

Open Communities HUD Grant Highlights

“Outsider Perspectives of Chicago’s Northern Suburbs” Focus Group

- Most participants gave the northern suburbs high marks for good schools and low crime.
- Participants view the entire region (with the notable exception of Evanston and Skokie) as “inaccessible” based on high housing costs; a sense of hostility; and, in some cases, experiences of discrimination.
- Some African American and Latino focus group participants expressed concern about racial profiling of people of color by police.

Fair Housing Audit

- According to the U.S. Census, between 1990 and 2010, Open Communities’ 16 community service area lost nearly 4,000 rental units (11.6% decrease) while gaining 26,000 for-sale units (27.5% increase). This exacerbated the affordability crisis for low- and moderate-income families.
- Highest incidents of potential discrimination in the rental market were most often based on race (37%), national origin (36%), disability (27%), and familial status (20%).
- Highest incidents of potential discrimination in the sales market were most often based on race (61%), national origin (33%), disability (44%), and familial status (50%).

Real Estate Owned (REO) Property Investigation

- Evidence of discriminatory practices in violation of the Fair Housing Act allege that the maintenance of bank-owned foreclosed REO properties are maintained and marketed in white neighborhoods in a much better manner than in African-American and Latino neighborhoods.
- Open Communities has joined complaints filed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development against Bank of America, Deutsche Bank, US Bank and Safeguard.

Fair Housing Ordinances

- Kenilworth and Winnetka do not address fair housing at the municipal level.
- Deerfield, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Niles, Northbrook and Wilmette do not provide the same protection against housing discrimination as the Federal Fair Housing Act.
- Open Communities has encouraged communities to abandon “crime free ordinances” because of the disparate impact against protected classes. For example, blacks are arrested and not convicted at a higher rate than whites; therefore, demanding that landlords evict a renter based on arrests alone disproportionately affects the housing status of blacks.

Senior Housing Study

- The study revealed that the Equal Housing Opportunity logo was used 90% of the time in print ads advocating for a sense of community in senior housing; however, 95% of the ads featuring individuals used white models only.
- According to the Disability Status Report for Illinois, 48.6% of people aged 75 and over are living with a disability, but in print ads for senior housing, the disability logo was only used in 32% of ads.
- Based on investigative testing, 67% of independent living facilities appeared to be engaging in possible discriminatory practices based on race.

Affordable Housing as a Fair Housing Issue

- With the exception of Highland Park, suburbs with too little affordable housing by law (that is, under 10%), resist taking affirmative overtures to developers to include lower-cost housing units. The suburbs also have fewer than 10% African Americans and Latinos combined.
- Deerfield, Lincolnwood, and Park Ridge did not submit affordable housing plans to the state in 2005, as required under the Affordable Housing Planning & Appeal Act.
- These suburbs as well as Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Kenilworth, Morton Grove, Northbrook, Northfield, Wilmette and Winnetka must submit updated plans by June 2015.

Full data is available in the executive summary of the report and can be viewed on our website at http://open-communities.org/files/2327/File/Task_15_report_v5.pdf