



Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
Centre pour les droits à l'égalité au logement

Statement on Race-Based Discrimination in Housing

June 10, 2020

Events of recent weeks have once again shone a bright light on the grave injustices faced by Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities in Canada. At CERA we have been watching these events and listening to the ongoing public dialogue with deep concern for the communities and individuals experiencing these injustices and genuine introspection about how we can be better advocates and allies as we work to advance the right to housing.

We welcome [recent news coverage](#) that has highlighted the significant and devastating experience of discrimination facing Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities in Ontario in accessing housing. This is something that we hear about frequently from racialized individuals across Ontario who contact us for assistance in finding and maintaining housing in a market fraught with systemic barriers. More attention on this issue is urgently needed.

The discrimination faced by Black, Indigenous and other racialized individuals and families seeking housing is a disgrace and abhorrent to the values of fairness, justice, equality and equity. More importantly however, discrimination in housing is a fundamental violation of human rights and it is illegal.

In 2009, we conducted a discrimination audit in Toronto's housing market that was the first of its kind in Canada. Our "[Sorry, It's Rented,](#)" report found that racialized rental housing applicants experienced a significant degree of discrimination during the application process. In particular, our discrimination audit found that one in four Black lone parent households, South Asian households and households in receipt of social assistance experienced discrimination. One in three households with an individual experiencing mental illness also experienced discrimination in accessing housing.

Our report made four recommendations to the Government of Ontario, including:

- That the government fund housing discrimination audits in communities across Ontario;
- That the government develop a system to monitor housing discrimination through both random and targeted checks and annual report cards;
- That the government provide adequate funds for individuals requiring advocacy support when they experience discrimination; and,
- That the government provide adequate funding for human rights education and capacity building.

Eleven years have passed and, while these recommendations remain as relevant now as they were then, none of them have been taken up.

One of government's most fundamental duties is to prevent violations of human rights. We are encouraged by recent announcements that governments will collect race-based health data in order to better understand the disparities in health outcomes experienced by racialized communities. Now, it's time to make the same commitment in the area of housing. CERA once again calls on the government of Ontario to implement our 2009 recommendations.

If you have been discriminated against, please see our website for some [resources](#) that may be helpful.