

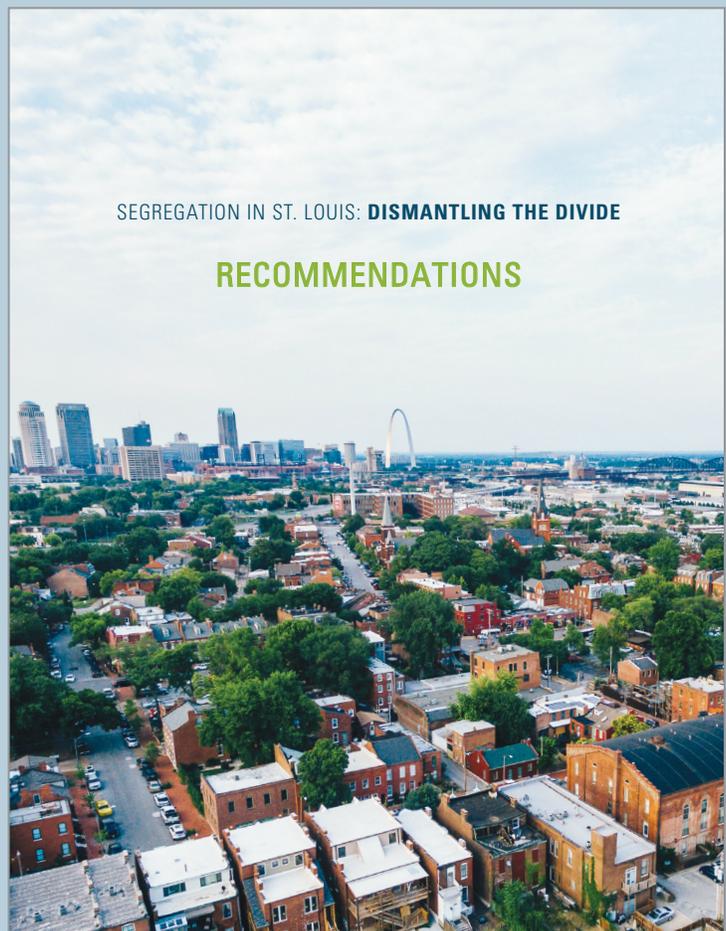
Recommendations for St. Louis County Municipal Leaders

How can municipalities start to dismantle the divide?

This document offers action steps that municipal officials and local leaders can take to support housing equity in your communities. These steps emerged from recommendations contained in the April 2018 report, *Segregation in St. Louis: Dismantling the Divide*. To find more in-depth coverage of these topics, refer to the pages in the report listed with the issue area.

Studies indicate that the St. Louis region remains among the 10 most segregated metropolitan areas in the country.¹ Our region lives with a legacy of more than a century of policies and practices that contributed to our segregation, but it is a legacy we can overcome.

Segregation contributes to inequities in health, wealth accumulation, job opportunities, home values, and educational attainment and has serious consequences for the economic viability and social cohesion of our region.^{2,3} Just as conscious policies and practices created our segregated communities, conscious effort can dismantle our divides.



Source of Income Protection Legislation



Eliminate housing discrimination based on source of income in St. Louis County. (Report pg. 100)

Background

Source of income anti-discrimination laws forbid property owners and managers from rejecting rental applications from applicants based on their source of income, including housing subsidies (e.g., vouchers) or other supports. Once enacted, municipalities must have a dedicated entity responsible for enforcing the source of income anti-discrimination law.

Regional Partners

- ArchCity Defenders
- Ascend STL
- Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council (EHOC)

Resources

- Read more about local opportunities to expand housing choice at: <http://bit.ly/ExpandHousingChoice>.
- A 2011 report prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development by Lance Freeman of Columbia University found greater utilization of housing choice vouchers in areas with source of income protections in place. Read the report at <http://bit.ly/FreemanReport>.
- Experts in the field recommend modeling legislation after Seattle's source of income law. Refer to Seattle's municipal code at: <http://bit.ly/SeattleMunicipalCode>.



Nuisance & Crime-free Ordinances

ACTION

Protect tenants by eliminating unfair local nuisance ordinances, which disproportionately put domestic violence survivors and people of color in low-income and transitional neighborhoods at greater risk for eviction, homelessness, and poverty. (Report pgs. 18 & 103)

Background

Nuisance ordinances enact penalties against property owners whose tenants are deemed public nuisances, often resulting in the property owner evicting the tenant. The criteria used to determine whether a property is a public nuisance is largely based on the number of requests for police services to the household address. This law becomes problematic for domestic abuse survivors and people with disabilities who often must call for police services, which increases their risk of eviction and homelessness.⁴ Nuisance ordinances are used disproportionately against African American households. A recent analysis of one St. Louis County municipality found that over a 5 year period nearly 55% of nuisance violation citations were given to African American households, even though only 17% of its population was African American.⁵

Regional Partners

- ArchCity Defenders
- Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council (EHOC)
- American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri



Resources

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued legal guidance on local nuisance ordinances in 2016. The document warned of their potential to discriminate against domestic violence survivors and others in need of emergency services in violation of the Fair Housing Act. Read more at <http://bit.ly/HUDFairHousingGuidelines>.
- Maplewood recently altered its ordinance to protect domestic violence survivors and other victims of crimes. Read more at <http://bit.ly/MaplewoodExample>.
- The St. Louis Public Radio podcast “We Live Here” continues to focus on nuisance ordinances in its 2018 season. Listen to the podcast at: www.welivehere.show/.
- Read additional policy suggestions in the Center for Social Development’s brief Evicting Victims: Reforming St. Louis’s Nuisance Ordinance for Survivors of Domestic Violence at: <http://bit.ly/StLouisNuisanceOrdinance>.

Tenant Protections

ACTIONS

Create a Tenant Bill of Rights that details tenant rights in the areas of living conditions, rent increases, eviction processes, and more. The bill of rights must be enforceable by a governmental office.

Create or support eviction defense programs to help families in crisis resolve housing matters before eviction hearings. (Report pg. 102)

Enforce property maintenance codes on rental property owners or property management companies that are disinvesting in their properties.

Background

- In 2016, 4,821 St. Louis County residents faced eviction.⁶ Often times victims of eviction don't have legal counsel to defend themselves in court. An eviction defense program would provide legal counsel to defendants throughout the eviction process.
- Property owners and property management companies who lease affordable housing units may allow their properties to fall into disrepair. This leaves low- to moderate-income families at risk for safety and health concerns. Adding resources to enforce property maintenance codes for rental units is essential to ensuring the health and safety of families.

Regional Partners

- Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council (EHOC)
- Arch City Defenders

Resources

- Read Washington D.C.'s tenant bill of rights at: <http://bit.ly/DCtenantbillofrights>.
- An analysis by the Kansas City Eviction Project determined the effects of legal representation during eviction hearings. Read the analysis at: <http://bit.ly/KansasCityEvictionProject>.



Affordable Housing Trust Fund

ACTION

Create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund for St. Louis County. (Report pgs. 72 & 98)

Background

- An Affordable Housing Trust Fund provides a dedicated source of funding for a region, city, or municipality's affordable housing efforts. The funds are typically allocated under legislative parameters and should target housing needs that are most critical.⁷
- In June 2018, St. Louis County created an Affordable Housing Trust Fund Task Force to explore the possibility of creating an Affordable Housing Trust Fund in St. Louis County. Municipal leaders who want to advance affordable housing throughout St. Louis County should support this effort.
- In addition to housing trust funds, governments can support affordable housing efforts and services that keep people in their homes by dedicating other budget funding to affordable housing.

Regional Partner

- St. Louis County Affordable Housing Trust Fund Task Force

Resources

- Learn more about the benefits of Affordable Housing Trust Funds from the city's AHTF coalition, a local advocacy group at: <http://bit.ly/AHTFCoalition>.
- Learn more about St. Louis County's AHTF Task Force at: <http://bit.ly/STLCountyAHTFTaskForce>.
- Read more about St. Louis City's AHTF at: <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/affordable-housing/>.
- Learn more about national and state-level Housing Trust Funds at: <http://bit.ly/NationalHTF>.
- The Frameworks Institute conducted research on framing affordable housing conversations in ways that help garner support. Read their report at: <http://bit.ly/FrameworksInstitute>.



Mobility

ACTIONS

Increase affordable housing options in areas of opportunity, which are defined as neighborhoods in St. Louis County where 10% or less of the families live in poverty and 10% or less of the housing units in the neighborhood are subsidized. (Report pgs. 56, 64-85 & 100)

Work with developers to build mixed-income housing in areas of high opportunity, encourage rental property owners in high opportunity areas to accept Housing Choice Vouchers (previously known as Section 8 vouchers), and change zoning laws to include additional multifamily housing in order to improve affordable housing options.

Background

- In St. Louis County 44% of renters are cost burdened when it comes to housing,⁸ meaning they spend 30% or more of their income on housing.⁹
- A national study found that children of low-income families who were offered a housing voucher to move to a low-poverty neighborhood that had higher rates of upward mobility earn significantly more in adulthood.¹⁰

Regional Partner

- Ascend STL



Resources

- The Opportunity Atlas is a national tool to help uncover census tracts that provide the best opportunity for economic mobility for low-income children. <https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>
- A housing mobility toolkit from The Urban Institute provides further resources at <http://bit.ly/HousingMobilityToolkit>.
- Housing mobility can greatly improve health. See this PBS News Hour segment featuring St. Louis at <http://bit.ly/HousingMobilityandHealth>.
- The 2017 Year End Report from Ascend STL, St. Louis' mobility program, offers lessons learned at: <http://bit.ly/MobilityConnection2017Report>.
- Additional resources on housing mobility from the Poverty & Race Research Action Council are located at <http://bit.ly/PRRACHousingMobility>.

Inclusionary Zoning

ACTIONS

Develop policies that require a given share of new construction to be affordable to people with low-to-moderate incomes. (Report pgs. 26-47)

Evaluate your municipality's zoning practices to determine which practices are exclusionary. Consult the "Percentage Detached Single Family Home" map (Report pg. 34), the "County Equivalent Zoning in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County" map (Report pg. 35), and the "Index of Exclusivity" map (Report pg. 67) to see how your municipality compares to others in the region.

Background

- Creating inclusionary zoning legislation that requires a portion of new rental unit construction to remain affordable for low-to-moderate income residents is a low-cost solution for governments requiring little or no public subsidies.¹¹
- Inclusionary zoning in the form of rezoning areas for multi-family units and smaller lot sizes ensures that there is an ample supply of affordable housing units to decrease segregation and foster inclusion in communities.

Resources

- Team TIF St. Louis provides additional resources related to inclusionary zoning, including model ordinances at <http://bit.ly/OrdinanceModels>.
- Explore options for crafting an inclusionary zoning policy at: <http://bit.ly/InclusionaryZoningPolicy>.



As you work for housing equity in St. Louis County, it is important to involve people of all walks of life in the communities you serve. Their voices, stories, and participation help construct more equitable communities.

Partner Groups

- ArchCity Defenders
<http://www.archcitydefenders.org/>
- Ascend STL
<https://www.ascendstl.org/>
- Community Builders Network
<http://www.communitybuildersstl.org/>
- Empower Missouri
<https://empowermissouri.org/>
- Equitable St. Louis
<https://www.equitablestlouis.org/>
- Health Equity Works
<https://healthequityworks.wustl.edu/>
- Invest STL
<http://investl.org/>
- St. Louis Equal Housing and Community Reinvestment Alliance (SLEHCRA)
<https://www.slehcra.org/>
- Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council (EHOC)
<http://ehocstl.org/>
- Team TIF
<http://www.teamtifstl.com/>
- Washington University in St. Louis
<https://wustl.edu/>

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10. Cambria, Nancy. Presenting a breakthrough new tool to examine poverty and upward mobility in America. Health Equity Works blog. <https://healthequityworks.wustl.edu/presenting-a-new-tool-to-examine-poverty-and-upward-mobility-in-america/>. Accessed on October 11, 2018.
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