# Proactively communicating with your residents to avoid challenging conversations

**As a board member, you're likely to encounter differing opinions during important decisions, like selecting a new telecom provider. Here are some tips to help you proactively prevent challenges and effectively manage concerns if they arise, ensuring productive conversations and positive outcomes.**

## Being proactive and preventing challenges:

### ENGAGE CHALLENGING RESIDENTS THEM CONSTRUCTIVELY AND SURFACE ANY CONCERNS.

If you know of particular residents within the community that don't manage change easily or are notoriously difficult, make sure that you talk to them from the very beginning. Providing them a heads up and giving them an opportunity to process and ask questions beforehand will serve you well and help manage their concerns. Every community has these residents that that is okay. Ask for input and involve them in problem-solving to make them feel included. ***"What's most important to you in a telecom provider? Let's see how we can address that."***

### ASK POTENTIAL PROVIDER HOW THEY WOULD ADDRESS DIFFICULT PEOPLE

As previously mentioned, every community encounters some challenging residents, whether due to a vendor change or general sensitivity to change. Providers with experience working with hundreds of communities are adept at managing these situations, ensuring residents feel supported and reassured throughout the process to prevent challenges or escalations down the line.

### WHEN PROVIDERS MAKE PRESENTATIONS TO COMMUNITY, MAKE SURE THEY ARE ABLE TO ADDRESS CONCERNS.

This will allow residents to have an avenue to express their concerns, and will allow the provider to answer the question in a timely manner, avoiding the spreading of false information or compounding of concerns throughout the community.

## Managing and de-escalating concerns with challenging residents:

### SHIFT TO A ONE-ON-ONE SETTING.

This minimizes disruptions and will prevent the discussion from becoming a larger issue with growing concerns from community members. Additionally, it'll allow for a more focused dialogue. ***"Let's step aside to chat about this in more detail—I want to make sure I fully understand your concerns."***

## Managing and de-escalating concerns with challenging residents:

### FOCUS ON THE FACTS.

Share data and insights about the provider selection process, costs, and benefits. This is also the right time to address misinformation by correcting any inaccuracies with facts. ***"Here's why this provider is being considered – they offer faster speeds, cost savings, and excellent customer service." "Actually, the provider has received high ratings for reliability in similar communities."***

### EMPHASIZE THE BIG PICTURE BY HIGHLIGHTING COMMUNITY BENEFITS.

Focus on how the decision will improve the quality of life for everyone. Reassure them that diverse views are part of the process. ***"This choice will bring faster internet, lower costs, and better support for all residents." "We know not everyone will agree, but we're working to make the best choice for the community as a whole."***

### SET BOUNDARIES RESPECTFULLY.

Encourage constructive dialogue and politely steer conversations away from negativity or personal attacks. Then, stay firm. If the conversation becomes unproductive, thank them for their input and move on. ***"I want to keep this discussion focused on solutions—let's work together to address your concerns." "I hear you, and your concerns have been noted. Now we need to focus on moving forward."***

**Varying opinions are a natural part of any decision-making process, especially when it impacts an entire community. You can always engage the telecom provider for resources too. What sets the most effective boards apart is their preparedness and ability to manage these scenarios to set the community up for success.**