Fair Housing for Young Adults was made possible with funding from an Education and Outreach Initiative (EOI) grant from the Fair Housing Initiative Program (FHIP) of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Thanks for attending this event.

This folder has some introductory info about fair housing and this awareness campaign, along with individual info sheets for the specific topics we’ll be covering today.

For more detailed info, including additional topics, use the QR code to connect to the full campaign materials on the FHJC website.

If you think you are experiencing any form of housing discrimination, contact the FHJC. We will help sort out the facts and provide you with information about your rights and options under fair housing laws. You can also contact us—anonymously if you prefer—if you know about housing discrimination that is happening to others. Our counseling and investigative services are provided for free, regardless of income. We are dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination.

The FHJC is a nonprofit civil rights organization focusing on fair housing in the five boroughs of New York City and the seven surrounding New York counties of Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester. Our mission is to foster open, inclusive, and accessible communities.
Some depressing stats

Despite more than 50 years of fair housing laws, U.S. metropolitan areas remain deeply segregated. And this is not limited to the South.

More than half of metropolitan regions in the United States have become more segregated in recent decades, with the most highly segregated areas located in midwestern and mid-Atlantic states. The New York City region is ranked second behind Chicago.

The harmful effects of segregation are well documented. In the Mott Hall neighborhood in the Bronx, asthma hospitalizations are five times higher than the national average and 21 times higher than other NYC neighborhoods, earning it the nickname “Asthma Alley.”

Neighborhoods with the greatest concentrations of low-income residents and residents of color are the most likely to see deadly police encounters.

Average revenue per student in nonwhite school districts is $2,226 lower than in white school districts.

Segregation has also created huge disparities a family’s ability to accumulate wealth over generations. The net worth of a typical white family is nearly ten times greater than that of a Black family, largely as a result of generations of housing inequality and segregation.

A little history

This didn’t “just happen.” It’s the result of a massive, coordinated, and costly effort by government and private industry.

In response to the Great Migration, towns and cities in the late 1800’s began passing Racial Zoning Ordinances and other discriminatory laws excluding people of color from selected neighborhoods in order to create and sustain white status and privilege. These laws were eventually overturned, but by then the developing real estate industry had created its own barriers in the form of race-restrictive covenants for the purchase of individual homes and eventually for entire neighborhoods.

A breakthrough, sort of

Housing equality was a central focus of the civil rights movement. As the movement’s peaceful demonstrations gave way to riots in cities across the US, the government was finally forced into action. In the immediate aftermath of Dr. King’s assassination in 1968, congress passed the Fair Housing Act, outlawing discrimination based on race, color, religion, and nationality. The stated purpose of the law was “to replace the ghettos with truly integrated and balanced living patterns.”

Additional protections have been added over the years for familial status, disability, and sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity.) New York State has additional protections, as do New York City and various counties and municipalities in our area.

So – why haven’t all those laws made more of a difference?

Lots of reasons. Loopholes and carve-outs have made the laws weaker, and they’ve never been adequately funded or vigorously enforced by the government. And although nonprofit fair housing groups like the FHJC try to make up the slack, the problem is growing. There were 31,216 housing discrimination complaints in 2021, an 8.7 percent increase over the number of complaints filed in 2020.

But the biggest reason is that landlords, real estate agents and other housing providers have simply become more subtle in the ways they discriminate. If you’re politely told that there’s nothing available, or that the rent is more than you can afford, or that you should try looking in a different neighborhood, you’re likely to take them at their word. Without knowing if people who are different from you are being treated differently, there’s no evidence of discrimination to report, no complaint to file. So the discrimination continues, and segregation is perpetuated.

Which brings us to -- you

Young people entering the housing market for the first time are especially at risk.

For discriminating housing providers, young adults who may not be fully aware of their fair housing rights are easy prey. The goal of this campaign is to arm you with the detailed information and awareness you need in order to spot discriminatory conduct, protect yourself against discrimination, educate others about their rights, and help break the discrimination-segregation cycle that continues to plague our region as well as the nation.

Your generation can play a key role in making fair housing a living reality for everyone.