

Understanding the Church Context

- Learn the church's mission, values, and community role.
- Review ministries, leadership structure, and neighborhood presence.
- Understand how churches make decisions.

Prepare Mission-Aligned Messaging

- Use language grounded in service, stewardship, and community impact.
- Explain alignment with church ministries.
- Avoid early technical jargon.

Build Trust Before Proposing a Project

- Begin with relationship-building conversations.
- Ask about the church's history and priorities.
- Share your values and experience working with faith-based partners.

Present Community Need Clearly

- Provide simple housing data.
- Connect needs to populations the church cares about.
- Show how housing expands outreach.

Explain Development Options

- Ground lease, joint venture, adaptive reuse, and infill.
- Train staff to describe options simply.

Address Church Concerns Directly

- Ownership, mission protection, community response, decision timelines.
- Reassure with examples and transparency.

Building a Communication Plan

- Tailor materials to non-experts.
- Include visuals and success stories.
- Participate in congregation and neighborhood meetings.

Demonstrate Transparency

- Explain timelines, finances, and risks clearly.
- Allow ample time for church discernment.

Engage Faith-Based Advisors

- Involve legal and real estate experts with church experience.
- Provide references.

Practice Cultural Sensitivity

- Respect faith traditions and decision-making processes.
- Keep mission central.

Co-Create the Vision

- Invite church leaders to shape goals and uses.
- Provide alternatives rather than fixed plans.

Plan for Long-Term Partnership

- Establish communication expectations.
- Clarify long-term operational roles.
- Emphasize stewardship for the next 50–100 years.