Legal Levers for Health Equity in Housing

Creating Equitable, Diverse Neighborhoods and Communities

Presenters:
Scott Burris, Center for Public Health Law Research
Demetria McCain, Inclusive Communities Project
Athena Williams, Oak Park Regional Housing Center
A Few Notes

Participants will be in listen-only mode, but we still want to hear from you!

Please enter your questions in either the chat or Q&A boxes (on the right side of your screen).

Today’s webinar will be recorded, and everyone who registered will receive a link.
HEALTH OUTCOMES & HEALTH CARE COSTS

- Stability
- Quality & Safety
- Affordability
- Neighborhood

www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/hpb20180313.396577/full/
CRISIS SOLUTION
Presenters

Scott Burris, Professor and Director
Center for Public Health Law Research

Demetria McCain, President
Inclusive Communities Project

Athena Williams, Executive Director
Oak Park Regional Housing Center
Scott Burris serves as Professor of Law and Public Health at Temple University, where he directs the Center for Public Health Law Research. His work focuses on how law influences public health, and what interventions can make laws and law enforcement practices healthier in their effects. He is the author of over 200 books, book chapters, articles and reports on issues including urban health, HIV/AIDS, research ethics, and the health effects of criminal law. He has served as a consultant to numerous U.S. and international organizations including WHO, UNODC and UNDP. He is a founder of Legal Science, LLC, a private company dedicated to the social mission of improving access to legal information and the supporting the practice of policy surveillance. In 2014, he was the recipient of the American Public Health Association (APHA) Law Section Lifetime Achievement Award and was the recipient of the Jay Healey Health Law Professors award in 2018. Professor Burris is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis (A.B.) and Yale Law School (J.D.).
Legal Levers for Health Equity in Housing

Scott Burris, JD, Temple University Beasley School of Law, Center for Public Health Law Research
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Policies for Action program supported research reported in this presentation. The content is solely the responsibility of the author and does not necessarily represent views of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
What Has Our “Housing System” Produced in the Past Half Century?

A chronic affordability gap
- There are only 37 affordable and available units for every 100 extremely low-income renter households

Persistent segregation
- The average White person lives in a neighborhood that is almost 80% White, approximately 10% Latino, less than 10% Black, and less than 5% Asian

Too many unhealthy homes
- 4 million households have children exposed to high levels of lead
BTW, vouchers have worked pretty well – at far too small a scale.
What Do We *Want* the System to Produce?

- Socio-Economically and Racially Diverse Neighborhood with Amenities
- Safe Housing without any Hazards
- Stable Housing
- Affordable Housing

Health Equity in Housing (HEIH)
What Do We Want the System to Produce?

HEIH is

• A MOTIVE
  → an organizing principle that can guide the independent use of many legal levers by many actors

• A MEASURE
  → If we are not advancing all these elements, we are failing

• METHODS
  → We offer one building block, a strategic approach to law
A Legal Levers Model for HEIH

Governance

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

More people living in quality housing in socioeconomic and racially mixed, healthy neighborhoods

Enhancing Economic Choice for the Poor

Increasing the Supply of New Affordable Housing

Maintaining Existing Housing Affordable, Stable, and Safe

Proactive code enforcement

Reform of fines and fees

AFFH – the Oak Park Way!

Zoning reform
Thoughts from a systems perspective ➔
Levers working together

- The goal is to balance the levers to achieve “the perfect sound” – equity
- Requires deliberate process of design, testing, refinement, and diffusion
- E.g., LIHTC housing unfettered by QAP and zoning barriers, and guided by AFFH metro-wide plan
The idea that social policy and change can be seen as “experiments,” and states or cities as “laboratories” has come up again and again for a century at least.
Six-part report series on Legal Levers for HEIH
Available at: http://publichealthlawresearch.org/product/housingreports
Thank You!

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Twitter: @LawAtlas
Youtube: YouTube.com/LawAtlasorgTemple
Demetria McCain has been with the Inclusive Communities Project (ICP) since its inception and presently serves as its president, where she oversees operations as well as engages in advocacy efforts that further ICP’s mission. ICP’s “Voices for Opportunity” initiative provides advocacy training for low-income renters and neighborhood groups fighting for fair housing and neighborhood equity. Prior to becoming president, she supervised ICP’s Mobility Assistance Program, a housing mobility counseling program that has assisted over 4,000 moves since 2005 for housing choice voucher families seeking safe, well-resourced, low-poverty, historically off-limits neighborhoods where they believe their families can best thrive. A native Dallasite, Demetria is the recipient of the 2015 Texas Houser Award and a sought-after panelist and commenter on issues relating to affordable fair housing. She recently joined Coppin State University’s adjunct faculty, where her course covers fair housing and homelessness issues. She is a graduate of NYU, Brooklyn College, and Howard University School of Law.
WEBINAR: BUILDING HEALTH EQUITY IN HOUSING

JULY 23, 2020
DEMETRIA MCCAIN
HOUSING MOBILITY & HEALTH EQUITY
NEIGHBORHOOD EQUITY REMAINS ELUSIVE IN DALLAS
CONCENTRATION OF SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS & U.S. CDFI DISTRESS INDEX
CONCENTRATION OF SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS & THE CHILD OPPORTUNITY INDEX
• “Today’s distribution of the federal low-income housing vouchers shows not just the increased exposure of Black and Hispanic families to disaster but the relative safety of White voucher families outside the highly vulnerable neighborhoods.”

• “Less than one-third, 30% of these White voucher families, are in the high risk SVI census tracts and exposed to the accompanying hazards and risks, disease and death. This is drastically fewer than the Black and Hispanic voucher families living in the highest risk SVI tracts.”

• “Over one-half, 55%, of all Black and Hispanic Housing Choice Voucher families in the nation are in census tracts with the highest vulnerability to disasters such as disease outbreaks.”

—Daniel & Beshara, P.C.

See https://www.danielbesharalawfirm.com/covid-19-and-racial-segregation
HOUSING MOBILITY HELPS FAMILIES WHO WANT TO MOVE ELSEWHERE
GAINING ACCESS
ICP’S MOBILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

• Helps with moves to safer, well-resourced areas of the 7-county D/FW region
  – Fair housing counseling and community information
  – Housing search assistance
  – Landlord recruitment and negotiations
  – Liaison between voucher holder and the public housing authority
  – Post-move support
LEVELS OF BARRIERS

• Misinformation
• Private
• Public/Governmental
  – Local
  – State
  – Federal
STRATEGIES TO ADDRESSING BARRIERS
MULTI-PRONGED APPROACHES

• Research (i.e., Voucher Discrimination Survey Report)
• Policy Advocacy (i.e., Preemption of Voucher Discrimination Ordinances)
• Engagement (i.e., Urban and Suburban Public Hearings)
• Program Administration (i.e., ICP’s Sublease Initiative)
• Advocacy Training of Residents (i.e., Voices for Opportunity Program)
• Credible Threat of Litigation (i.e., Town of Addison, TX)
• Litigation (i.e., HUD; TX Dept. of Housing & Community Affairs)
Athena Williams
Oak Park Regional Housing Center

Athena Williams serves as Executive Director of the Oak Park Regional Housing Center. The OPRHC is regarded as a leading agency for promoting fair housing rights and equal racial access in Oak Park and surrounding West Cook County communities, including Chicago’s Austin neighborhood. Athena is a respected community organizer and activist, formerly program director for the West Cook Homeownership Center of the OPRHC. She previously served as an assistant to the late Reverend Dr. Lewis Flowers of the Westside Ministers’ Coalition, was a Chicago Public School Local School Council member, Associate Director of the Monroe Foundation, and an administrative assistant to 37th Ward Alderman Emma Mitts. Athena is a product of Chicago Public Schools, holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Wisconsin Madison, and holds multiple certifications in housing and financial counseling through NeighborWorks. Athena is also the mom of a daughter who is completing her MBA in Marketing/Finance at Hampton University.
Promoting and Sustaining Diverse and Integrated Communities
For over 43 years, the Oak Park Regional Housing Center has been committed to its mission of achieving meaningful and lasting racial diversity in Oak Park. Our program has been recognized as a model and best practice within the community and across the nation. Yet, despite the relatively high profile of our model, our value and impact are not fully realized.

The promotion of diversity with integration, provides a structure that enables economic and social benefits for the community. We work with apartment owners and the interested renters to market vacant units, in addition to individuals seeking to become homeowners, in a manner that contributes to integration, thereby expanding housing options for all.
Terminology

• **Diversity** is the presence of people of different racial groups in a community. We strive for a community that racially represents the metropolitan region.

• **Integration** is when people of different racial groups live in proximity to one another within a community. We strive for a community where no neighborhood is exclusively for or without any racial group.

• **Inclusion** is when people of different racial groups interact socially and participate together in a community. Integration is the foundation for inclusion.

• **Equity** is when people of different racial groups have similar outcomes in a community. We continue to strive for a community that is more equitable.
Segregation is the Structure of Inequality in Metropolitan America

• Segregation provides a primary impetus for continued discrimination.
• Segregation correlates with inequalities in jobs, schools, crime, health, infrastructure, and services.
• Segregation enables “racial blind spots” that perpetuate “self segregation.”
• Segregation disadvantages everyone socially and economically.
Racial/ethnic change in the City of Chicago during the 2000s

- Whites
- Blacks
- Asians
- Latinos

Each dot=25 people
Integration is much better in Oak Park than in surrounding communities.
Tenant BEGINS Housing Search

Implicit Bias, Misperceptions & Stereotypes LIMIT Options

In Some Cases, People of Color Face DISCRIMINATION

Search EXCLUDES Affirmative Options

Move Reinforces SEGREGATION

Status Quo of Inequality PERSISTS

Typical Housing Searches are Limited
Housing Search, with Counseling, Increase Options & Facilitate Integration

Tenant BEGINS Housing Search

Structure of Inclusion IMPROVES

Housing Center DISRUPTS Implicit Biases, Misperceptions & Stereotypes

People of Color are INFORMED about Fair Housing Rights and Actions

Move Promotes INTEGRATION

Search EXPANDS to Include Affirmative Moves

Structure of Inclusion IMPROVES

Move Promotes INTEGRATION

Search EXPANDS to Include Affirmative Moves

People of Color are INFORMED about Fair Housing Rights and Actions

Housing Center DISRUPTS Implicit Biases, Misperceptions & Stereotypes

Tenant BEGINS Housing Search
2010 Population Percentages
Oak Park Largely Reflects the Chicago Region

School-age population is even closer in parity.
Integration turns Diversity into an Asset

Diversity + Integration = 

Opportunity/Mobility
Equity: Equalized outcomes for all racial groups

Inclusion: Social interaction among all racial groups

Integration: Proximity to different racial groups

Diversity: Presence of multiple racial groups
Integration is the Heart of Our Community

- Serves as a core value that reinforces our spirit.
- Promotes a “one village” mentality that enhances harmony.
- Provides an aspiration for a common cause that unites us.
- Addresses the structural nature of inequality.
- Enables additional social justice efforts by promoting a giving nature.
- Attracts new residents and highlights Oak Park nationally via a unique brand.
For More Information

Mission Web Page: www.oprhc.org

Service Web Page: www.LiveInOakPark.com

Athena Williams, awilliams@oprhc.org
1041 South Boulevard, Oak Park, IL 60302
708-848-7150
Please enter your questions in either the chat or Q&A boxes (likely on the right side of your screen)
Join the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

July 2009 founded

600 individual members

Coalition Facts and Activities

- Organizational Makeup: 80% of membership operates with a state and/or local focus
- Steering Committee: Comprised of 16 elected members; governs coalition activities
- Policy: Support national policy agendas and funding requests
- Quarterly Webinars: Learn from colleagues and experts
- Monthly Action Alerts: Receive updates about events, sign-on letters, and new resources
- Regular Hill Meetings: Visit with your members of Congress (Coalition members have met with Congressional offices over 235 times since 2013 alone!)

sarah@nshhcoalition.org ● nshhcoalition.org
Based at the Temple University Beasley School of Law, the Center for Public Health Law Research supports the widespread adoption of scientific tools and methods for mapping and evaluating the impact of law on health. The Center works by developing and teaching public health law research and legal epidemiology methods (including legal mapping and policy surveillance); researching laws and policies that improve health, increase access to care, and create or remove barriers to health (e.g., laws or policies that create or remove inequity); and communicating and disseminating evidence to facilitate innovation. The Center celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2019.
The Inclusive Communities Project (ICP) is a not-for-profit organization that works for the creation and maintenance of thriving racially and economically inclusive communities, expansion of fair and affordable housing opportunities for low-income families, and redress for policies and practices that perpetuate the harmful effects of discrimination and segregation. It prides itself on its multipronged approach, which utilizes direct services (through housing mobility counseling for housing choice voucher holders), research, policy advocacy, program administration, and litigation. ICP is a thought leader whose advocacy has positively changed local, state, and federal policies.

https://www.inclusivecommunities.net/
Oak Park Regional Housing Center
Oak Park, Illinois

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https://oprhc.org/
National Center for Healthy Housing
Columbia, Maryland

The National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH) is the preeminent national nonprofit dedicated to securing healthy homes for all. Since 1992, NCHH has served as a highly regarded and credible change agent, successfully integrating healthy housing advocacy, research, and capacity building under one roof to reduce health disparities nationwide. With more than six million families living in substandard housing, NCHH equips leaders in the public health, housing, and environmental sectors with the data, tools, policies, and best practices they need to improve housing quality in their communities.

https://nchh.org/
National Low Income Housing Coalition
Washington, District of Columbia

Founded in 1974 by Cushing N. Dolbeare, the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) educates, organizes, and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing for everyone. NLIHC’s goals are to preserve existing federally assisted homes and housing resources, expand the supply of low-income housing, and establish housing stability as the primary purpose of federal low-income housing policy. NLIHC’s staff teams work together to achieve its advocacy goals. Its research team studies trends and analyzes data to create a picture of the need for low-income housing across the country. Its policy team educates lawmakers about housing need and analyzes and shapes public policy. Its field team mobilizes members and supporters across the country to advocate for good housing policy. Its communications team shapes public opinion of low-income housing issues. And its administration team works to ensure NLIHC remains a sustainable, high-capacity organization.

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https://nlihc.org/
Part 2: Building and Maintaining Safe and Affordable Homes

In Building and Maintaining Safe and Affordable Homes, the second webinar in our three-part series, we’ll explore research and best practices for how we can build health equity in housing by improving and maintaining housing quality and by increasing and maintaining housing affordability.

Part 3: An Experimental Approach to Building Health Equity in Housing

What we don’t know about how laws and policies impact health equity in housing is far greater than what we do know. So, how do we build health equity in housing with a lack of evidence? The Center for Public Health Law Research has proposed that a bold, systematic experimental approach is the best way forward: We need to work together to try new things—and study them—so we can begin to make a more substantial dent on the U.S. housing crisis. This final webinar will discuss a few experiments the Center identifies as being among the most promising, based on existing evidence and past implementation: proactive lead inspection, and tweaks to levers to increase the availability of affordable housing. Attendees will hear from experts who have worked on the ground addressing these issues across the United States and gain insight into how they might begin to experiment in their own communities.