

Opening Hearts

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Welcome in Any Language

Maggie, the manager of a down payment program, peered across her document-strewn desk at the father chastising his 10 year old son. Drawing on her long career in lending didn't seem to help. The man was angry that the distraught youth could not explain in Spanish what Maggie had just said in English. The Father had worked two low-paying jobs, sacrificed and saved for years. This funding was his family's ticket out of a crowded apartment and into a home. The dream was slipping away in a confusion of words he didn't understand. His son was to blame!

This was not going well, but hadn't the man insisted that his kid interpret? Maggie has another appointment waiting in the lobby and an inspiration: "Gestures! I'll use gestures to explain and speak more slowly and maybe a little louder! If that doesn't work, we can try again after my vacation. Besides, the next client may use up the remaining funds."

This can be one outcome. But, there can be a better one where Maggie has appropriate information and tools to help people in their language while avoiding a civil rights or fair housing complaint. That's why I do this work.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in accessing federally-assisted programs. This includes discrimination based on national origin. National origin includes a person that doesn't read, write, speak, or understand English...someone that is limited English proficient...LEP. This designation bestows certain rights on this person under Title VI. Federal agencies issue guidance on what is required. There can be penalties when reasonable steps are not taken to avoid delayed or denied services because a person is LEP.

As recipients of federal assistance, affordable housing providers and others have an obligation to provide timely, competent and no-cost language assistance to persons in any language. This takes the form of interpretation and translation. Interpretation is

the oral conversion of English into another language, and vice versa. Translation is its written counterpart. The federal guidance requires a provider to have a Language Assistance Program. I help clients through these steps to create a program: a Language Needs Assessment, a Language Access Plan, staff training, and periodic monitoring, evaluation and updates to the Plan.

A good Language Assistance Program can help you expand your market, offer better service, meet federal requirements and manage risk. Erik Kingston of the Idaho Housing Finance Association probably says it best: "Good customer service is welcome in any language."

Gary Hanes
Gary E. Hanes & Associates, LLC

Resources:
www.lep.gov
www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/promotingfh/lep.cfm
www.boiseinterpreters.com





Federally assisted, affordable housing providers should provide timely, competent and no-cost language assistance to persons in any language.

“To the extent required by law, refrain from placing refugees of the same race, religion, national origin or other protected class in the same neighborhood, building, or apartment complex.”



Open the door to inclusion...end discrimination and discriminatory displacement.

Information Regarding Housing Placement for Refugees

The Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), in consultation with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, provides the following *Note to Resettlement Agencies* in light of questions raised during the December 2011 Admissions Workshop.

This *Note to Resettlement Agencies* includes basic background information on relevant sections of the Fair Housing Act, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act or FHA), and other information, including suggested best practices, which may be helpful to resettlement agencies in the housing placement process.

As noted in the Cooperative Agreement (Agreement), resettlement agencies must provide the services specified therein “in a manner consistent with United States law.” Thus, in addition to compliance with the specific housing-related provisions in the Agreement, particularly those found in Section 8.C.4, resettlement agencies must also comply with generally

applicable legal rules, such as those found in the Fair Housing Act.

This *Note* is provided by PRM in the spirit of cooperation, as a partner to resettlement agencies, in seeking the best possible outcomes for refugees resettled in the U.S. It may not be relied upon as legal guidance. Each resettlement agency is solely responsible for ensuring compliance with U.S. laws such as the Fair Housing Act, and should consult with counsel when questions arise regarding specific cases.

Relevant Fair Housing Act Provisions

The FHA prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing, and in other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability. The FHA prohibits types of action, regardless of actor, thereby covering a broad range of persons and entities that provide housing or engage in housing-related transactions. Resettlement agencies are covered insofar as they assist people in identifying and obtaining housing. (Note: The

term “housing provider” does not appear in the FHA, and the provisions found below are not limited in that manner).

Certain relevant FHA provisions are as follows:

Section 804(a) – It is unlawful to make unavailable or deny a dwelling to any person because of race, religion, national origin or other protected class.

Section 804(b) – It is unlawful to discriminate against any person in the provision of housing-related services because of race, religion, national origin or other protected class.

Section 804(c) – It is unlawful to make, print, or publish any notice, statement, or advertisement, with respect to the rental of a dwelling that indicates a preference or limitation based on race, religion, national origin or other protected class.

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Our Mission

The Intermountain Fair Housing Council (IFHC) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure open and inclusive housing for all people throughout Idaho. The IFHC’s organizational purpose is to advance equal access to housing for all persons without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, familial status or disability. The IFHC attempts to eradicate discrimination through education on the fair housing laws, housing information and referrals, housing counseling and enforcement including testing and filing complaints under the Fair Housing Act.

The Refugee Experience in Idaho

Imagine you have just arrived to a new country. You have been waiting to be resettled for years, spending the intermediary time in a refugee camp. You have left behind your home, friends, and family. You speak very little of the language, and you cannot read. You arrive at the airport after an exhausting journey, and months of waiting. Your hope is that a new life will be facilitated with the help of refugee agencies and other support groups.

Now imagine an apartment has been found for you. You signed a year lease that you could not read or understand. Your apartment is really expensive – there is no way you can afford it after you stop getting rental assistance. Your apartment also isn't right for you. You would never have chosen an apartment on the second floor because of several health problems that make stairs very difficult. However, you were not given any other options for living arrangements, so you agreed to the apartment. You soon come to find out that there is very little public transportation. It is difficult to get downtown, to the city center, or even to your children's schools or your various doctors' appointments.

A few weeks later, and things are even more difficult. You have come to find out that you have been saddled with debt from a "travel loan" – the cost of bringing you to your new home, though you are wondering why your flight cost so many thousands of dollars. The only jobs you can find don't pay enough to cover your rent, even though you may be overqualified for this kind of work in your country of origin.

What's even more complicated is that the rental assistance program you were provided with was cut off as soon as you found a job – that's the policy, even if you are not earning a living wage. You heard from friends about subsidized housing, but you aren't sure how to apply and you are only a few months into a

year-long lease. On top of all this, you are still trying to learn the language, since not speaking fluently makes it really difficult to do basic things like shop or understand directions. Now what?

For those of us who have never gone through resettlement – who are not refugees – it can be hard to imagine what the life of a refugee in Idaho feels like. Many are unaware of the large refugee population in Idaho. About 5,700 refugees arrived in Idaho between 2002 and 2012, according to statistics from the Idaho Office for Refugees. Many are not receiving the support they need and deserve. Though obviously experiences differ family to family, person to person, the description above is a common set of experiences for the refugee community in Idaho.

Across the board, refugees are being given little to no choice in their own housing, and often are left with high monthly rent and long leases. This reality means that many are evicted or forced to break their lease and lose security deposits. Some are left homeless and/or with massive amounts of debt. This would be a difficult situation for any one, let alone someone who has been through traumatic experiences, and is now in a foreign country with very little support or assistance. Remember, all legal documents are in English, and though legally translators should be provided for these interactions, this is not always the case.

Choosing where you live is an important, intimate decision that will affect your entire life. The location of your home determines your access to doctors, schools, work, social services, grocery stores, and public transportation. The location of your home determines your access to green spaces like parks, your exposure to diverse communities, as well as your access to healthy air and drinking water.

Of course, in our society, certain privileges serve us in accessing these needs. Perhaps

you speak English, are a citizen, are white, and middle class. Perhaps you have no physical disabilities, good credit, and own a car. These privileges allow you to make choices for your living situation, and give you opportunities to escape less desirable situations. For example, if your house isn't zoned for good schools, you may have the money for private schools, and a car to drive your child there each day.

Shouldn't those who are not as privileged be able to make these same choices to help them and their loved ones flourish, and to feel safe? The answer is yes. Unfortunately, this is not the reality for many of the refugees coming to Idaho. Support is needed, and deserved. There are some models, the mutual aid model for instance, that help build community while providing the support to new Americans' needs when first arriving to their new home.

In the mutual aid model, people come together to help fulfill their own needs, to build networks of aid and assistance that are by and for the community. This is important because there is no one more qualified to understand your needs than yourself – and everyone is empowered to help their neighbor if they can. Other cities, like Chicago, have built successful mutual aid networks with refugees in order to provide the support that they are lacking. These organizations, like the Iraqi Mutual Aid Association, ensure that necessities like basic orientation, English classes, proper job placement, and transportation are all taken care of. Perhaps it is time for Boise to follow in Chicago's footsteps; to make the needs of the refugee communities a priority.

Written by *Suzahn Ebrahimian*



Fair housing opens doors to diversity.

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Choosing where you live is an important, intimate decision that will affect your entire life.

Donation/Wish List

Paper
Camera
Leveler
Volunteers/Testers
Office Space
Computers
Donations for Inter-
pretation

The Intermountain Fair Housing Council has implemented a **scent free** environment for our clients and staff. We ask that all clients, staff, advocates, testers, ambassadors, others who visit our office to refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, and scented personal hygiene products. We appreciate your support in the Council's scent free environment.

Mutual Aid in Idaho

In a representative democracy, we are supposed to take our grievances to the public forums to make our voices heard, and to petition those who represent us to fight for our causes. But it is becoming increasingly apparent that action must be taken outside of legislative efforts in order to help ourselves and those in our communities more directly. In reality, we do this every day. Neighbors ask each other for childcare, food, help finding a job, lend tools, help work on a household project, or even just reach out to enjoy each other's company.

For one reason or another, these day-to-day voluntary direct actions are not seen as political. And unfortunately, the potential of person to person empowerment often stops at one-time favors. But in a city where more and more communities are being displaced by development, and the cost of living is ever rising, these actions are the glue that hold entire communities together. This network of sharing-taking-giving is often referred to as mutual aid.

Mutual aid is the voluntary sharing of resources between community members in order to ensure that everybody's needs are met. It is very different from charity. Charity is based on a gift-giving model, where one person or organization who is empowered with resources decides to share *their* resources with someone who is *disempowered*. It is based off of a fixed hierarchy of have/have not – meaning there are defined roles that don't easily change. So, it is easy to imagine how charity is not inherently empowering. In fact, many criticize charity models for doing too little to change the systems that marginalize people in the first place. In essence, charity can help when someone is in immediate material need, but the road to justice certainly does not end there.

Mutual aid relies on the *horizontally structured* premise that everyone has needs, and everyone has abilities/resources to share. Basically, everyone is valuable, and anyone is vulnerable in some way. A horizontal structure simply means that roles and positions are fluid and equitable. In a horizontal structure we do what we can to make sure everyone's needs are met, which involves listening and an understanding of how oppression works.

By building strong networks off of this model, anyone who participates in mutual aid is empowered because the community is caring for itself. No one is forced to participate (this is called voluntary association). People participate because it benefits themselves and others to do so, and is meaningful in light of the bigger picture of justice and equity.

In reality, mutual aid is very simple. For example, all around the country (Boise included), Food Not Bombs is a network of people that serve food for free in public spaces. Anyone can help serve food, and anyone can share the meal. There are no restrictions on access. There is no official membership. Anyone can start a Food Not Bombs chapter at any time. There is no complicated process. Most people who participate are eager to share resources and experiences with new chapters because the basic principle of mutual aid is that the more people participate, the more people are fed. The idea is the same for the Boise Free Store, where anyone can come and take what they need or give what they don't need anymore!

What would Boise be like if neighborhoods worked together to make sure every inhabitant had what they needed to get by? With one of the poorest public transportation systems in the country, there are huge gaps in Boiseans' needs to get to work, school, or just get around town without hassle. This is especially

true for those who can't afford to live in areas easily accessible to downtown. On top of this, the environmental impact of the number of cars on the surrounding wilderness is very damaging.

Carpooling is a very common form of mutual aid because it saves time and gas money. What if the occasional carpooling turned into a community project, with the intentions of empowering bonds between neighbors? You may help a neighbor stay out of eviction or foreclosure by helping them get to work – which also benefits your whole neighborhood.

Mutual aid is a natural human tendency. We help each other out because it is the right thing to do, or because we care about a person who is in need. Some have already been taking action to help politicize and strengthen these networks in Boise. What if we let these principles of equity and sharing organize our streets and our city blocks? The term "livable city" could take on a whole new life.

Written by *Suzahn Ebrahimian*

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Director's Message—Access to Affordable Healthy Housing: Families Need Broader, Flexible Occupancy Policies

With the changing human landscape of Idaho from predominantly European, Anglo, and white to include Latino, African, Asian, Iraqi, Uzbeki. Idaho is welcoming more and more New Americans. With New Americans arriving in Boise and Twin Falls and other parts of Idaho, we are seeing that our housing policies and practices might not be as welcoming to families with children as we would like them to be. The federal Fair Housing Act protects families with minor children against discrimination in housing. We usually see housing policies in which ads or housing providers refuse to rent to families with children or steer families to another building that they feel is more family friendly or on the first floor of a building because they think kids should not live on higher floors.

In our growing communities, we need to think about how barriers to housing affect families as well as individuals. While the federal Fair Housing Act protects families with minor children based on familial status, our Idaho Human Rights Act does not. No city or county ordinance protects families from housing discrimination. Families face outright discrimination from landlords whose ads say, "no children." Some Home Owner's Associations prohibit kids in their condominiums. Some landlords have rules that segregate children to first floor apartments or family buildings so that they don't get hurt or aren't too noisy for the neighbors. While landlords can regulate noise and other behavior, they can't do so in a way that is overly restrictive such that kids can't play or be kids. Rules that restrict occupants rather than children in pool areas, weight rooms and other areas of housing complexes are preferred over rules against children being present. Tenants and homeowners are responsible for the

occupants' and guests' behavior/actions in their home regardless of age.

While these issues pose significant barriers to families with children, occupancy policies and lack of affordable healthy housing pose even a greater barrier. First, there just isn't a lot of affordable housing for families of five or more. While there are more one- and two-bedroom apartment units, there aren't a lot of three-, four- and five-bedroom units and certainly very few with affordable rent. With the lack of Section 8 Vouchers and large subsidized units, families need housing providers to create or provide larger units with more bedrooms, provide access to larger affordable homes to rent (hard to find in urban/suburban areas), and need housing providers to be more flexible and inclusive with their occupancy policies.

Because the first two suggestions are self-explanatory, I will focus on changing occupancy policies. Most occupancy policies provide guidance regarding how many people can occupy a rental unit of any kind. According to the Frank Keating memo <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/library/occupancystds.pdf>,

the guide starts with two people per bedroom but then looks at other factors to determine if more people can occupy or live in a unit. The guidance looks at square footage of the unit, the capacity of the utilities, age of children, and other factors and provides examples of when it would be reasonable or unreasonable to house more people per bedroom/unit. The scarcity of large units with three or more bedrooms and more inclusive, flexible housing policies is having an adverse impact on communities of color (Latinos, African refugees and other

New Americans whose families are larger) and religious communities that support larger families.

Today, most occupancy policies and jurisdictions allow two people per bedroom plus one. Most jurisdictions support that policy and have expanded their policies so as to not include children two and under in the number of occupants because toddlers and infants take up little space and or sleep with their parents or siblings. Some larger housing providers have gone even further by expanding their policy and excluding children under five years old from the number of persons or occupants. When housing for large families is scarce or unaffordable, this more flexible, inclusive occupancy policy provides greater housing choice and opportunity. Cities and counties should seriously consider expanding and supporting this broader definition when housing development dollars and the will is scarce for the creation of larger units. This support can be generated through passing ordinances that prohibit discrimination based on familial status and establishing broad occupancy standards, providing financial incentives and support for creating housing units for larger families, and providing vouchers or assistance for families to rent homes when larger units in apartments are not available.

We build community for all when we provide families with access to affordable healthy housing through protection under State and federal law, develop larger affordable housing units and or resources to access existing units, and establish more inclusive occupancy policies.

Zoe Ann Olson
Director

IFHC's Report for 2011-2013

Intermountain Fair Housing Council (IFHC) had two fair housing Private Enforcement Initiative (PEI) Grants from Department of Housing And Urban Development.

Under our 2011-2012 PEI Grant 18 month grant:

- Inquiries (housing calls): **1469**
- Intakes (possible fair housing cases): **518**
- For a total number of calls: **1987**

Reasonable Accommodation (RA):

- Assisted with RA: 128
- Granted (Housing Provider Granted RA): 104 or 81 %

Cases referred for filing a Fair Housing Act (FHA) complaint or resolved by alternative dispute resolution (ADR):

- Cases to HUD for filing a complaint: 99
- ADR: 11
- Project total 110

IFHC's educational and outreach efforts include:

- The IFHC conducted 55 educational events in 10 languages throughout the state including English, Spanish, French, Kirundi, Swahili, Somali, Russian, Burmese, Nepali, Arabic.
- IFHC provided fair housing outreach to over 76,389 persons across Idaho.
- IFHC conducted three Spanish language fair housing programs (30 minutes each) reaching 45,000 households on Cable TV's "Nuestra Voz."
- IFHC conducted three public radio programs for 45 minutes on fair housing in Spanish reaching 21,000.

IFHC's Education and Outreach Work under our Education and Outreach Initiative Grant 2011-2012 includes:

IFHC has produced over 34 documents including:

- Barriers for Communities handout
- FH for HOAs handout
- FH Mediation Design Template
- FH Month Newsletter
- April Fair Housing Month flyer, agenda, and calendar
- April Training Ad for publication in English and Spanish
- Fair Housing Guide to Avoid Religious Discrimination
- Advanced Fair Housing Training PowerPoint for Housing Providers, Consumers, and Attorneys
- LGBT handout

Provided FH documents in Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Nepali, Russian and distributed to over 360 persons:

- The Ken Nagy Reasonable Accommodation and Self-Advocacy Guides
- Reasonable Accommodation Scripts
- Reasonable Accommodation Videos (Except in French not Nepali)

Recruited/trained: Six Fair Housing Guides who speak French/Swahili/Kirundi, Somali, Arabic, Spanish, Nepali, Russian

- Created Reasonable Accommodation Videos in English, Arabic, French, Swahili, and Russian and will post on redesigned website
- Will provide fair housing and landlord-tenant training via the Idaho Law Foundation's New Americans' Law Academy via a two hour housing (including fair housing) workshop in multiple languages
- IFHC hosted four Mutual Aid Network trainings with fair housing guides and guests who speak English, Somali, Arabic, Russian, Farsi, Kirundi, Swahili
- The guides referred 49 African families (who speak French/Swahili or Kirundi, 6 Russian, 11 Arabic, 18 Spanish Speaking Persons)

Provided Other Fair Housing Education and Outreach:

- Nine (9) trainings were provided in Nepali, French, Swahili, Kirundi, Somali, Russian, Spanish in the Magic and Treasure Valley
- Distributed "Financial Literacy Packets for Persons with Disabilities" in English/Spanish packets to 180 households throughout Idaho
- Conducted 14 (2-hour) workshops for Fair Housing Advocates for 120 PSR workers/disability advocates throughout Idaho
- Conducted 7 regional Fair Housing training workshops for consumers, advocates, government employees, and providers throughout Idaho and educated 1,115 individuals
- IFHC completed two print ads and one radio program in Spanish reaching over 21,000 households
- Reviewed and provided feedback the Analysis of Impediments/Fair Housing Plans for Boise, Nampa, Meridian, Lewiston, Coeur d'Alene, Pocatello, Idaho Falls, Idaho Housing and Finance Association, and Idaho Department of Commerce

Under our 2013 (Three Year) PEI Grant as of June 30, 2013:

- Total Inquiries (housing calls): 315
- Total Intakes (possible fair housing cases): 171
- Project total HUD complaint Filings: 20
- Project total ADR: 12
- Total Assisted Reasonable Accommodations: 22
- Total Granted Reasonable Accommodations: 17

Funding Sources:

HUD, Department of Justice, private grants, litigation, donations.

Training:

IFHC Staff has attended over 20 Fair Housing training events/webinars in the past year.

Japanese Internment Camps: An Example of Idaho's Painful Past of National Origin Discrimination

After visiting the Black History Museum in Boise (see our March 2013 newsletter), Intermountain Fair Housing Council hopes that you will continue your civil rights studies by exploring two historical sites of forced segregation—two Idaho Japanese Internment Camps. In addition to Idaho's Native American Reservations, these camps illustrate a shameful example of national origin discrimination, displacement, and segregation in Idaho. According to the Idaho Parks website, "after the attack on Pearl Harbor,...in February 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order that moved nearly 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans into 10 isolated relocation centers in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming. These temporary, tar paper-covered barracks, the guard towers, and most of the barbed-wire fences are gone now, but the people who spent years of their lives in the centers will never forget them and all they lost. Minidoka Relocation Center was located in Jerome County, Idaho, 15 miles east of Jerome and 15 miles north of Twin Falls." To visit and learn more go to: <http://www.nps.gov/miin/planyourvisit/directions.htm>.

Even though, the Kooskia Internment camp is not an official park site yet, you can support its historical preservation. According to the *Huffington Post*, this year, a University of Idaho research team began to preserve the history of the Kooskia Internment Camp. Many local residents knew little about the small Kooskia camp, which operated from 1943 to the end of the war and held more than 250 detainees about 30 miles east of Kooskia. There is no official site to visit. Google Kooskia Internment Camp to learn more.



Information Regarding Housing Placement for Refugees (Continued from Page 2)

Section 804(d) – It is unlawful to represent to any person because of race, religion, national origin, or other protected class that any dwelling is not available for inspection, sale, or rental when such dwelling is in fact so available.

There are very limited exemptions with regard to the aforementioned Fair Housing Act provisions, and to our knowledge, none of them would be generally applicable to the provision of housing services within the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

Religious Organization Exemption (42 U.S.C. 3607(a)) – *There is an exemption for religious organizations that permits such organizations to limit housing to or give preferences to persons of the same religion. It only applies if the housing at issue is owned by the religious organization and operated for a non-commercial purpose.*

HIV/AIDS – *There is no exemption in the FHA for persons with HIV/AIDS. However, under the HUD-funded HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS/HIV) program, which is authorized by separate legislation, persons with HIV/AIDS can be housed together in certain circumstances.*

Steering

Sections 804(a), 804(b), 804(c) and 804(d) of the Fair Housing Act have been read to generally prohibit the practice of steering.

Steering is the practice by which real estate agents, other persons or entities providing housing services preserve or encourage patterns of segregation in available housing by channeling or assigning members of certain groups (based on race, national origin, etc.) to particular buildings or neighborhoods (24 C.F.R. Sec. 100.70(a) and (c)(4)).

Best Practices

The suggested best practices found below do not constitute additional, formal requirements under the Cooperative

Agreement.

Use the Fair Housing Act Affirmatively

- Partner with local fair housing organizations to ensure that landlords do not discriminate against refugees in the provision of housing.
- Document instances in which landlords refuse to rent homes to refugees, either explicitly because of refugee status, or under other pretext.
- File fair housing complaints if landlords refuse to rent to refugees because of race, religion, national origin or other protected class.

Pursue Diverse Housing Options

- To the extent required by law, refrain from placing refugees of the same race, religion, national origin or other protected class in the same neighborhood, building, or apartment complex.
- Continuously develop relationships with landlords in the local area, particularly those who provide affordable housing.
- Develop and maintain local records regarding the existence of affordable housing in particular neighborhoods.

Promote Choice

- To the extent practicable, allow refugees to view multiple housing options and to make decisions with regard to their initial housing placement.
- To the extent practicable, facilitate multiple lease options for refugees, such that refugees can decide whether they prefer a long-term or short-term arrangement.

Other

- Consult with counsel and/or the HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the Housing Discrimination Hotline by email, fheo_webmanager@hud.gov, or phone, 1-800-669-9777, if questions arise relating to the lawfulness of particular housing placements.
- Include a training component relating to compliance with the Fair Housing Act

in the staff training plan for existing and new employees.

- Keep records in which the rationale for particular housing placements is recorded.
- During orientation, discuss with refugees their housing-related rights relating to disabilities, reasonable accommodations, and other forms of discrimination such that refugees can seek recourse when/if landlords refuse to make required changes.

Reminders

The reminders found below may be helpful in circumstances in which resettlement agencies discuss housing options with resettled refugees:

- Do not ask refugees whether they would like to be housed near persons from their country of origin.
- Do not ask refugees whether they would like to be housed near persons of their same religion.
- Do not ask refugees whether they would like to be housed near a mosque, synagogue or other place of worship.
- Do not ask refugees whether they would like to be housed near restaurants, grocery stores, etc. that serve/provide types of food generally associated with a particular protected class.
- Do not ask refugees whether they would like to be housed near persons that speak the same language.

Lawrence Bartlett, Director, Office of Admissions



CHECK YOUR PRIVILEGE: NATIONAL ORIGIN

Fair and healthy housing should be accessible to everyone. Unfortunately, while some are unfairly discriminated against, others experience housing privilege. Each newsletter, we will feature a Housing Privilege Checklist that can help us put our privileges into perspective. What is a privilege? A privilege is a social status that allows access to certain rights or benefits based on factors beyond our control. These factors include—but are not limited to—race, national origin, citizenship status, sex/gender, ability, and class. Though these factors are beyond our control it is still our responsibility to be aware of our privileges so that we do not unintentionally perpetuate issues like housing discrimination. This issue's checklist explores housing privilege associated with national origin. In the United States, looking for a new home as a person of color presents obstacles that those of European descent do not usually experience.

1. I can easily converse with my housing provider, landlord, or property manager. I do not require an interpreter.

2. I can easily understand legal documents such as a lease, and I can expect for it to be in my primary language.

3. I can read street signs and other important information to help me move around my neighborhood.

4. My landlord speaks my primary language.

5. I have easy access to all the necessary IDs and paperwork needed to gain access to housing.

6. I have never been steered into a different neighborhood by a housing provider, even when I was qualified for the house I wanted to rent or buy.

7. I have never been denied a choice in where I will live, or what living situation is right for my family.

8. The food that I grew up eating is easy to access in my neighborhood or city. I do not have to find a “specialty” foods store to cook the food I am accustomed to.

9. I have never been told by my neighbor or housing provider to stop cooking certain foods because of its smell.

10. Because of my accent, I have never been hung up on when inquiring about a rental, sale or loan.

11. I have never been told,

"Speak English."

12. I have never been told that I would be more comfortable living with "my people."

13. I can shop without feeling harassed or followed.

14. My neighbors in my community will be at least neutral or pleasant to me.

15. When I pay with check/credit, my national origin does not affect others' perception of my financial reliability.

16. When I see ads for rentals or homes to purchase, I see pictures of people who like me.

17. When I see a police car in my neighborhood, I feel safe as the police are here to protect me.

18. I am not told by a housing provider a property is no longer available when I want to rent or buy.

19. I have access to transportation, green space, quality health care and food, banks in my neighborhood.

20. I can find people of different national origins in my neighborhood schools and businesses.

Written by *Suzahn Ebrahimian*