AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT: BEST PRACTICES FOR MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

ORGANIZATION:
COLUMBUS COALITION AGAINST RACISM AND HOMELESS (CCARH)

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Redlining - Although informal discrimination and segregation had existed in the United States, the specific practice called "redlining" began with the National Housing Act of 1934, which established the Federal Housing Administration (FHA).[10] Racial segregation and discrimination against minorities and minority communities pre-existed this policy.
Of 300 large private subdivisions built from 1935 to 1947 in New York’s Queens, Nassau, and Westchester Counties, 83 percent had racially restrictive deeds, with preambles like, “Whereas the Federal Housing Administration requires that the existing mortgages on the said premises be subject and subordinated to the said [racial] restrictions … [except for] domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant…” (Dean 1947).-2
Columbus

"Restrictive covenant" means any specification in a deed, land contract or lease limiting the use of any housing because of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, familial status or military status or any limitation based upon affiliation with or approval by any person, directly or indirectly, employing race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, familial status or military status as a condition of affiliation or approval.

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• SPARC Study – Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities Six communities (Atlanta, Columbus, Dallas, San Francisco, Syracuse and Pierce County Washington).

• The study found that 78% of people experiencing homelessness in these communities were people of color. Broken down further, 64.7% were Black, 28% were White, and 6.9% identified as Hispanic/Latino. By comparison, the general population of the U.S. is 73.8% White, 12.4% Black, and 17.2% Hispanic/Latino.

• In 2017 Blacks made up 28% of the population in Columbus, Ohio with 64% experiencing homelessness.

• And 77% received prevention services. (CSB-SPIR)
HOUSING DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES OF TODAY

Redlining
Restrictive Covenant
Mass Incarceration
Homeless
The historic roots of housing discrimination

- Matthew Desmond, an assistant professor of sociology and social studies at Harvard University and affiliate of the Institute for Research on Poverty, recently outlined the severity of the housing challenge that poor Americans face. He noted that rising housing costs, stagnant or falling incomes among the poor, and a shortfall of federal housing assistance means that the poorest households now spend more than half of their income on housing.

- Specifically, he wrote: “Between 1991 and 2013, the percentage of renter households in America dedicating under 30 percent of their income to housing costs fell from 54 percent to 43 percent. During that same time, the percentage of renter households paying at least half of their income to housing costs rose from 21 percent to 30 percent. African American and Hispanic American families, the majority of whom rent their housing, were disproportionately affected by these trends. In 2013, 23 percent of black renting families and 25 percent of Hispanic renting families spent at least half of their income on housing”. (Eviction)
The study found that Black veterans who received a caseworker fared better than Black veterans who only received a voucher. “The caseworker mattered more for Black veterans than White veterans”. - 1

Permanent supportive housing is a proven solution to homelessness for the most vulnerable chronically homeless people. It pairs housing with case management and supportive services. (NAEH)

Community engagement collaboration practices.

Listen to your client for needs and supportive services.

Be active in hiring a diverse workforce.

Staff mirror population being served.
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

• Look at your implicit bias
• Look at your attitude towards client’s and co-workers of different races.
• Look at your beliefs about race and how they may affect your behavior.
• Speak up if you witness racism in any form.
• Respect the experiences of people from other races.
• If you don’t have a friend that is a different race they you, find one!
• Support anti-racism, pro-equity work in your community.
When it comes to public health, the relationship between homelessness and perceived race has concrete consequences. Since both homeless people and Black people in the United States have higher mortality rates, in the report Jones describes Black homeless people as facing a “double dose of vulnerability.”

“It’s enough to at least start a policy dialogue that goes beyond the race-blind rhetoric that we’ve had in the past,” Jones said. “For me, it’s sort of like waving a flag to say ‘hey look over here, we need to start looking at this, we need to start asking these questions and talking about it.’”
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
1. Study Investigates Connections Between Race and Homelessness; Streetsensemedia; Jensen Cassidy, December 18, 2016
2. Race and Public Housing, revisiting the federal role; Economic Policy Institute; Rothstein Richard, December 17, 2012
3. City of Columbus, website