a toolkit for leading a conversation about fair housing

Where we live matters. That’s why the City of New York is asking you to talk about fair housing with your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, and community groups. Through Where We Live NYC, the City is developing the next chapter of fair housing policies that confront segregation, fight discrimination, and increase opportunity for all.

Sharing your stories, your struggles, and your dreams for fair housing in New York City strengthens our communities and helps us build a more just future for our city.

This toolkit has everything you need to get started!

IN THIS TOOLKIT YOU WILL FIND...

Conversation Guides: instructions, talking points, and discussion questions to help you lead conversations around different fair housing topics – discuss just one, or all four of these topics:

• Our history of segregation
• Your neighborhood experience
• Housing challenges and discrimination
• Our shared vision for the future

Resources: helpful links to keep learning or get support with your housing needs

Notetaker Template: space to take notes during your conversation, with the option to submit your notes online and share them with the City’s Where We Live NYC team

Conversation Starter Cards: cut out the cards included in this packet for a more interactive discussion, or you can use the digital deck on our website

ONLINE BONUS ITEMS:

Local Data: explore data on our website to learn more about diversity in your neighborhood, and the opportunities and challenges facing different New Yorkers

Brochure: learn more about Where We Live NYC by downloading our brochure

THERE ARE NO RIGHT ANSWERS

We all have different perspectives when it comes to our housing and our neighborhoods. The questions in this toolkit ask about our personal experiences and goals. Not everyone may agree during the conversation, and that’s okay! Sharing different perspectives is how we all grow and learn from each other.

Don’t forget to share insights and photos from your conversation on social media using #WhereWeLiveNYC

Let’s Talk About Fair Housing • nyc.gov/WhereWeLive • #WhereWeLiveNYC
Before beginning this conversation, please watch the “Where We Live Matters” video online.

talking points

As we saw in the video, New York City is one of the most diverse cities in the U.S. today – but, by some measures, it’s also one of the most segregated. We want to take some time to reflect on the video, and how that history shows up in our lives and our neighborhoods.

QUESTIONS:

• Has the history of segregation and fair housing impacted you, your family, or your neighborhood?
• What does an integrated neighborhood look like to you?
• Do you consider your current neighborhood integrated? Is there a diverse mix of races, ethnicities, incomes, ages, and abilities?
• Do you want to live in an integrated neighborhood?
• What spaces in your neighborhood feel segregated? Who is included and excluded in these spaces?
• What spaces in your neighborhood feel integrated – where diverse New Yorkers feel welcomed and interact? This could include block parties, museums, parks, schools, or even the subway stop.

RESOURCES:

• EXPLORE local data on our website about who lives in your neighborhood and how different New Yorkers access opportunity
• TEACH this history using the facilitation materials and lesson plans from Facing History & Ourselves
• WATCH more about the history with PBS’ Eyes on the Prize film, or learn about present day inequities though the America Divided TV series
• READ more about the history – the following books are a good place to start:
  • The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson
  • The Color of Law by Richard Rothstein
  • Crabgrass Frontier by Kenneth Jackson
  • American Apartheid by Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Gather your community – a group of friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, or classmates
2. Print out this toolkit, or read it from your mobile device
3. Assign a facilitator to lead the conversation – people in your group can take turns being the facilitator
4. You can also have a notetaker write down what’s being said by using the template provided
5. Read the instructions, talking points, and questions to get the conversation going
6. To make the conversation more interactive, use the cards at the end of this packet, or you can use the digital deck on our website – people in your group can take turns picking a card
7. Be flexible! Dig into one conversation topic or all four, ask questions in order or shuffle the deck
8. Once the conversation is complete, you can submit your notes to the City using our online form, but this is not required
9. Keep the dialogue going! Share photos and insights from your conversation on social media using #WhereWeLiveNYC
Let's Talk About Fair Housing

nyc.gov/WhereWeLive

#WhereWeLiveNYC

notetaker template

You can submit your notes to the City’s Where We Live NYC team online:
nyc.gov/WhereWeLive

1. How many people participated in this conversation?

2. In what neighborhood did this conversation take place?

our history of segregation
talking points

A big part of fair housing is housing choice – the choice to live in a neighborhood that supports you and your family, whether that means moving to a new neighborhood or staying in your current one. Fair housing is also about access to opportunity – how where you live impacts your access to quality schools, good jobs, reliable transportation, and a neighborhood that’s safe, healthy, and welcoming.

We want to talk about why you live where you live, if you want to stay, the things you like and don’t like, and how other New Yorkers might be experiencing your neighborhood.

QUESTIONS:

• What is the main reason that you ended up living in your current neighborhood?
• What are two things you love about your neighborhood?
• What are two things that your neighborhood does not provide?
• If you had the choice, would you want to stay living in your current neighborhood, or move to another neighborhood? What might make it hard to stay? Hard to move?
• What challenges might other New Yorkers face living in your neighborhood, or trying to move into your neighborhood?
• How might different residents in your neighborhood have different experiences accessing opportunity? Do you think everyone in your neighborhood has the same quality of education? Experience of safety? Access to transportation?

RESOURCES:

• GET SUPPORT on your housing needs using the the NYC Housing Resource Center
• EXPLORE local data on our website about who lives in your neighborhood and how different New Yorkers access opportunity

continued on next page...
If your group is having a difficult time coming up with reasons why they live where they live, below are some examples that might be helpful:

**Housing**
- Housing Conditions
- Affordability
- Availability of Subsidized Housing
- Temporary Shelter or Homelessness

**Work and School**
- Ease of Transportation
- School Quality

**Social Networks**
- Family and Community
- Safety
- Sense of Belonging

**Neighborhood**
- Environment
- Accessibility
- Local Businesses and Services
### Your Neighborhood Experience

Mark the reasons people live in their neighborhoods that were shared during your conversation:

- [ ] Housing Conditions
- [ ] Affordability
- [ ] Subsidized Housing
- [ ] Temporary Shelter or Homelessness
- [ ] Ease of Transportation
- [ ] School Quality
- [ ] Family & Community
- [ ] Safety
- [ ] Sense of Belonging
- [ ] Environment
- [ ] Accessibility
- [ ] Local Businesses & Services
- [ ] Other: ______________________

Other notes:

---

1. How many people participated in this conversation?

2. In what neighborhood did this conversation take place?

You can submit your notes to the City’s Where We Live NYC team online: [nyc.gov/WhereWeLive](http://nyc.gov/WhereWeLive)
Let's Talk About Fair Housing

CONVERSATION GUIDE

housing challenges and discrimination

Talking Points

Fair housing laws protect us from discrimination when we are renting, buying, or financing our home. Unfortunately, many New Yorkers still face discrimination and it can take many forms. Let’s discuss what discrimination looks and sounds like, along with other challenges we may face in our homes or when we look for housing.

First, I am going to share some different scenarios. As you listen, think if any of these are familiar to you, or happened to your family or a close friend.

Have you heard a landlord say...

• “Installing a ramp (or another reasonable accommodation) is expensive and would ruin the appearance of the building.”
• “Sorry. We don’t take housing vouchers.”
• “No kids.”
• “I don’t have to make that repair. If you want it, you pay for it.”
• “There are too many people in your apartment, you have to move out.”

Have you heard a family member or a friend say...

• “They told me the apartment was available, but then when they saw I was black (or another identity), they said they had just rented the apartment.”
• “My same-sex partner cannot be added to the lease.”
• “I don’t ask for repairs because I’m afraid my landlord will call ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement).”
• “When they saw I was pregnant, they changed their minds about renting me the apartment.”
• “I am trying to buy a house, but no banks will give me a loan.”
• “They’re renovating the units in my building and offered me money to leave.”
• “My landlord doesn’t like when family and friends visit my apartment, and my landlord has threatened to call the police.”
• “I have a hard time reaching my landlord, and now I just got a letter saying I am facing eviction.”

Instructions

1. Gather your community – a group of friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, or classmates
2. Print out this toolkit, or read it from your mobile device
3. Assign a facilitator to lead the conversation – people in your group can take turns being the facilitator
4. You can also have a notetaker write down what’s being said by using the template provided
5. Read the instructions, talking points, and questions to get the conversation going
6. To make the conversation more interactive, use the cards at the end of this packet, or you can use the digital deck on our website – people in your group can take turns picking a card
7. Be flexible! Dig into one conversation topic or all four, ask questions in order or shuffle the deck
8. Once the conversation is complete, you can submit your notes to the City using our online form, but this is not required
9. Keep the dialogue going! Share photos and insights from your conversation on social media using #WhereWeLiveNYC

continued on next page...
CONVERSATION GUIDE

**housing challenges and discrimination**

“**QUESTIONS:**

- Have you ever experienced discrimination when looking for housing? How were you treated unfairly?
- What are the biggest challenges you’ve faced when looking for quality and affordable housing?
- Have you had trouble with your landlord not making repairs, not maintaining your building, or threatening you and your family in any way?
- Have you taken any actions to fight against housing discrimination, or fight for better housing conditions?

Not every scenario we discussed today may technically count as housing discrimination, but all these housing challenges are urgent. The City wants to make sure you know your rights when it comes to housing discrimination. There are resources provided to help you fight discrimination and get the housing support you need.

**RESOURCES**

- FIGHT DISCRIMINATION with the [Know Your Rights Guide](#) or by [filing a complaint](#)
- GET SUPPORT on your housing needs using the [NYC Housing Resource Center](#)
1. How many people participated in this conversation?

2. In what neighborhood did this conversation take place?

You can submit your notes to the City’s Where We Live NYC team online:

nyc.gov/WhereWeLive
Through the Where We Live NYC process, the City of New York will be developing policies that fight discrimination, break down barriers to opportunity, and build more just and inclusive neighborhoods. As New Yorkers, we can have a role to play in shaping what that future looks like. Let’s take some time to come up with a vision for ourselves, our families, and our neighborhoods.

**QUESTIONS:**

- I want to live in a place where I can... Where my family can... Where my community can... (fill in the blank)
- What is one thing you want to change in your neighborhood?
- What is one thing you want to stay the same in your neighborhood?
- What can you do to be a better neighbor?
- How can your neighborhood be more welcoming for all residents?
- Where We Live NYC is developing the next chapter of fair housing policies that fight discrimination, break down barriers to opportunity, and build more just and inclusive neighborhoods. What specific outcomes do you want to see come out of this process?

Sharing our stories, our struggles, and our dreams for fair housing in New York City strengthens our communities and helps us build a more just future for our city.

Thanks for taking the time to have this conversation!
1. How many people participated in this conversation?

2. In what neighborhood did this conversation take place?
make-at-home deck of cards

To make your conversation more interactive, create a deck of cards using the images on the following pages. People in your group can take turns picking a question card and answering it. The deck includes all the questions listed in the toolkit.

To create the deck, make sure that you are printing double-sided. Once you have printed this document, you can cut out the cards along the black lines.

When using the cards, you can ask questions in order or shuffle the deck. There is also a digital deck available online.

NEED TRANSLATED MATERIALS OR SUPPORT?

The Where We Live NYC team is standing by to answer any questions – email us at WhereWeLiveNYC@hpdnyc.gov. We are currently working on developing a Spanish version of these materials. If you would like the materials in other languages, please send us a note.
Has the history of segregation and fair housing impacted you, your family, or your neighborhood?

What spaces feel integrated in your neighborhood—where diverse New Yorkers feel welcomed and interact? Where integrated is your neighborhood feel integrated?What spaces feel

Do you want to live in an integrated neighborhood?

Do you consider your current neighborhood integrated? Is there a diverse mix of races, ethnicities, incomes, ages, and abilities? Do you want to live in an integrated neighborhood?

What does an integrated neighborhood look like to you?

Has the history of segregation and fair housing impacted you, your family, or your neighborhood? Why is segregated? Who is segregated? Who feels segregated? 

What spaces feel integrated in your neighborhood—where diverse New Yorkers feel welcomed and interact? Where integrated is your neighborhood feel integrated?What spaces feel

conversation starter cards
conversational starter cards

your neighborhood experience

your neighborhood experience

your neighborhood experience

your neighborhood experience

conversation starter cards

your neighborhood experience

your neighborhood experience

your neighborhood experience

your neighborhood experience

conversation starter cards

your neighborhood experience

your neighborhood experience

your neighborhood experience

your neighborhood experience

where we live in nyc

where we live in nyc

where we live in nyc

where we live in nyc

NYC

NYC

NYC

NYC
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Starter Cards</th>
<th>Conversation Starter Cards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How might different residents in your neighborhood have different experiences accessing opportunity?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think everyone in your neighborhood has the same quality of education, experience of safety, access to transportation?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have the residents in your neighborhood have a different experience?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How might different residents in your neighborhood face living in your neighborhood, or trying to move into your neighborhood?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you had the choice, would you want to stay living in your current neighborhood, or move to another neighborhood?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What challenges might other New Yorkers face living in your neighborhood, or trying to move into your neighborhood?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are two things that your neighborhood does not provide?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are two things you love about your neighborhood?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the main reason why you ended up living in your current neighborhood?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you change if you had the choice?</td>
<td>Your neighborhood experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Starter Cards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Housing Challenges and Discrimination**

  - Have you faced challenges when looking for quality and affordable housing?
  - Have you had trouble with your landlord not making repairs or threatening you?
  - Have you taken any actions to fight against housing discrimination?
  - Have you experienced discrimination when looking for housing?
  - How were you treated unfairly?

  

- **How were you treated unfairly when looking for housing?**

  - Have you faced any housing challenges when looking for quality and affordable housing?
  - Have you had trouble with your landlord not making repairs or threatening you?
  - Have you taken any actions to fight against housing discrimination?
  - Have you experienced discrimination when looking for housing?
  - How were you treated unfairly?
conversation starter cards

our shared vision for the future

---

our shared vision for the future

---

our shared vision for the future

---

our shared vision for the future

---

our shared vision for the future

---

our shared vision for the future

---

our shared vision for the future

---

our shared vision for the future

---

our shared vision for the future

---

our shared vision for the future

---
How can your neighborhood be more welcoming for all residents?

What specific outcomes do you want to see come out of this process?

I want to live in a place where I can... Where my family can... Where my community can... (fill in the blanks)

What is one thing you want to change in your neighborhood?

What is one thing you want to stay the same in your neighborhood?

What can you do to be a better neighbor?

Where We Live NYC is developing the next chapter of fair housing policies that fight discrimination, break down barriers to opportunity, and build more just and inclusive neighborhoods.

What are some ways you can be a better neighbor?