

Notes from Small Group Discussions at Fair Housing Workshop at 12/2/16 Annual Meeting

At the MACDC Annual Meeting on December 2, 2016, MACDC held a workshop titled “The HUD Fair Housing Rule...And What’s Next.” Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development from the Town of Arlington, was the lead presenter. She was assisted by two co-presenters: Jorge Colon, Program Manager for Allston Brighton CDC’s Homebuying Mentors Program, and Andrew DeFranza, Executive Directors at Harborlight Community Partners. Don Bianchi from MACDC worked with the presenters to organize the workshop.

The workshop was attended by approximately 40 people. Jennifer presented an overview of the HUD Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule. Jorge and Andrew spoke about how they are engaging their local communities around fair housing. We then broke into five small groups, who discussed two questions and then reported out to the full group.

The two questions were:

1. As community-based organizations, how can we provide a vehicle for our members to have a voice in a fair housing planning process?
2. How do we prioritize the potentially conflicting goals of improving places where LMI households reside while providing mobility opportunities for LMI households?

The following was reported out by each of the five small groups:

Table 1:

Question 1:

Develop resident leadership  
Work with immigrant populations

Question 2:

Focus was on creating opportunities for residents to stay in their communities, as neighborhood improvements make neighborhoods more expensive to live in  
Move toward homeownership

Table 2:

Question 1:

Gentrification: in Boston, a concern that it is happening, in Worcester, a fear it could happen  
Quaboag Valley needs more improvement, not a concern about gentrification

Question 2:

Creating units where people can stay is the priority  
More transportation options and better paying jobs are key

Table 3:

Question 1:

Working with churches  
Door-to-door campaigning, as was done in campaign to pass CPA  
Create coalitions  
Long-term commitment to keeping municipal government accountable

Frame fair housing conversation so people can understand it; make it personal and provide data, put community first

Question 2:

Group did not have time to address this question

Table 4:

Question 1:

Start with education, such as in first-time homebuyer courses, use the opportunity to talk about fair housing

Engage with broad cross section of community on fair housing

Understand of people doing different types of work can relate to fair housing

Work within the system, have constructive conversations, use leverage

Question 2:

Be conscious of long-term planning, and impact of choices

Talk about all systems, not just housing, including transportation, education, etc.

Set priorities

Call people out on choices they make and identify impact of choices

Table 5:

Question 1:

Be intentional and include diverse voices

In Boston, there is distrust of City government

Focus on "housing you can afford" rather than "affordable housing"

Question 2:

Group did not have time to address this question