

let's talk about fair housing

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!

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

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](#)



our history of segregation

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 through 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** 

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

your neighborhood experience

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...

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your neighborhood experience

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

notetaker template

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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:

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.”

”

continued on next page...

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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 the [NYC Housing Resource Center](#)

notetaker template

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housing challenges and discrimination

our shared vision for the future

talking points

“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! ”

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our shared vision for the future

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@hpd.nyc.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.

conversation starter cards



conversation starter cards

our history of segregation

Has the history of segregation and fair housing impacted you, your family, or your neighborhood?



our history of segregation

our history of segregation

What does an integrated neighborhood look like to you?



our history of segregation

our history of segregation

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



our history of segregation

Do you want to live in an integrated neighborhood?



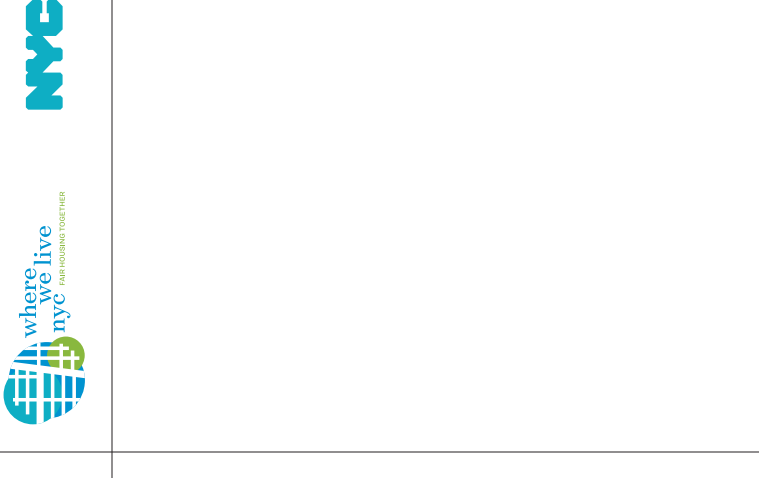
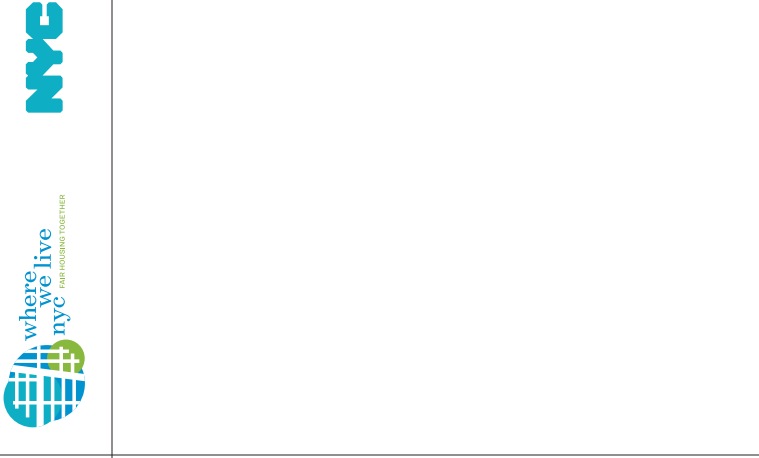
What spaces in your neighborhood feel segregated? Who is included and excluded in these spaces?



What spaces feel integrated in your neighborhood—where diverse New Yorkers feel welcomed and interact? *This could include block parties, museums, parks, schools, or even the subway stop.*



conversation starter cards



conversation starter cards

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

conversation starter cards



conversation starter cards

housing challenges and
discrimination

Have you ever
experienced
discrimination when
looking for housing?
How were you treated
unfairly?



housing challenges and
discrimination

What are the biggest
challenges you've
faced when looking
for quality and
affordable housing?



housing challenges and
discrimination

Have you had trouble
with your landlord
not making repairs,
not maintaining your
building, or threatening
you and your family in
any way?



housing challenges and
discrimination





Have you taken any
actions to fight against
housing discrimination,
or fight for better
housing conditions?



conversation starter cards



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	
<p>_____</p> <p>I want to live in a place where I can... Where my family can... Where my community can... <i>(fill in the blanks)</i></p> <p>_____</p>		<p>_____</p> <p>What is one thing you want to change in your neighborhood?</p> <p>_____</p>		<p>_____</p> <p>What is one thing you want to stay the same in your neighborhood?</p> <p>_____</p>		<p>_____</p> <p>What can you do to be a better neighbor?</p> <p>_____</p>	
							
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