



## Facilitation Guide

# Race & Class in Our Built Infrastructure

## Racial Segregation in American Cities

This facilitation guide uses historical perspectives to ensure that discussions about race, class, and opportunity are held in an honest context – away from guilt and blame. Rather, we will understand the roles federal, state, and local governments have played in racially segregating metropolitan cities across the United States, and the ways this history still haunts our communities. We hope that through conversation, we can see and name the various ways historical residential segregation has impacted social and environmental landscapes and experiences in the present-day, and the various ways we are individually and collectively affected.

### Materials Needed

#### The Weight of Redlining Exhibit Materials

- [“To Equitably Connect Housing and Economic Mobility for Black Americans, Tackle Structural Racism”](#) Housing Matters article (print)
- [“Segregation and School Funding”](#) Shaker Institute article (print)
- [“In U.S. Cities, The Health Effects Of Past Housing Discrimination Are Plain To See”](#)
- [“Redlining means 45 million Americans are breathing dirtier air, 50 years after it ended”](#) The Washington Post article (print)
- [“Building Justice: How Segregation Enables Over-Policing of Communities of Color”](#) City Limits article (print)

#### Additional Materials

- Computer(s) or iPad(s)
- [A Tale of Two Neighborhoods in Minneapolis](#) (print)
- CEED’s Metro Cities Booklet [pending]
- Sticky notes

- Paper
- Cardboard squares
- Butcher paper
- Markers
- Paint
- Magazines
- Scissors

## Facilitation Steps

### A. Introduction: Who are we? Who's all here (name/neighborhood)? Goals for today [10 min]

### B. What does a healthy neighborhood look like? [20 min]

1. Pass out a paper and marker to all participants. Encourage them to visualize their neighborhood and draw their block; instruct them to be as detailed as possible, including types of homes lining their block, potholes on their street, heavy traffic flows at a nearby corner, bus stops, etc. Next, have them include additional sites that may be in a one mile radius of their home on the outskirts of the paper. Sites should include areas of social and environmental burden (e.g industrial sites, highways, police-presence) and areas of social and environmental resilience (e.g schools, parks, mosques, libraries).
2. Explain that their neighborhood drawings are to help visualize social and environmental impacts that may affect the overall health of their neighborhoods. Allow ~10 minutes for drawing and pondering.
3. Once participants have finished their neighborhood drawings, prompt them to share what areas of social and/or environmental burdens and resilience can be found near them, it is imperative to also consider racial and ethnic demographics in this discussion:
  - a. What specific social concerns do you have for your neighborhood?
  - b. What specific environmental concerns do you have for your neighborhood?
  - c. Does your neighborhood experience disproportionate social or environmental burdens? (i.e are there more than one systemic and/or environmental concern you have for your neighborhood?)
  - d. What does a healthy, thriving neighborhood look like to you?
  - e. What areas make your neighborhood great?
  - f. Why do you think your neighborhood looks the way it does?

### C. A systemic design [20 min]

1. Pass out [A Tale of Two Neighborhoods in Minneapolis](#)<sup>1</sup> and/or pull up the infographic on the projector.

<sup>1</sup> This example can be used in any region; not specific to only using in Minneapolis, MN. The story illustrated in this infographic can transcend cities and be used as a general example of environmental racism and classism anywhere.

2. Have participants number off 1 through 2 (this identifies which neighborhoods they will be “living in” for the activity). Once everyone has their number, have all the “1’s” group together, and the “2’s” group together.
3. Go down the line of visuals and information presented on A Tale of Two Neighborhoods. Have each group describe their “neighborhood” section by section. Define vocabulary and illustrate examples as needed to enhance understanding and impact. Ask clarifying questions throughout:
  - a. What does this mean?
  - b. Why do you believe these neighboring areas' experiences are so different?
  - c. Which neighborhoods in Minneapolis<sup>2</sup> do you think A Tale of Two Neighborhoods depicts?
  - d. What other neighborhoods/cities across the US could be used as polarizing examples like this?
4. Have participants return to their original seats. Begin discussion and reflection on A Tale of Two Neighborhoods and how it illustrates systemic racism.
  - a. What is systemic racism?
  - b. What racist historic systems, laws, or policies do you know of?
  - c. How do these systems, laws, or policies perpetuate the unfair treatment of communities of color?

## Systemic Racism

Today’s racial inequalities persist due to the deeply rooted, unfair and racist systems that carry the legacy of former practices, policies, and laws that now sustain racial discrimination. Systemic racism *systematically* permeates whole systems, such as: political, legal, health care, school, and economic to put Black, Indigenous, and communities of color at a disadvantage in society. Systemic racism can usually be traced to deliberate acts and rules of discrimination in the past (such as residential segregation, or redlining, in the 1930’s); and once in place, systemic racism is continuous and constant, with damaging effects on communities years, even decades and centuries after the discriminatory rules are no longer in effect.

### D. Urban infrastructure & neighborhood zoning [20 min]

1. Have participants grab a chair and make a large group circle.
2. Explain what redlining is and it’s lingering systemic impacts on our lives:

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<sup>2</sup> Change to your city.

## Segregated Neighborhoods Across America

Our zip-codes play a significant role in the economic and academic opportunities we receive as well as the state of our health and overall safety. Social measures, such as economic mobility, homeownership rates, and quality of schools, as well as environmental measures such as air quality, proximity to highways, and neighborhood safety and police-presence, all contribute to our overall quality of life; and these factors vary disproportionately among neighborhoods. In the United States, communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income communities are more likely to have economic and academic disadvantages and disinvestment, as well as poorer air quality, live near industrial facilities, and be heavily over-policed. These disparities are not a failure of policy, but are a direct result of it.

Redlining began in the 1930s, when neighborhoods were graded by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), based on their perceived risk for home loan lending. Neighborhoods were graded in four categories: 1) Type A (best); Type B (still desirable); Type C (definitely declining), and Type D (hazardous). Neighborhoods classified as "hazardous" were outlined in red on maps and were denied access to mortgages and other economic opportunities. These neighborhoods were often inner-city areas with majority Black and immigrant communities. Meanwhile, new-build suburban communities were being built and subsidized by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), with the requirement that none of the homes be sold to Black residents in an effort to avoid "mixing" the neighborhood composition. As a result, neighborhoods became segregated by race and class. This type of structural design deeply alters what is possible for communities in the decades that follow.

3. Take a moment to display "[Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America](#)". This is an interactive site that houses records of redlining practices dating back to the 1930s.
4. Open the map so that it shows the entire country. As a large group, interact with the map, observing and reviewing different regions, states, and cities; be sure to click into specific neighborhood designations (best, still desirable, definitely declining, and hazardous) to read short descriptions and characteristics of the areas.
5. Prompt participants to select regions, states, and cities that they would like to review and why they are interested in that specific area.

### E. The Weight of Redlining Exhibition [30 min]

1. To demonstrate the connections between the many systemic problems Black, Indigenous, and communities of color face, participants will participate in the Weight of Redlining Exhibition in an effort to trace social symptoms back to deeper, historical causes.
2. Set up five stations. At each of the stations, place one of the printed texts (or have the texts pulled up on computers/iPads): "[In U.S. Cities, The Health Effects Of Past Housing Discrimination Are Plain To See](#)", "[Segregation and School Funding](#)", "[To Equitably Connect Housing and Economic Mobility for Black Americans, Tackle Structural Racism](#)", "[Redlining means 45 million Americans are breathing dirtier air, 50 years after it ended](#)", and "[Building](#)

[Justice: How Segregation Enables Over-Policing of Communities of Color](#)

- a. Station #1 - Economic Impacts: "[To Equitably Connect Housing and Economic Mobility for Black Americans. Tackle Structural Racism](#)"
  - b. Station #2 - Education Impacts: "[Segregation and School Funding](#)"
  - c. Station #3 - Environmental Impacts: "[Redlining means 45 million Americans are breathing dirtier air, 50 years after it ended](#)"
  - d. Station #4 - Health Impacts: "[In U.S. Cities, The Health Effects Of Past Housing Discrimination Are Plain To See](#)"
  - e. Station #5 - Safety Impacts: "[Building Justice: How Segregation Enables Over-Policing of Communities of Color](#)"
3. Assign participants to each station in pairs or small groups. Encourage them to read or play with the material at their station. Allow ~15 minutes for them to read and ponder at their station; encourage conversation and experience-sharing.
  4. Give participants a couple of minutes to summarize their resources for the larger group.
  5. Going station by station, have participants share their learnings; guide the conversation to solidify the importance of each resource and how they intersect with the others, through leading questions:
    - a. How do you feel after realizing the many deep impacts redlining has had on our neighborhoods?
    - b. Which social or environmental impacts do you notice in your everyday life?
    - c. What is needed to make things right for our communities?

## **F. Intersecting impacts of redlining [20 min]**

1. To best understand our experiences today, we have to understand the ways history has shaped the present. Systemic challenges today, like inequalities in housing, education, and health are far from separate issues; these challenges are woven deep into our history through policies and practices. Encourage participants to share aloud what they believe to be high level (systemic) impacts of redlining, remind them to reflect on themes discussed in The Weight of Redlining Exhibition (e.g higher poverty rates; reduced school funding; incarceration rates).
2. As participants share, choose one impact. Together, talk through the domino effect of these high level impacts, and how they web into to various other social or environmental impacts mentioned (e.g Reduced school funding in my high school → out-of-date texts, fewer computers/tablets, high staff turnover → higher dropout rates → lower test scores → less access to AP/IB classes → barrier to higher education → directed to low-wage jobs; this is an example of how education and poverty rates are webbed together)
3. Pass out a paper and marker to all participants. Instruct them to draw their best web; this web is to help visualize the intersections among the various systemic challenges brought forth by redlining – and how high level themes translate into local instances.
4. On the outer rings of the web, have participants write out at least 2 high level themes (e.g education and poverty rates). Instruct them to talk themselves through the domino effect of each high level theme to fill in the smaller rings. As they make their way to the center of the web, remind them to consider the ways each theme may connect to, or lead to another. Allow ~10 minutes for drawing and connecting.
5. Give participants a couple of minutes to summarize their webs for the larger group.

6. Going one by one, have participants share their web. Encourage others to share their views or other connections that stand out to them.
7. Hand out CEED's Metro Cities Booklet [pending] for further reading and learning around the intersecting impacts of redlining on our communities.

### **G. Collective visioning: alternative models [15 min]**

1. While gathered in a large group circle, encourage participants to explore alternative models and processes that address and remedy local impacts of redlining. Facilitate the conversation using guiding questions as needed:
  - a. As a society, how did we get here? (encourage participants to reference learnings from previous activities)
  - b. Why does historical context matter when discussing race, class, and opportunity?
  - c. If we do nothing, what does that mean for where we are going?
  - d. What does it look like for our communities to move beyond the challenging and discriminatory effects of the past?
  - e. How can we collectively push for a different narrative for our communities?

### **H. Our larger ecosystem [30 min]**

1. Pass out markers, paint, magazines, scissors, cardboard squares, and butcher paper to all participants.
2. Explain that we will be creating and designing yard signs, window signs, or advocacy posters for us to plug our ideas and passions into our larger ecosystems (e.g at home, in our dorms). This a creative outlet for anger, confusion, and learnings from today – it also helps to visualize where our passion and momentum lies.

### **I. Reflections & Closing [10 min]**

1. Wrap-up; what did participants learn? What will they be sharing with community members? What remains unanswered?
2. Thank participants for their time and participation; we hope that they learned something new and are energized to continue conversations like today's.