

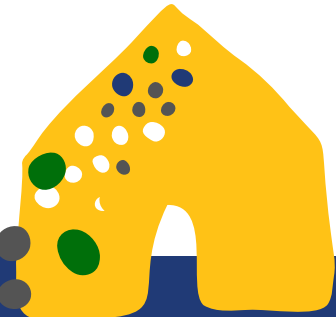
Transformation Talks



Dalio
Education

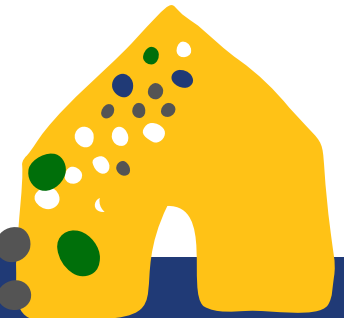


Connecticut
Department of
HOUSING



Transformation Talks

- Margaret Middleton,
Open Communities
Alliance
- Michele Conderino,
Open Doors
- William Nickeo, New
Opportunities





Bridging the Gap Between Frontline and Leadership “A Collective approach to Culture Shift”

Fostering Unity, Trust, and Transparency Across All Roles and Shifts

William A. Nickeo: Housing Navigator

New Opportunities/ New Beginnings

May 21, 2025

Why Communication Matters in a Shelter Setting

- High-stress, high-stakes environment

- Communication = safety + morale + trust

- When it breaks down: client care suffers, morale drops

- When it thrives: stronger outcomes, better teamwork



Shared Mission – One Team, Many Roles

- Unified goal: compassion + safety for clients
- Roles differ, mission stays the same
- Respect across shifts and titles

Staff Expectations

- Professionalism
- Consistency
- Clear reporting & documentation
- Support for peers
- Accountability
- Respectful feedback

Management Expectations

- Transparent decision-making
- Accessible and approachable
- Recognition and coaching
- Equity and fairness
- Conflict resolution support

Working Toward the Same Goal – Across All Shifts

- Strong shift handoffs
- Use of shared logs
- Respect for each shift's challenges
- Cross-shift meetings or updates

Best Practices for Safe, Constructive Communication



- Clear, calm language



- Active listening



- Respect timing/tone



- Use chain of command appropriately



- Document key concerns
-

Creating a Culture of Psychological Safety

What is Psychological Safety?

- A shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.

Why It Matters in Shelter Work:

- Reduces burnout and turnover
- Encourages reporting of safety or client concerns
- Builds trust between staff and leadership
- Increases collaboration and morale

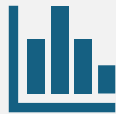
How to Foster It:

- Lead with vulnerability
- Invite feedback regularly
- Respond with empathy, not defensiveness
- Normalize learning from mistakes
- Celebrate honesty and accountability

Speaking Without Fear of Retaliation



- RETALIATION =
SILENCE +
RESENTMENT



- CLEAR REPORTING
SYSTEMS



- ANONYMOUS
OPTIONS



- VISIBLE FOLLOW-
UP AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

Real-Life Scenarios (Activity)



- SHIFT HANDOFF
BREAKDOWN



- FEAR OF SPEAKING
UP



- MANAGER DETECTS
TEAM TENSION



Scenario 1: Shift Handoff Breakdown

Scenario:

During the night shift, a client became agitated and was moved to a different sleeping area. The incident was written in the log, but the morning staff didn't read it before starting their shift. The client was returned to their original spot, leading to another outburst and a safety concern.

Discussion Questions:

- What went wrong in this communication exchange?
- How could the shift handoff process be improved?
- What systems or habits can we implement to ensure smoother transitions?



Scenario 2: Fear of Speaking Up

Scenario:

A frontline staff member notices a pattern of favoritism in shift assignments, but doesn't feel comfortable saying anything. They worry they'll be seen as a complainer or passed over for hours if they speak up.

Discussion Questions:

- How can leadership help create an environment where this staff member feels safe sharing?
- What mechanisms should be in place to report concerns anonymously?
- How can peer support play a role in empowering one another to speak up?



Scenario 3: Manager Detects Team Tension

Scenario:

A manager overhears tension and sarcasm between team members during a team huddle. Productivity is slipping, and staff are avoiding shared tasks. No one has directly voiced a complaint.

Discussion Questions:

- How should the manager address this? Publicly or privately?
- What questions could be asked to surface the root cause of tension?
- What ongoing communication practices could prevent this kind of drift from team unity?

Key Takeaways



- STRONG COMMUNICATION = STRONG TEAM



- RESPECT EVERY ROLE AND SHIFT



- SAFE SPACES BUILD TRUST



- UNIFIED VOICE = BETTER CARE

Questions & Feedback



- What works well here?



- Where can we grow?



- What would you like management to know?

WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Traditional

- Skill building trainings/conferences
- Continued formal education (certification programs, associate's, bachelor's, master's, etc.)

But also....

- The opportunity to be involved in program/system design within organizations
- Town/city strategic planning initiatives
- Other organizations/fields strategic planning initiatives
- The opportunity to supervise interns
- Internal teambuilding activities



WHY IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPORTANT

- Professionalizes service delivery
- Personal professional development for team members
- When developing programs/systems, eliminates unintended consequences
- Creates opportunities for internal promotion
- Eliminates losing quality staff for other opportunities



RESPONSIBILITIES

- If your agency approves/pays for trainings...attend!
 - Be on time, stay for the entire duration, actively participate
 - If it is virtual, be on camera and be engaged
 - Bring the information back to your team and leadership
- If you have ideas, share them, but flesh them out (time, budget, possible revenue streams)





THE FUTURE WORKS HERE: DEVELOPING CULTURE AND LEADERS WHO MAKE AN IMPACT

Michele Conderino

CEO of Open Doors





THANK YOU

Michele Conderino

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Fair Housing and Mobility Rights for Voucher Holders

Presented to CCEH
Annual Training
Institute

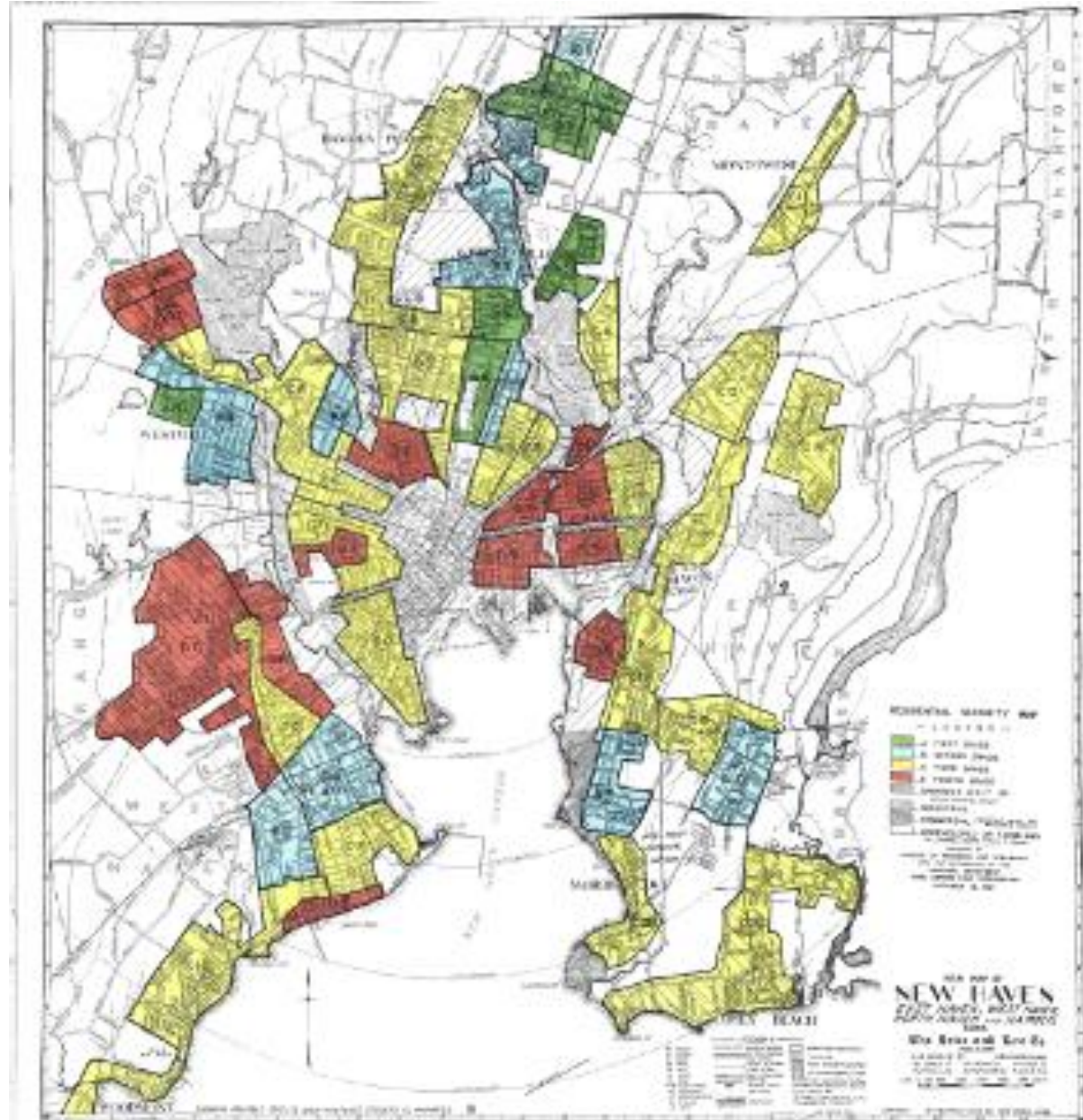
May 2025



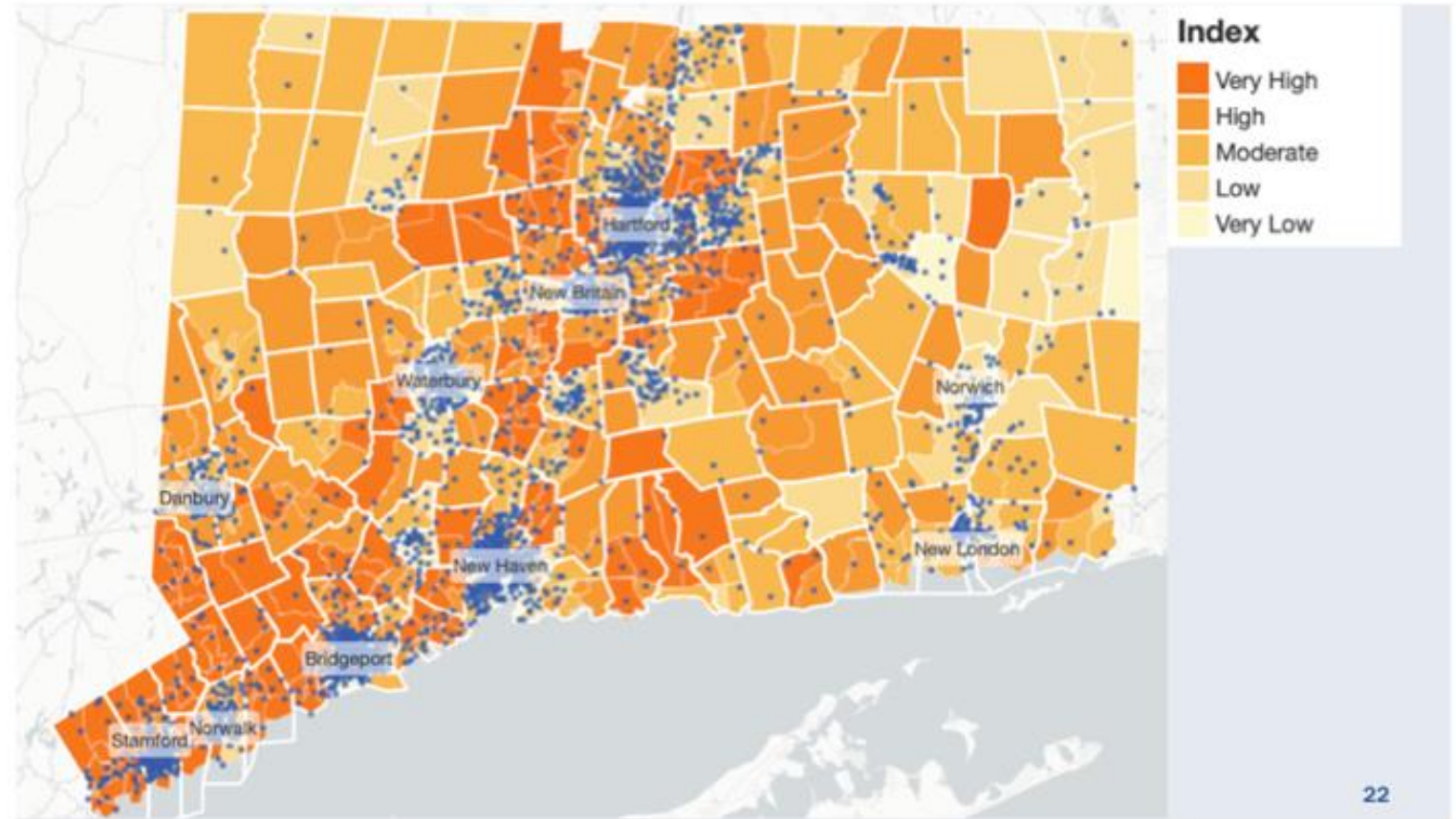
OPEN COMMUNITIES
ALLIANCE

Embracing Diversity to Strengthen Connecticut

Decades of intentionally discriminatory government policy limited the housing options for people of color in CT.



CT remains
one of the
most
segregated
states
today.



Dark orange = structurally over-resourced
Lighter orange = structurally under-resourced
Blue dots= people of color

Mission

A civil rights organization working to undo the history of segregation by breaking down barriers to housing choices and supporting equitable investments and policies in higher poverty areas.

Today's Take Aways:



1. It is illegal to discriminate against someone because they use a housing voucher to pay their rent.
2. Voucher holders can move to a different town and there are resources to help them.
3. HUD tenants who experience violence/abuse can request an emergency transfer under VAWA at any time.

Quick Voucher Basics

Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV or Section 8)

⇒ HUD is the federal agency that funds these vouchers

⇒ In Connecticut, different groups manage these vouchers.

- State of CT (DOH/D'Amelia)
- Housing Authorities (ex: Housing Authority of the City of Hartford)
- Imagineers

⇒ Sometimes there are limits on where you can live in the first year.

⇒ Voucher recipient has the right to port after the first year.

Quick Voucher Basics

- **Vouchers are worth different amounts depending on the voucher administrator and where they are used.**
 - Ex. 3 bedroom in:
 - Milford
 - RAP = \$2,211
 - Milford Housing Authority = \$2,396
 - Department of Housing/D'Amelia = \$2,197
 - New Haven
 - RAP = \$2,243
 - New Haven Housing Authority = \$2,001
 - Department of Housing/D'Amelia = \$2,201
- } \$199/month difference
- } \$200-\$242/month difference

*2024 payment standards

Federal Fair Housing Act Protected Classes

- Race – Black or white
- Color – skin tone
- National Origin – country of an individual's origin or the country from which the individual's ancestors came
- Religion – Limitation based on religious or spiritual beliefs
- Sex – gender (recently being applied to sexual orientation too)
- Handicap/disability
- Familial Status – presence of children under 18; pregnancy; persons in the process of getting legal custody

Connecticut's Fair Housing Law Additional Protected Classes

- Gender Identity or Expression
- Lawful Source of Income – for example, using a Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8 or the Rental Assistance Program
- Age (except minors)



- We require income 3x the rent
- “We don’t accept Section 8”
- “This unit wouldn’t be good for Section 8”
- Not returning phone calls after you tell them about your voucher.
- Telling you the unit has been rented even though it is still being listed.
- OR we don’t take security deposit guarantee.

Voucher holders
can move to a
different town
and there are
resources to help
them.

OCA's Mobility App

<https://www.ctoca.org/mobility-app>

Mobility App
By Open Communities Alliance | About this map

The Mobility App is designed to provide recipients of government housing vouchers like Housing Choice Vouchers and the Rental Assistance Program access fuller information about the value of their vouchers in different communities and learn about resources in communities they might consider living. Enter an address below to determine if the unit identified is in a community with the type of neighborhood resources your family needs. All voucher values are subject to further adjustments by the administering housing authority.

Q 06517

Hamden
1652 Census Tract
High Opportunity Level

How much is my voucher worth in 06517?

DOH (D'Amelia): \$1,511 (expires 1/1/25)
RAP: \$1,579 (expires 1/1/25)
Hamden Housing Authority: \$1,511 (expires 1/1/2025)



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Voucher holders
can move to a
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counseling

- Counseling to help voucher recipients find housing in particularly hard-to-reach areas with more resources.
- My Sister's Place (Greater Hartford)
- Elm City Communities (Greater New Haven)
- Home Inc. (Greater Bridgeport + Middlesex)

Right to move under

VAWA

(Violence

Against

Women

- Voucher holders (and any HUD tenant) experiencing violence/abuse can request an emergency transfer at any time.
- Who?
 - Victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who reasonably believe there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence including trauma if they stay in the unit.
 - Stalking means “engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or suffer emotional distress.”
- How?



1-5380 and send it to the PHA. PHA cannot ask for more than self-certification to
: a conflict between two members of a household who both claim to be victims of the

red to have its own emergency transfer plan and must act promptly when it receives an
er request.

What can my
org or I do to
advance fair
housing?

Let's Work
Together!

- **Become a fair housing tester**
- **Education and outreach** - invite us to do a free training!
- **Coalition building** - Join OCA coalition for individuals or Growing Together CT coalition for orgs
- **Legislative and administrative advocacy** - Fair Share Legislation, PHA jurisdiction
- **Testing/Litigation** tell us what your voucher holding clients experience
- **Direct services** let us know when your clients face trouble moving and/or porting with their voucher; we can help or direct you to mobility services in your area.



OPEN COMMUNITIES
ALLIANCE

Embracing Diversity to Strengthen Connecticut

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Thank You!

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