



America Healing Organizations Applaud Release of HUD's New Fair Housing Rule

Contact:

Philip Tegeler
Poverty & Race Research Action Council
202.360.3906
ptegeler@prrac.org

The following statement reflects the views of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's America Healing organizations, a group of civil rights organizations working toward racial equity and racial healing. The organizations include the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, NAACP, National Urban League, National Council of La Raza, Race Forward, Advancement Project, Demos, National Collaborative for Health Equity, National Congress of American Indians, Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, National Council of Asian Pacific Americans and the PICO National Network

The Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) release of the final "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule" is a courageous and necessary step by President Obama and HUD Secretary Julián Castro to move our country past the artificial barriers that have divided us and toward a more inclusive and democratic society.

For too long, our communities have faced disinvestment, segregation and forced displacement, as our schools decline, our businesses leave and our neighborhoods suffer the compounding health impacts of high poverty. These patterns did not happen by accident – they are the product of decades of government and private sector policies that have divided our cities and regions. But all of our families – Black, White, Latino, Asian and Native American – deserve the chance for a good education, a safe neighborhood and access to a good job, regardless of the neighborhood they are born into.

The "AFFH" requirement is technically not new – it has been part of the Fair Housing Act since 1968. But the HUD rule now clarifies what courts have consistently held – that government agencies that receive housing funds must address their own responsibility for segregation and disinvestment. The new rule follows the Supreme Court's bold statement two weeks ago on the Fair Housing Act's goal of "moving the Nation toward a more integrated society" (in the *Inclusive Communities Project v. Texas* case).

HUD's new fair housing rule requires communities to examine their current and past policies and the effects of segregation and lack of access to opportunity. The rule asks communities and regions to come together for honest discussions about race, poverty and government policy, and to chart a path forward toward healing and reconciliation.

The new rule recognizes that "fair housing" means different things in different contexts. In our severely segregated metropolitan areas, it means giving low-income families living in high poverty, disinvested areas a real choice to live in nearby integrated, high opportunity communities. It also forces states and local governments to take moral and legal responsibility for the unequal conditions faced by families in many of our poorest neighborhoods – failing schools, dangerous streets, lack of opportunity and conditions that are hazardous to children's

health. As the rule points out, these unequal conditions are fair housing issues too. And in gentrifying neighborhoods with rising rents and home prices, fair housing means preserving housing opportunities for low-income families of color who have persevered through the difficult years and who choose to stay in the community they call home.

The past several decades have seen our society grow farther apart, even as we have become increasingly diverse as a country. As groups committed to racial justice and racial healing, we support this step that will help bring our communities closer together, break down discriminatory stereotypes and encourage true integration.

Advancement Project, Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, DEMOS, NAACP, National Collaborative for Health Equity, National Congress of American Indians, National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, National Council of La Raza, National Urban League, PICO, Poverty & Race Research Action Council and Race Forward are part of America Healing, a long-term effort of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, working to improve life outcomes for vulnerable children by promoting racial equity and eliminating barriers to opportunity.