

Equity Challenge Day 9: Housing Inequity in Your Own Backyard

Liz Keegan of the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan recently held an educational session on housing discrimination. Here is some of the important information she shared:

- Fair Housing Law is the right of individuals to obtain housing of their choice free from discrimination based on protected classes under federal, state and local fair housing law.
- People living just a few blocks apart may have vastly different opportunities to live a long life in part because of their neighborhood.

Unfortunately, significant gaps in life expectancy persist across many United States cities, towns, ZIP codes and neighborhoods. The latest estimates of life expectancy reveal differences down to the census tract level. Use the calculator to explore how life expectancy in America compares with life expectancy in your area, and resources to help everyone live a longer, healthier life. Click here: [Where You Live Effects How Long You Live](#).

Today's Challenge

Option 1: The [Lakeshore Housing Alliance](#) annually conducts a survey of people experiencing literal homelessness in Ottawa County. Review the [2020 Ottawa County Point in Time Count](#) data to learn about the demographic breakdown of people experiencing homelessness in our county on that one day in January 2020.

Option 2: Read the [2018 Ottawa County Needs Assessment](#) to learn more about what is considered affordable housing and what it looks like in our county. You will also learn about the gaps in housing.

Option 3: Listen to Patrick Moran, President of Greater Ottawa County United Way talk about [Ottawa Housing Next](#), a collective impact effort to address the need for affordable housing in Ottawa County. (NOTE: This video is from the formative years of Housing Next. See the current work the Housing Next Coalition does [here](#).)

Option 4: Watch this 5-minute [video from the Urban Institute](#) exposing how housing discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities occurs today. Check out the [Fair Housing Center of West Michigan](#) for more information about housing discrimination.

Option 5: Journal on your own experiences of home and property. Did your parents own a home or land? How did they acquire it? If not on a reservation, how did the land transition from Indigenous stewardship to your family? Was the community racially integrated or segregated? How did it end up that way? How have property values and demographics in that community changed over time? How does this history of land ownership affect your economic situation?