

# Regional Priority Strategies to Reduce Racial Homeownership Gaps

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## Help People of Color Receive Responsible Mortgage Products

- Explore and potentially promote special purpose credit programs that can address homeownership gaps in a race-conscious way.
- Affirmatively market affordable mortgages for purchase & renovation
  - Compile information on small-dollar mortgages offered in the Baltimore region for affirmative marketing.
  - Publicize homeownership and wealth-building success stories for people of color.
  - Support homebuyer clubs and other ways for homebuyers to share information and support each other as they seek to enter homeownership.
- Support reforms to reduce racial disparity in appraisals that can under-value Black-owned homes and hinder Black homebuyers.
- Expand down-payment assistance.
- Explore and promote alternatives to credit scores for mortgage-worthiness evaluation (e.g. Underwriting for Good in New York)

## Learn from and Refine Homeownership Counseling

- Identify and tackle obstacles that disproportionately keep Black home seekers who receive homeownership counseling from getting a mortgage and buying a house.
  - Conduct a survey of people who have received homeownership counseling.
  - Conduct focus groups of homeownership counselors.
  - Act on the results.
- Seek ways to elevate mortgage lenders that have good track records serving Black homebuyers.

## Help Existing Homeowners Sustain Homeownership & Build Wealth

- Expand funding for affordable repair & renovation products for low- and moderate-income homeowners so they can maintain their home asset. Affirmatively market these products to neighborhoods predominantly of people of color.
- Monitor home values in middle-income neighborhoods, particularly those predominantly of color. Fund and support deployment of Middle Neighborhoods market-building measures so homes appreciate at a moderate pace and build wealth over time.
- Help homeowners establish clear legal title to their homes for rehabilitation assistance and conduct estate planning to ensure intergenerational transfer of wealth (e.g. Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service's My Deed My Legacy program)
- Affirmatively market counseling to homeowners of color to help them avoid foreclosure as COVID-19-related foreclosure moratoria expire.