes, or allows a bill to become law

Pop Quiz #2: Choose Your Moment!



Question: A state housing bill is scheduled for its first committee hearing next week. You have only 15 minutes to help. Which action is most likely to add value?

1. Send every legislator the same long report
2. Email the bill author and relevant committee members a short local example, your requested action, and an offer to answer questions
3. Wait to see whether the governor signs it
4. Contact the media before learning what the bill does

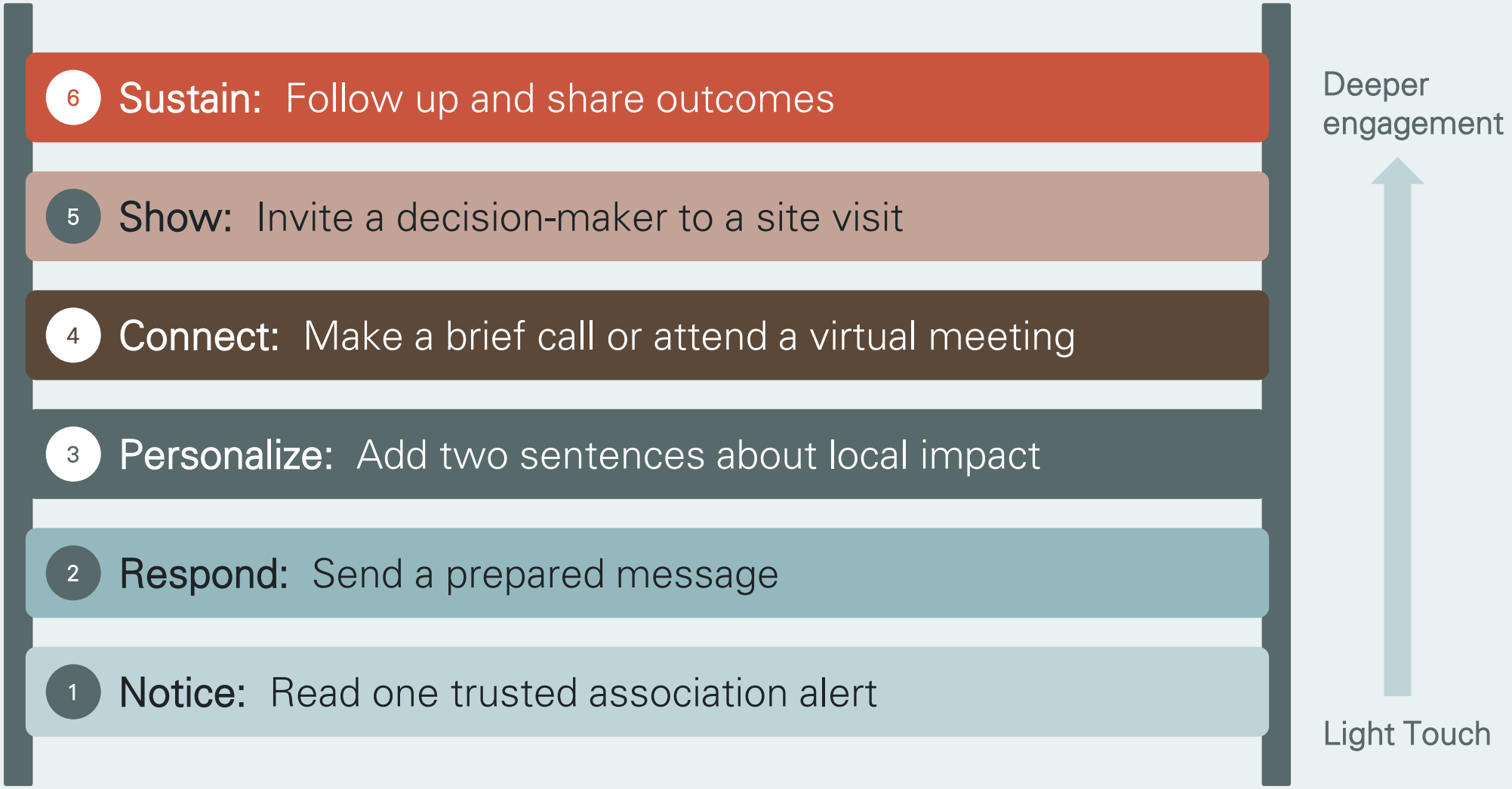
County and City Decisions

- Local decisions may involve budgets, land use, zoning, permits, housing programs, redevelopment, and service partnerships
- Staff research and recommendations often shape options before a public vote
- Boards, councils, commissions, and public hearings create formal entry points
- Earlier conversations can be more influential than testimony on decision night

Advocating Directly to Agencies

- Agencies turn laws into rules, guidance, funding notices, forms, and day-to-day procedures
- Watch for proposed rules, public comment periods, listening sessions, advisory groups, and requests for information
- Explain the operational impact: Who is affected? What is happening? What change would help?
- Offer a realistic solution and evidence from local implementation

The Advocacy Ladder



Easy Entry Point: NAHRO August Advocacy

- Annual letter-writing and engagement campaign
- NAHRO Action Alert Center
- Site visits and engagement with officials at every level
- Personalized local example can make a prepared message more effective



Other Light Touches

- Sign up for NAHRO's "Housing Updates from Washington"
- Sign up for your legislator's e-newsletter
- Join Minnesota NAHRO's Legislative Committee
- Respond to housing advocacy action alerts

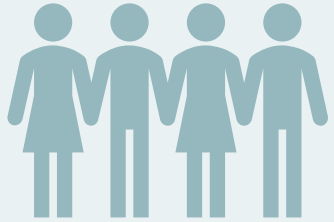
Affordable Housing Wins



Past and Current Wins

- Publicly Owned Housing Program
- Housing Infrastructure Bonds created in 2012
- Historic $1.3B housing bill in 2023
- $165M housing bill in 2026
- 21st Century Road to Housing at federal level in 2026

Engagement



National NAHRO, others



MN NAHRO, Homes for All, others



Visit Examples State and Federal


MISSION
Trails Edge
SOUTH
Opening Fall 2022
CDA
Carver County Community Development Agency
CAP
CARVER COUNTY
Ripley|Richard
MINNESOTA HOUSING
Ivy Properties
Financing provided by
WELLS FARGO
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
FRANA companies

CARVER PLACE



CHASKA YARDS COMPLETED













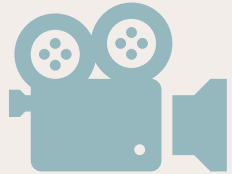
Effective delivery techniques



Letter Sign Ons



August Advocacy



Media



MN NAHRO and National NAHRO

Day on the Hill

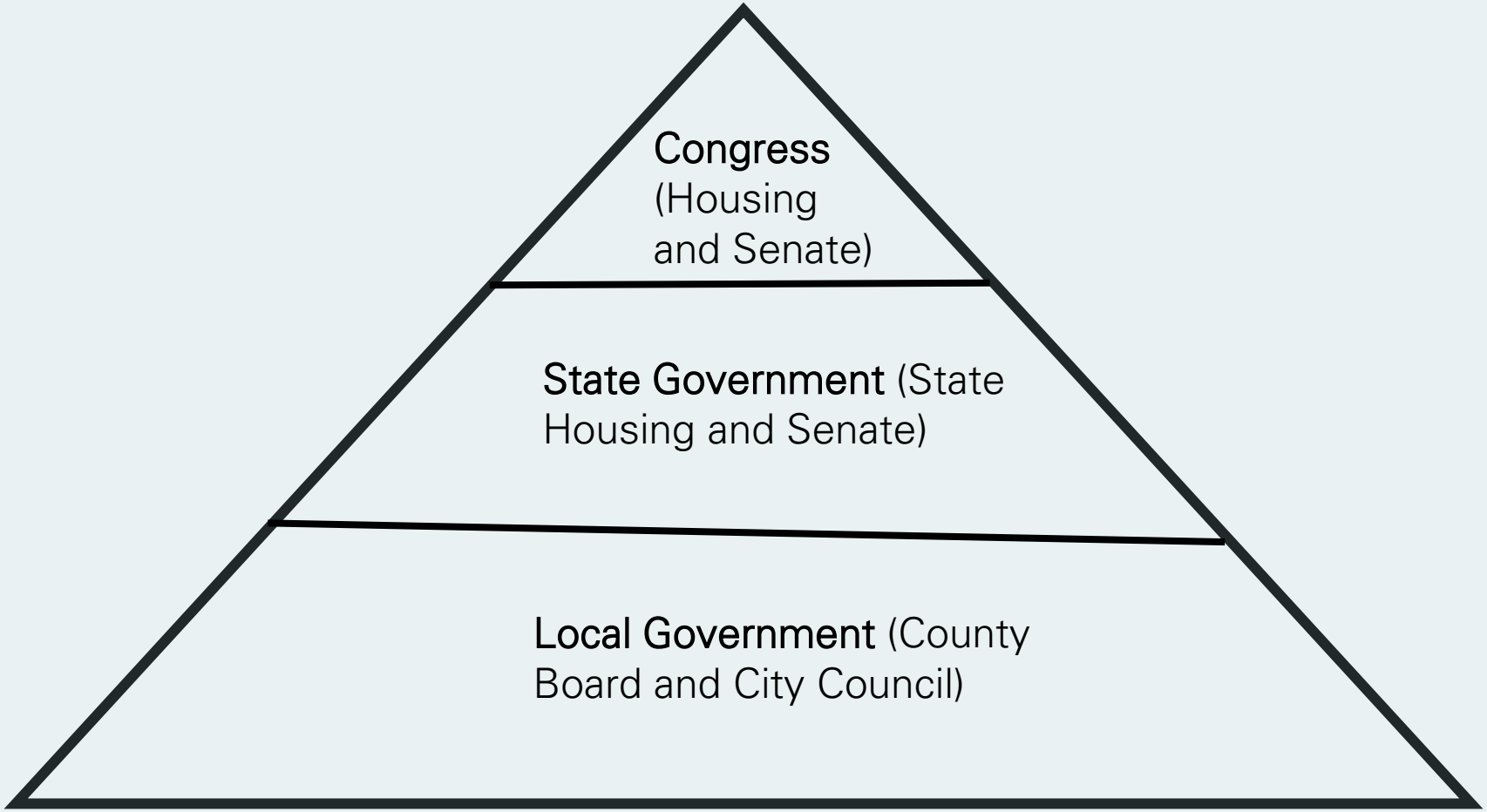
Relationship Building



Learn about your community

- Who administers housing programs locally?
- Who are the agency leaders
- Who are your local elected officials
    - City Council Members
    - County Commissioners
    - State Representative and State Senator

Target your influence



Know your audiences

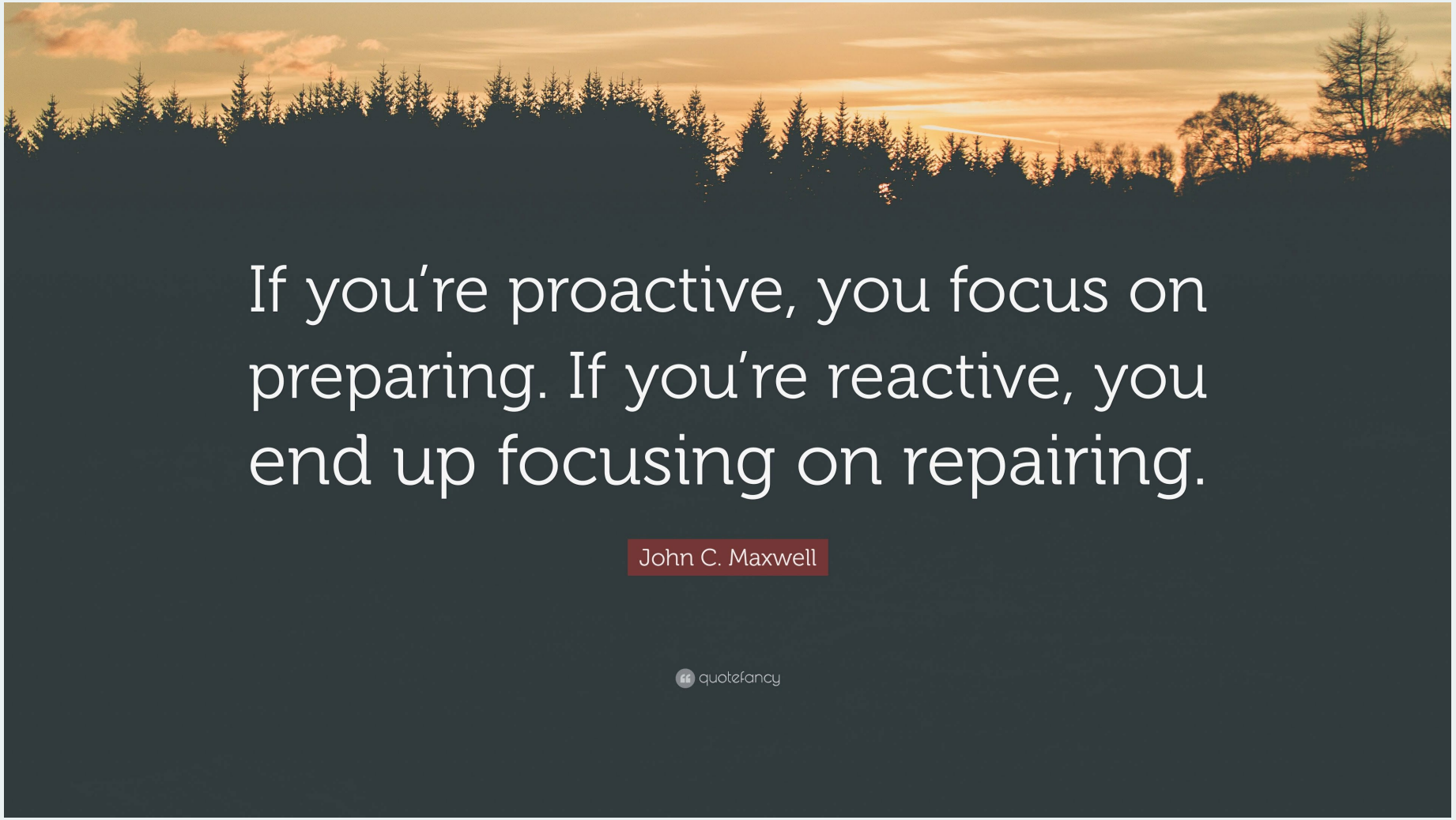
City of Faribault



Faribault County



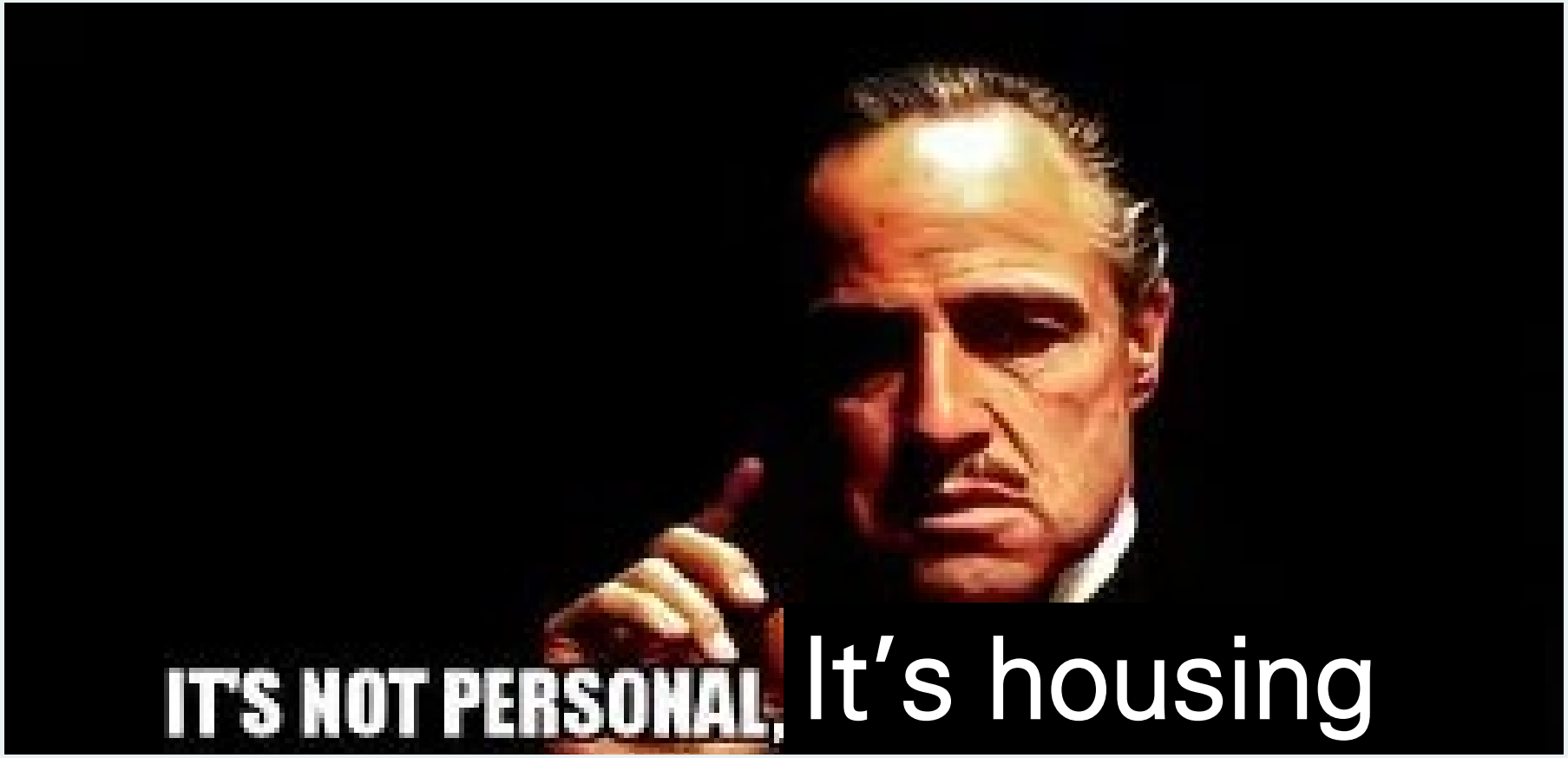
Be proactive



Be consistent



Work with everyone



Your magic power…knowledge



Thank you



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