

What is Fair Housing?

Housing discrimination is illegal, immoral and debilitating to thousands of Massachusetts residents seeking housing, whether to rent, buy or finance a safe place to raise their family, or simply a roof over their head. Where we live determines the quality of our children's education, our access to jobs and social contacts, as well as aspects of our health and well-being.

“We do not discriminate in our community; it's the high cost of housing here...”

High housing costs are commonly assumed to be the root cause of persistent segregation. However, in 80% of our cities and towns, the number of African-American and Latino homebuyers is less than half than housing costs alone predict.

The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University found that, “Almost 70 percent of Hispanics and an overwhelming 85 percent of African Americans believe that members of their group miss out on good housing because they fear they will not be welcome in a particular community.”

Is it really happening here?

Extensive paired testing done by the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston (FHCGB) has uncovered a pattern of discrimination in the Commonwealth in the rental, purchase, and financing of properties to people of color, families with children, and people receiving housing assistance. Paired testing is a method of testing for discrimination that has been validated by the Supreme Court. In a paired test, volunteers are matched on personal and home seeking characteristics so that the only significant difference between them is the factor being tested.

Tests show that:

- People of color experience discrimination in **at least half** of their attempts to rent, purchase, or finance homes in Greater Boston.
- Families with children and people receiving housing subsidies experience discrimination in roughly **two-thirds** of their attempts to rent in the region.

How I can ensure my community is open and welcoming?

- ❖ Bring information on fair housing issues to local civil rights groups (Human Rights Commission, Fair Housing Commission, No Place for Hate Campaign, etc.) to include in their community outreach and programs.
- ❖ Contact the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston for help to sponsor a forum or event on fair housing to raise awareness in your community.
- ❖ Volunteer to be a tester so that you can help us expose and challenge housing discrimination.
- ❖ Write a letter to your legislator about the need to fund fair housing programs.
- ❖ Donate to the Fair Housing Center to help support education and programming.

For more information, contact Aviva Rothman-Shore at the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston.

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The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston works to eliminate housing discrimination and promote open communities throughout the region.