



10 Activities to Recognize April as Fair Housing Month

April is Fair Housing Month. Congress passed the Fair Housing Act in April 1968 immediately following Dr. King's assassination. Amended in 1988, the Act guarantees equal housing opportunities for all people and makes it illegal to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, family status or disability. Massachusetts state law adds other protections, including people using housing subsidies.

Take advantage of this opportunity to sponsor a community forum or other educational event to raise awareness about the continued presence of housing discrimination and the benefits of living in an inclusive community.

1. Host a forum on "We Don't Feel Welcome Here" and/or "More than Money" – invite the authors of these two studies to come and discuss their findings about residential segregation and perceptions of discrimination in Greater Boston.
2. Sponsor the viewing of Race: the Power of an Illusion, a PBS Series that traces the historic roots of discrimination. The entire series is three hours long and the last episode called "The House We Live In" has a 30 minute section that focuses on segregation and discrimination in housing. Follow the viewing with a guided discussion on how these issues impact your community today.
3. Invite Community Change or City-Wide Dialogues to facilitate a conversation in your community about the sometimes-taboo subjects of race and ethnicity and to help design strategies to create a more welcoming community.
4. Reach out to the local schools:
 - Sponsor storybook reading in kindergarten classes of "When Chocolate Milk Moved In" by Ken Harvey or other books about living in a multicultural community
 - Organize an art contest for the creation of a fair housing month poster with the winner's highlighted in city hall, on your community website and in other locations
 - Partner with a technology class at the high school to create a short advertisement or spotlight on the issue to be aired on community access television
5. Include a flyer about fair housing in the water bill and send it to every household in your community.
6. Tap into local media:
 - Submit editorials and/or letters to the editor to your local newspaper
 - Add a link on the town website to the FHCGB website and other resources
 - Sponsor advertisements and programs on public access television
7. Organize a letter writing campaign to your legislators and/or local government about the need to fund and support fair housing programs.
8. Organize a tester recruitment event – The FHCGB is always in need of volunteer testers from all backgrounds to help document instances of housing discrimination.
9. Sponsor trainings for realtors and bankers, home buyers/home seekers, landlords, Housing Authority and other city/town employees to educate them on their fair housing rights and responsibilities.
10. Raise and donate funds for the Fair Housing Center to help support education and programming.

For a more detailed tool kit to create any of these events, contact Aviva Rothman-Shore at the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston.

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The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston works to eliminate housing discrimination and promote open communities throughout the region.

April is one time of year when people of many faiths reflect on themes of freedom and renewal both as individuals and as a community. Fair housing is intrinsically linked to an individual's freedom to choose a place to live as well as to a community's commitment to welcoming a diversity of people. Use one of the opportunities listed on the other side of this paper to educate and raise awareness about fair housing in your community. Consider using the questions below to put that work in a faith context.

- What does your faith tradition say about our obligation to create equitable communities? To treat people fairly?
- How does your faith inform your understanding of freedom? Of equality? What action does your faith call you to take on these issues?
- What are the sacred texts in your faith that support this commitment to justice and equality? How can you use them to guide your call to action?