



# REIMAGINING CODE ENFORCEMENT

## PUTTING EQUITY FRONT & CENTER

SCEMA SEMINAR  
FEBRUARY 2021

HESTER<sup>ST</sup>

**HESTER ST**

**WHERE THE  
PEOPLE SHAPE  
THEIR CITY**



**CAPACITY  
BUILDING**



**PLANNING &  
DESIGN**



**DEVELOPMENT**



**WHAT ISSUES ARE COMING UP  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY & FOR YOUR  
CODE ENFORCEMENT TEAM?**



# CODE ENFORCEMENT'S MISSION IS TO KEEP HOMES AND NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE AND HEALTHY

**RESTORE DISTRESSED PROPERTIES**

**KEEP LANDLORDS ACCOUNTABLE**

**PROTECT LOW-INCOME TENANTS & HOMEOWNERS**



**KEEP VACANT LOTS CLEAN**

**PRESERVE NEIGHBORHOODS**

**INCREASE NEIGHBORHOOD RESILIENCY**

# BUT CODE ENFORCEMENT CAN ALSO IMPACT LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES OF COLOR DISPROPORTIONATELY



**PRIORITY AREAS FOR ENFORCEMENT  
ARE OFTEN LOW-INCOME  
COMMUNITIES OF COLOR**



**FEAR OF EVICTION AND  
IMMIGRATION DETENTION  
PREVENTS CONTACT WITH CITY  
ENFORCEMENT**



**PEOPLE OF COLOR RECEIVE MORE  
VIOLATIONS IN GENTRIFYING  
NEIGHBORHOODS**



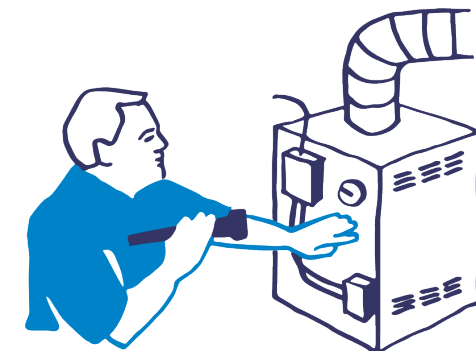
**NO SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR  
RESIDENTS DISPLACED IN  
CONDEMNATION**



**HOUSING VOUCHER  
RECIPIENTS ARE PLACED IN  
LOW QUALITY HOUSING**



**LOW INCOME HOMEOWNERS CANNOT  
AFFORD TO ADDRESS CODE VIOLATIONS**



**LANDLORDS CAN PREFER TO PAY A FINE  
THAN ADDRESS VIOLATIONS. TENANTS  
ARE STUCK WITH BAD CONDITIONS**

# **THIS DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT IS NOT RANDOM**

- **LOW INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS OF COLOR HAVE DETERIORATED DUE TO A HISTORY OF DISINVESTMENT, REDLINING AND MORE !**
- **DISPARATE IMPACT ON BLACK & BROWN COMMUNITIES: LESS ACCESS TO CREDIT, LOWER HOME APPRAISAL RATES, LOWER HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES COUPLED WITH HIGHER RATE OF CODE VIOLATIONS**
- **THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN FUTHER EXACERBATED BY 2008 FORECLOSURE CRISIS AND NOW, CURRENT HOUSING INSTABILITY CAUSED BY ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19**

# THIS DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT IS NOT RANDOM

- **ENFORCEMENT PROCESSES & POLICIES ARE DESIGNED BY UNEQUAL SYSTEMS**
- **THEY REFLECT THE IMPLICIT BIASES, VIEWPOINTS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DESIGNER AND THE SYSTEMS IN WHICH THEY OPERATE**
- **IN THE CONTEXT OF INSTITUTIONAL AND SYSTEMIC RACISM, PROCESSES AND POLICIES MAY (AND MOST LIKELY DO!) REPRODUCE THESE NORMS IN WAYS THAT CAN DISPARATELY IMPACT THE MOST VULNERABLE**

## **BUT WE ALSO SEE THAT**

- **CODE OFFICERS HAVE A DEEP KNOWLEDGE, AND EAR TO THE GROUND ABOUT HOUSING CONDITIONS**
- **THEY ARE THE FIRST RESPONDERS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**
- **OFTEN THE TOOLS AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE CODE ENFORCEMENT TEAM (VIOLATIONS, FINES) ARE NOT THE RIGHT TOOLS TO DEAL WITH THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE VIOLATIONS**

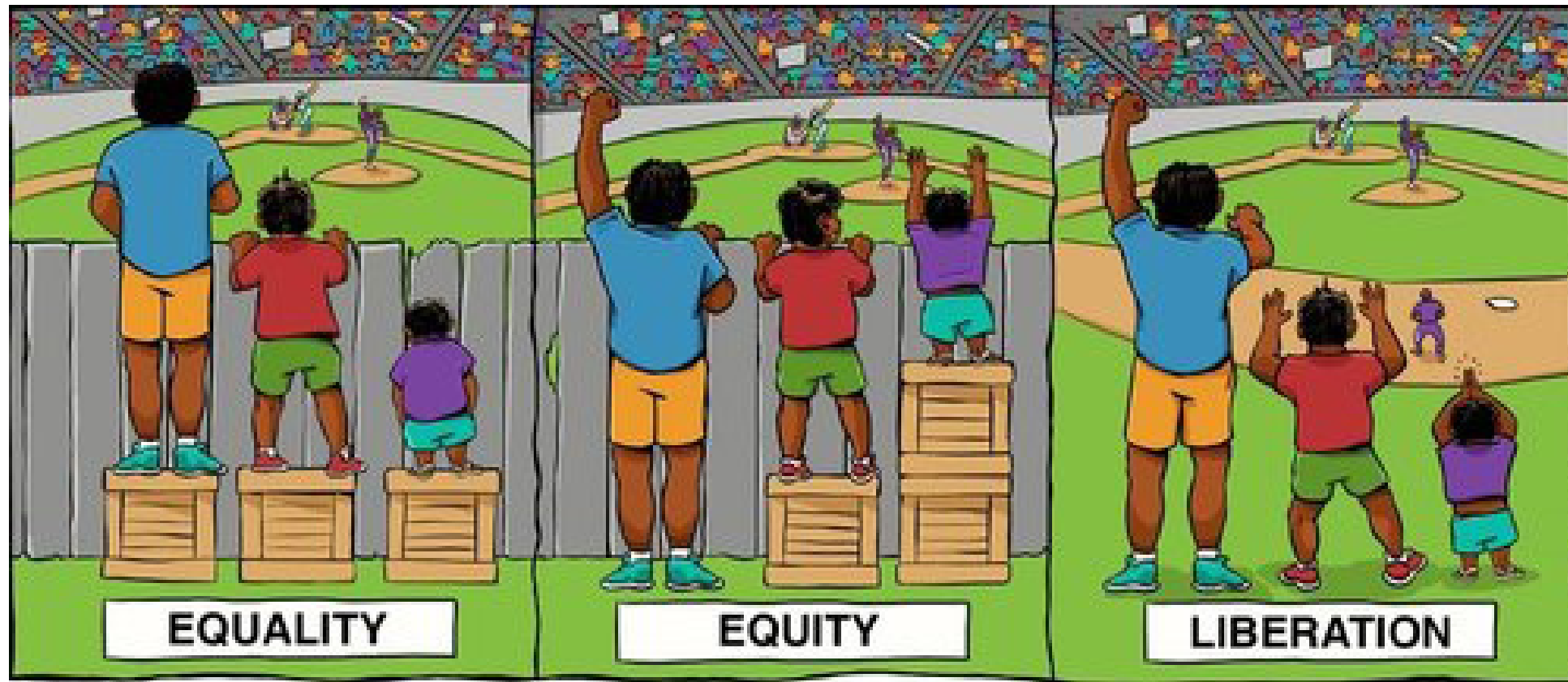


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- **THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY IN EVERY COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP A DIFFERENT APPROACH THAT IS PROACTIVE + EQUITABLE + WORKS WITH COMMUNITIES + PROVIDES SOCIAL SUPPORTS**

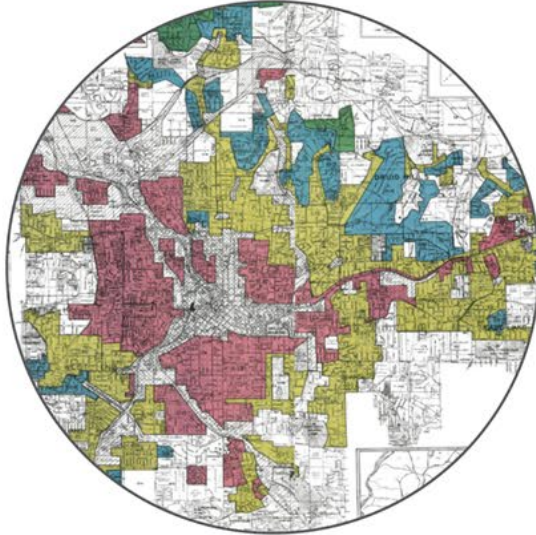
**HOW CAN WE REIMAGINE  
CODE ENFORCEMENT?**

# PUTTING EQUITY FRONT AND CENTER

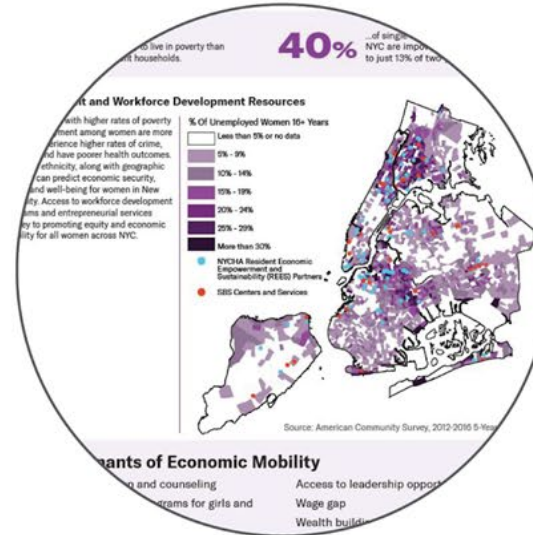


SOURCE: CENTER FOR STORY-BASED STRATEGY

# PRINCIPLES OF AN EQUITABLE PROCESS



**RESTORATIVE**



**EVIDENCE-BASED**



**COLLABORATIVE**



**COMMUNITY-CENTRIC**



**PROACTIVE**

# SO, WHAT CAN WE DO?



**WORK WITH OTHERS**



**THINK ABOUT YOUR PROCESS**



**ENGAGE COMMUNITY**



**MAKING CHANGES TOWARDS EQUITY**





**WORK WITH OTHERS**

# WORK WITH OTHERS

- **CODE ENFORCEMENT ALONE CANNOT DEAL WITH THE LARGER EQUITY ISSUES AFFECTING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS**
- **BUILD OR DEEPEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH:**
  - **OTHER CITY AND COUNTY AGENCIES**
    - **CITY PLANNING**
    - **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
    - **SOCIAL SERVICES**
    - **HEALTH**
    - **PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY**
  - **NON-GOVERNMENT ENTITIES**
    - **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**
    - **SERVICE PROVIDERS**
    - **UTILITY COMPANIES**

# WORK WITH OTHERS

- **HOW CAN WE DEEPEN PARTNERSHIPS?**
  - **ESTABLISH OFFICIAL CHANNELS FOR SHARING DATA AND INFORMATION ABOUT PROPERTIES AND CASES**
  - **IDENTIFY PERSISTENT PROBLEMS THAT ARE TOUCHED BY DIFFERENT AGENCIES AND OTHER NON-GOVERNMENT ENTITIES**
  - **BRAINSTORM JOINT SOLUTIONS INSTEAD OF DEALING WITH ISSUES ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS**
  - **INSTITUTIONALIZE COLLABORATION, PARTICULARLY FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS**

# WORK WITH OTHERS

## ELMIRA, NY

- **DEEP COLLABORATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS:**
  - **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
  - **CODE ENFORCEMENT**
  - **LEGAL****DESPITE LEADERSHIP CHANGES**
- **INSTITUTIONALIZED COLLABORATION WITH COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT AND INSPECT APARTMENTS PAID WITH HOUSING VOUCHERS**

## NEWBURGH, NY

- **DEEP COLLABORATION BETWEEN CITY PLANNING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT**
- **INFORMAL COLLABORATION WITH HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TO REFER TENANTS FACING CONDEMNATION AND DISPLACEMENT**



**EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS**



# EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS

**IDENTIFY EQUITY CHOICE POINTS: PARTICULAR STEPS IN THE PROCESS THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON EQUITY**

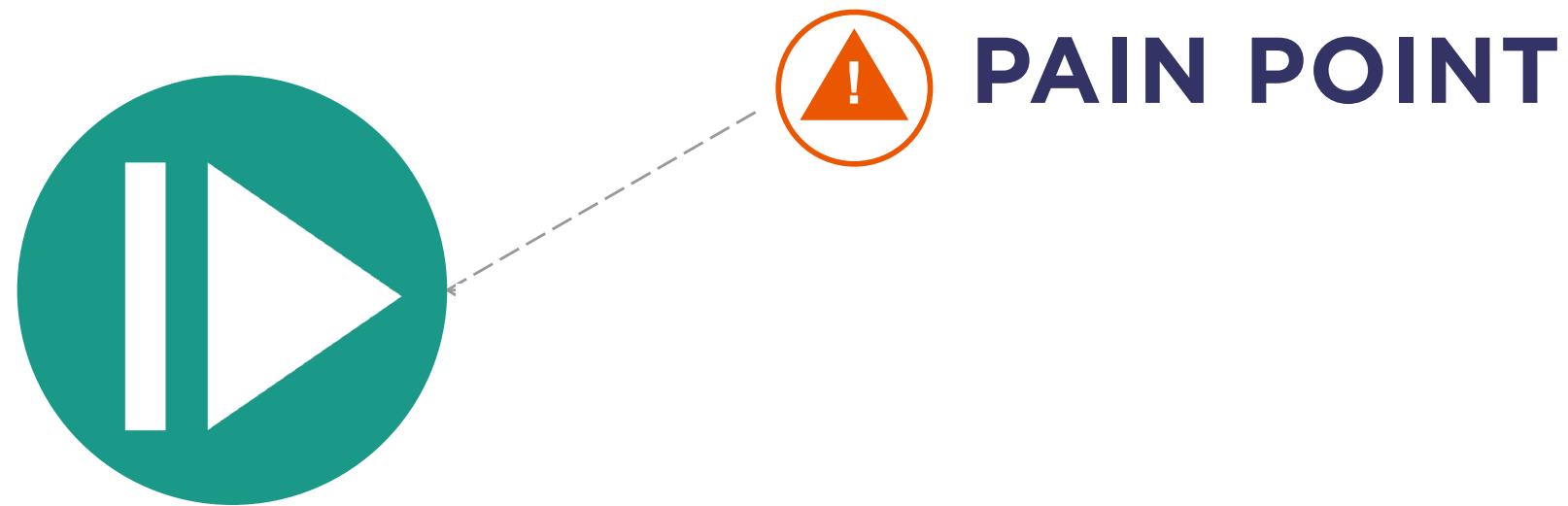
- **MAP CITY PROCESSES USING A HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN LENS**
- **UNDERSTAND HOW DIFFERENT ACTORS EXPERIENCE AND/OR ARE IMPACTED BY THE SAME PROCESS**
- **IDENTIFY THE MOST EFFECTIVE PLACES TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS, CHANGES OR TWEAKS IN ORDER TO MAKE PROCESSES MORE EQUITABLE**

# EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS

## USE A PROCESS MAP TO IDENTIFY EQUITY PAIN POINTS



# EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS



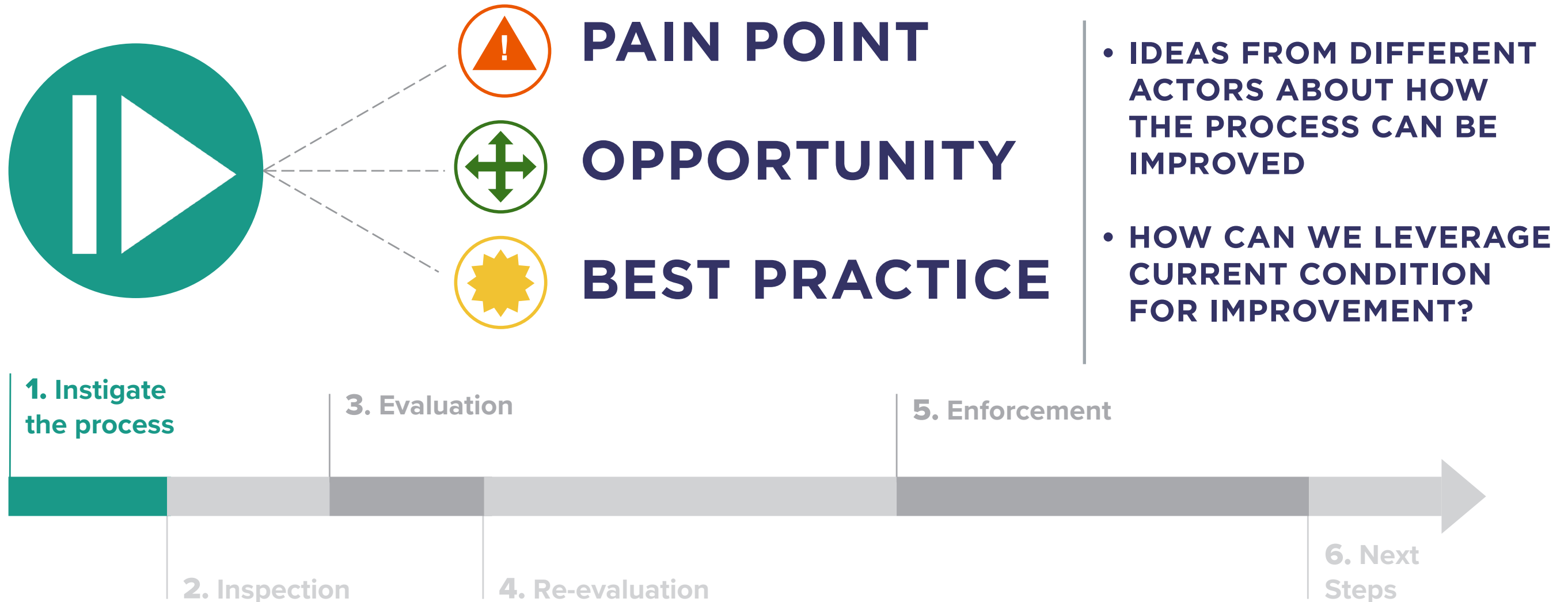
- **LOOKING AT THE PROCESS THROUGH DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES: CODE TEAM, OTHER AGENCIES, OUTSIDE PARTNERS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
- **A LACK OF ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES, COMMUNICATION GAPS OR EVEN THE RULES THEMSELVES!**



# EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS



# EVALUATE YOUR PROCESS

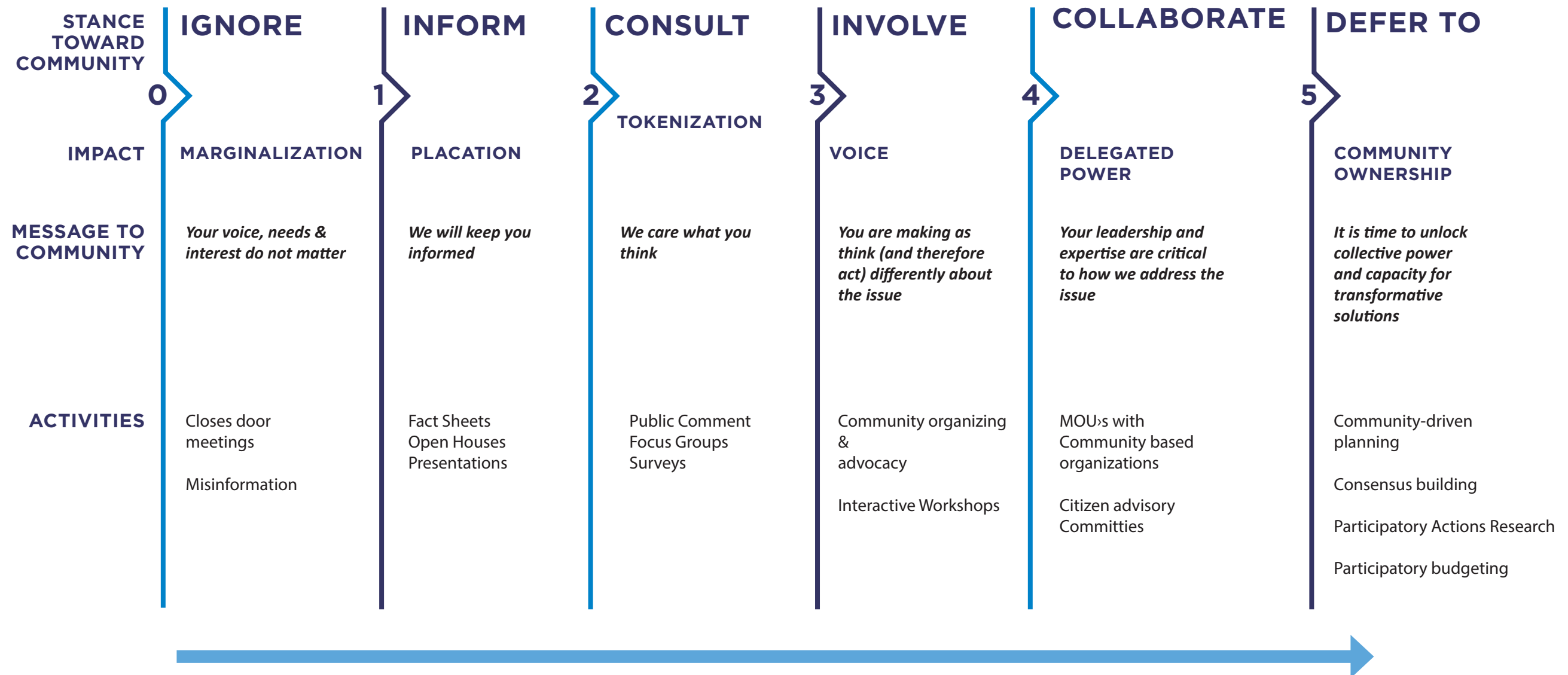






**ENGAGE COMMUNITY**

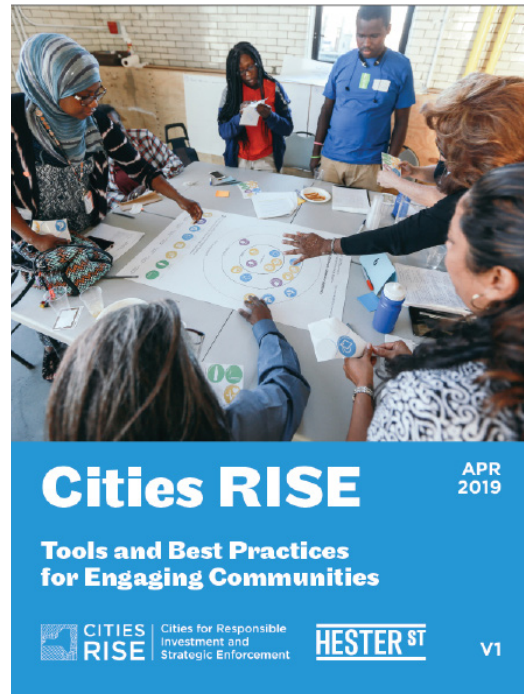
# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM



SOURCE: THE MOVEMENT CENTER

# ENGAGE COMMUNITY

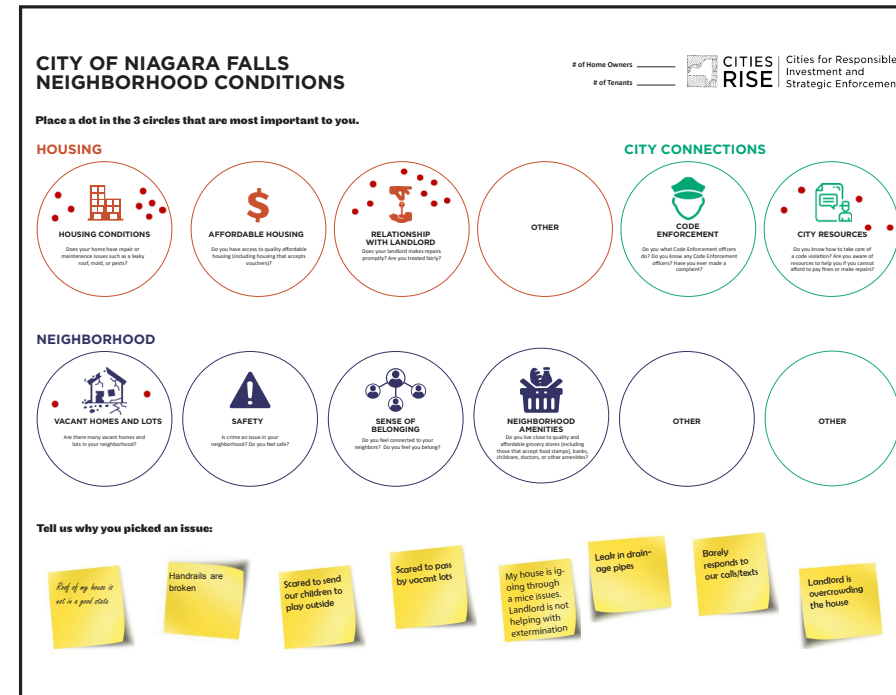
## BUILDING CAPACITY FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO INFORM MORE EQUITABLE AND EFFECTIVE POLICY AND PRACTICE



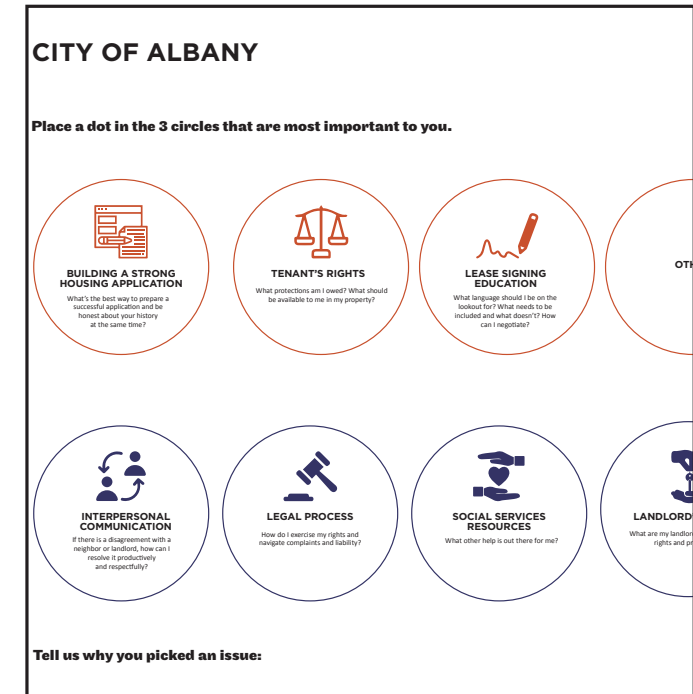
Community Engagement Guide



Public education brochure



Engagement tools



# ENGAGE COMMUNITY

- **CREATE USER FRIENDLY MATERIALS**
- **PARTNER WITH TRUSTED LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS**
- **GO WHERE PEOPLE ARE AT**
- **LEVERAGE EVENTS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION & RESOURCES**
- **CREATE INCLUSIVE SPACES: TRANSLATION, FOOD, CHILDCARE & TRUSTED LEADERS**
- **ESTABLISH A FEEDBACK LOOP TO BUILD TRUST & COMMUNICATION**





# ENGAGE COMMUNITY

## ROCHESTER, NY

- **PARTNERSHIP WITH 3 LOCAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATIONS**
- **SMALL MEETINGS WITH TRUSTED LOCAL INTERPRETERS (5 LANGUAGES)**
- **SENSITIVE TO CULTURAL NORMS**
- **CONNECT CITIZENS TO CITY RESOURCES**
- **ESTABLISHED ONGOING DIALOGUE**





# ENGAGE COMMUNITY

## ELMIRA, NY

- **BUILDING TRUST AND LONG-LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**
- **LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS TO REACH VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**
- **BROAD AND DEEP ENGAGEMENT:**
  - **TABLING AT COMMUNITY EVENTS**
  - **FOCUS GROUPS**
  - **COMMUNITY HOME REPAIRS**
  - **COMMUNITY CLEAN UP DAYS**





# MAKING CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY

# MAKING CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY

- **REVISE RULES, STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS EQUITY PAIN POINTS IDENTIFIED BY CITY, ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY**
- **CREATE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AND INVESTMENTS TO ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF EQUITY ISSUES, NOT JUST THE SYMPTOMS**
- **REVIEW RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING PRACTICES TO EMBED EQUITY IN THESE PROCESSES**
- **INSTITUTIONALIZE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS CONSTANT PRACTICE**
- **INSITUTIONALIZE CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATIONS**

# MAKING CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY



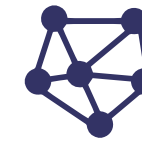
## EDUCATION MATERIALS

- **HEALTHY HOUSING GUIDEBOOK**  
*ROCHESTER*
- **EDUCATION MATERIALS FOR HOMEOWNERS AND TENANTS**  
*WHITE PLAINS*



## TRAINING

- **GOOD NEIGHBOR SCHOOL** *ALBANY*
- **MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING FOR OFFICERS** *ELMIRA*
- **CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR CODE OFFICERS**  
*BINGHAMTON*



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **REGULAR MEETINGS WITH COMMUNITY**  
*ELMIRA + BUFFALO*
- **PUBLIC CODE DATA + KIOSKS**  
*NEWBURGH + MT. VERNON*
- **OUTREACH WHEN CODE POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE**  
*ROCHESTER*

# MAKING CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY



## STAFF ROLES

- **COMMUNITY  
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM**  
*SYRACUSE*
- **HOUSING SERVICES  
CASEWORKER**  
*ALBANY + BINGHAMTON*
- **EVICTON PREVENTION  
COUNSELOR**  
*ROCHESTER*



## PARTNERSHIPS

- **FUNDING FOR  
OUTREACH BY  
COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS**  
*ALBANY + BUFFALO +  
MT. VERNON*
- **COLLABORATE  
WITH AND FUND  
LEGAL AID SERVICES**  
*ELMIRA + NEWBURGH  
+ NIAGARA FALLS*



## DIRECT SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS

- **REVOLVING LOAN  
FUND FOR REPAIRS**  
*BUFFALO + ELMIRA +*
- **TENANT SUPPORT  
DISPLACEMENT FUND**  
*WHITE PLAINS*

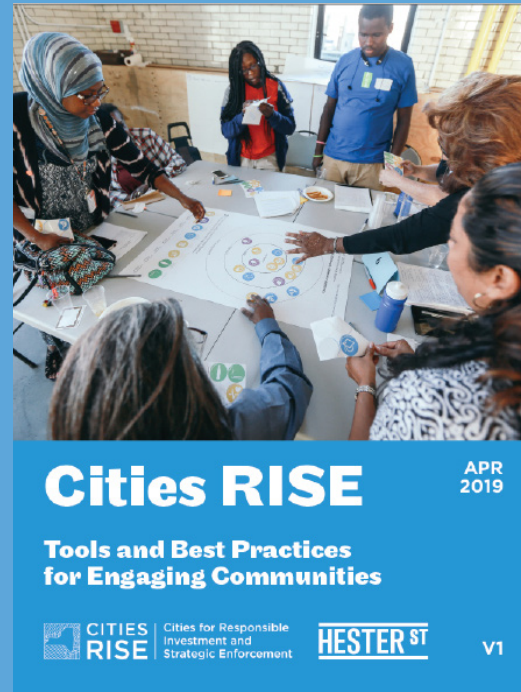
# MAKING CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY



## DIRECT INVESTMENT

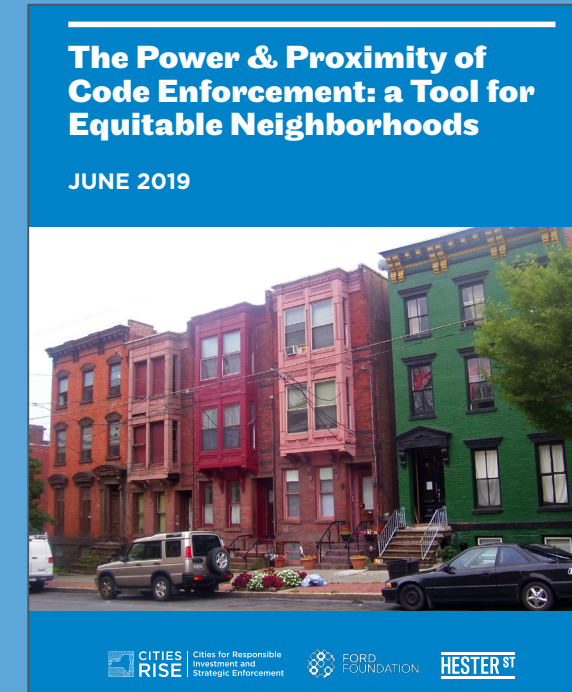
- **EMERGENCY  
ABATEMENT FUND**  
*ROCHESTER*
- **COMMUNITY CLEANUPS**  
*ELMIRA + BUFFALO*
- **DEEP DIVE  
BLOCK PROGRAM  
(TREE, SIDEWALK +  
LIGHT IMPROVEMENTS)**  
*ALBANY*
- **STABILIZATION FUND  
FOR DILAPIDATED  
HOMES** *BINGHAMTON*
- **IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY  
HOUSING FOR  
DISPLACED TENANTS**  
*NEWBURGH*
- **DESIGN AND  
PREDEVELOPMENT OF  
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**  
*NEWBURGH*

# DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

[Download here](#)



## THE POWER AND PROXIMITY OF CODE ENFORCEMENT

[Download here](#)

**CONTACT US**

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