

PHI



ENIXX

2024

**Designing and Launching
Equity-Focused Initiatives**

Speakers

DISCUSSION LEADER

Cat Goughnour, Assistant Secretary of Just Communities | Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

SPEAKERS

Caroline Iosso, Senior Program Associate | Vera Institute of Justice

Nashika Stanbro, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director | Washington State Housing Finance Commission

Steve Walker, Executive Director | Washington State Housing Finance Commission

Caty Waterman, Deputy Director, Multifamily Administration and Initiatives | Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development



WASHINGTON STATE
HOUSING FINANCE
COMMISSION

Racial Equity Strategic Plan - RESP

Steve Walker, Executive Director

Nashika Stanbro, DEI Director



RJET Racial Justice and Equity Team

RESP Racial Equity Strategic Plan

MVV Mission, Vision, and Values

DEI Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



1. Starting at Zero
2. Racial Justice Equity Team (RJET)
3. RESP Focus Areas & Goals
4. Major Takeaways

Why we started

- Before: “Colorblind”
- Make wrongs right

Who was involved?

- Staff
- Leadership
- Consultants

Where we decided to go

- Formation of the Racial Justice and Equity Team (RJET)
- Development and commitment to a Racial Equity Strategic Plan (RESP)
- The addition of a DEI Director
- Revision and commitment to new Mission, Vision, and Values



Racial Justice Equity Team

RJET Subsequent Outcomes



WASHINGTON STATE
HOUSING FINANCE
COMMISSION

Collaboration
with Exec.
Director

Safe Space
Principles

Racial Equity
Values

Policy
Workgroups

Leadership
Training
& Coaching

DEI Director

RESP
Consultant
Hire

RESP Consultant
selection process



- Leadership **does** need to set the tone with a strong commitment
- Leadership **doesn't** need to be perfect – just willing to be vulnerable, brave and humble
- Creating trust for difficult conversations is fundamental – and takes time
- Professional support gets you further
- Exercise grace, patience and support of BIPOC staff



Five **Internal** Focus Areas:

- **Culture & Restorative Healing**
- **Leadership Development**
- **Recruit DEI Administrator**
- **Policy Revision**
- **Data Gathering**

Three **External** Focus Areas:

- **Resource Accessibility**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Communications**

RESP as a Vehicle for Change



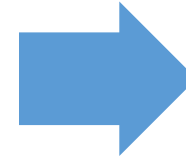
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Call to
Action

- Inside-Outside Momentum
- Community Activists

Shift in
Priorities

Production-based



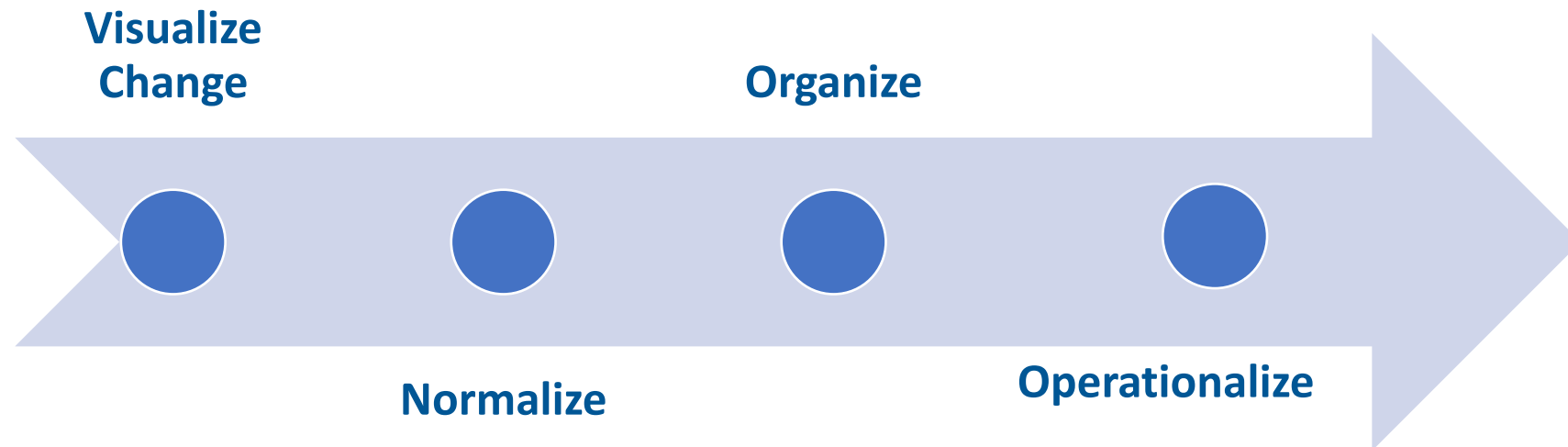
Values & Relationship-
based

New
Spheres of
Work:

- Community Engagement
- Resource Accessibility

Lessons Learned

- Ambition and Urgency
- Pace of Progress
- Sustainable and Strategic DEI Principles
- Operationalizing to Break Down Silos



Questions?

Contact:

Nashika Stanbro, DEI Director

nashika.standbro@wshfc.org

Vera



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Opening Doors to Affordable Housing: HFA and Non-Profit Collaboration to Expand Housing Access for People with Conviction Histories

Caroline Iosso, Vera Institute of Justice,
Senior Program Associate

Caty Waterman, Maryland Department of
Housing and Community Development,
Deputy Director (Multifamily
Administration and Initiative)

Housing is a Human Right

A person's conviction history should never be a barrier to housing.



The cycle between incarceration and housing insecurity

10 X

Formerly incarcerated people are almost 10 times more likely to be unhoused than the general public.

11 X

Unhoused people are 11 times more likely to have encounters with law enforcement.

Housing, public safety, and racial justice

- Housing promotes **public safety** and **lowers recidivism**.
- Conviction history is not a good predictor of **housing success**.
- Criminal background checks **increase racial disparities** in housing access.

Maryland Landscape

- **22 percent** of adults in Maryland have an arrest or conviction history.
- **70,500** men and **16,000** women were released from Maryland state jails and prisons in 2019 alone.
- Black Marylanders are incarcerated at a rate **5.3 times higher** than white Marylanders.

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Motivating factors:

- No set standards for tenant selection or screening beyond affirmatively furthering fair housing requirements
- Change in leadership at the gubernatorial and departmental level
- Lack of engagement from justice-involved community
- Concerns about barriers to voucher holders or applicants for subsidized LIHTC units

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Goals for engagement:

- Increase understanding of the reentry housing landscape
- Build partnerships with reentry agencies/organizations
- Learn best practices for reducing barriers to persons with conviction histories

Vera's Technical Assistance Model

- **Engaging stakeholders:** Bridge between HFA and the communities they serve
- **Emphasizing equity:** Ensuring that the perspectives and needs of people with lived experiences are heard by the HFA
- Working with HFA to **recommend policy changes:** Analysis of HFA policies and areas for improvement
- Providing **support throughout implementation:** Continued public education and community engagement, data analysis, research

DHCD Policy Changes

Policy changes will apply to all DHCD-funded multi-family housing, including existing housing.

- Codified in a policy memo and will be directly referenced in the QAP and our LIHTC compliance guide

Changes:

- Requires owners to submit tenant selection policy to DHCD
- Outlines required criteria for inclusive tenant selection policy:
 - Individual assessment, with sample worksheet.
 - Increased requirements for communication (and documentation) between applicant and owner/property manager, particularly around denials.
- Suggestions on credit and eviction history policies in line with April 2024 HUD Guidance

DHCD Policy Changes

Timeline:

- Policy Memo issued 8/5/24
- Tenant Selection Plans for portfolio projects due 1/1/25

Pushback from Developers:

- Timeline for implementation
- Opposed DHCD being involved in individual tenant selection decisions
- Complaints about individualized assessment process

Vera Now Accepting Applications

Find the application on our website: vera.org/investing-in-communities/opening-doors-to-housing-initiative

Submit via email to openingdoors@vera.org

Timeline:

October 1, 2024: Applications open

December 1, 2024: Submission deadline

December 20, 2024: Completion of semi-finalist review

January 15, 2025: Notification of selected proposals.





MD DHCD JUST COMMUNITIES

Designing and Launching Equity-Focused Initiatives

Cat Goughnour,

Assistant Secretary, Just Communities

Tuesday, October 01, 2024

D H C D O P E R A T I N G P R I N C I P L E S

We are an agency committed to...

1. Defending the rights, freedoms, and dignity of all Marylanders.
2. Rebuilding to meet the needs of residents.
3. Prioritizing evidence and continuous improvement.
4. Governing through partnership.
5. Leveraging capital of all kinds.

D H C D T O P P R I O R I T I E S

Leave no one behind by...

1. Expanding and preserving affordable housing.
2. Providing shelter for all.
3. Build lovable communities.
4. Right the wrongs of the past.

Historic Progress on Housing

INPUTS



126

SUPPORTERS TESTIFYING



51

COMMITTEE, SUBCOMMITTEE & WORK GROUP MEETINGS



1,450

YES VOTES

OUTCOMES



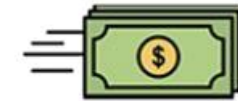
A NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ENTITY



THE FIRST EVER OFFICE OF TENANT AND LANDLORD AFFAIRS



A **\$361 MILLION** CAPITAL BUDGET THAT MULTIPLIES INVESTMENT IN HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



INCENTIVES TO INCREASE DEVELOPMENT DENSITY WHERE WE WANT IT



REQUIRES LANDLORDS TO OFFER RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL TO CERTAIN TENANTS



JUST COMMUNITY DESIGNATION TO TARGET INVESTMENT IN DISINVESTED AREAS



INCREASE IN EVICTION FILING FEE FROM **\$15** TO **\$50**



REDUCTION IN THE ALLOWABLE SECURITY DEPOSIT TO ONE MONTH'S RENT



Just Communities **SB 308, HB 241**

This will create a new geographic data layer, similar to Priority Funding Areas and Sustainable Communities, to target state investment. This Just Community data layer will create a proactive approach to target state investments to help reverse decades of disinvestment and exclusionary policies.

A potential Just Community must have past and current economic and housing trends that demonstrate a need for reinvestment in the area in combination with other metrics like redlining, imprisonment rates, and environmental hazards tracked by the Division of Just Communities.

The creation of the Just Communities designation and division marks a new and focused effort by DHCD and the State of Maryland to remedy and reverse these policies, creating another mechanism to open pathways to opportunity in communities that have been previously denied them, and ensuring that no Marylander is left behind.

Join the Maryland Just Communities Journey



Just Communities



The Division of Just Communities works to build and strengthen partnerships in communities with economic and housing trends that demonstrate a need for reinvestment, in combination with other metrics like redlining, imprisonment rates, and environmental hazards. Under the leadership of Assistant Secretary Cat Goughnour, the creation of the Division of Just Communities marks a new and focused effort by DHCD and the State of Maryland to help reverse decades of disinvestment and exclusionary policies, opening pathways to opportunity in affected, minoritized communities that have been previously denied them and ensuring that no Marylander is left behind.



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