



Investment • Access • Opportunity

Barriers to Fair Housing in the Twin Cities Region

In 2018 and 2019, community-based organizations that are members of Equity in Place received funding from the Fair Housing Implementation Council and the Heading Home Minnesota Funders Collaborative to conduct community engagement around fair housing issues in local communities. Through engagement with hundreds of renter households, we identified a number of longstanding, pervasive and urgent housing challenges facing low-wealth people and people of color in communities around the Twin Cities region – and recommendations to address those barriers.

BARRIERS

Lack of affordable options & rental subsidies:

The rising cost of housing, lack of available subsidy programs, and challenges in utilizing supports, like Section 8 vouchers, in safe, truly affordable housing is a top barrier.

Evictions & displacement: Rampant and aggressive eviction practices have resulted in tenants facing immediate displacement and ongoing barriers to stable housing.

Tenant abuse: Landlords are broadly engaging in unscrupulous and often illegal practices, including demanding large security deposits at signing and fees for repairs. Residents without immigration status and Somali communities face increased bullying, threats and intimidation from landlords.

Lack of maintenance: Despite paying high rents, many low-wealth tenants are living under dangerously unhealthy conditions –and have no legal or practical recourse to hold landlords accountable.

Informing & enforcing tenants' rights:

City services are landlord-oriented and tenants do not have the support they need to be informed, empowered residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopt and implement the policies and priorities highlighted in the **Equity in Place Policy Agenda**, in addition to localized priorities, like the repeal of Crime Free Drug Free ordinances.

Allocate a consistent and significant funding stream to **robustly resource community organizing** to conduct and sustain authentic community engagement to advance equitable housing outcomes.

Provide staffing and resources within governments and agencies to **inform tenants of their rights** – in culturally competent ways – and increase enforcement around illegal and unfair landlord practices.

Change **property maintenance and local rental codes** to ensure dignified and safe housing and occupancy limits and definitions of family that are not overly restrictive and limit housing options.

Create, adopt, revise and/or enforce fair housing policies

and mandate fair housing training for city staff and landlords – and follow through on commitments in the 2017 update to the Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing.

