

The Equal Opportunity Game: A Workshop for Youth

New Orleans, United States New Orleans, United States



Hannah Adams





Organization type:

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Project Stage:

Growth

Budget:

\$10,000 - \$50,000

Website:

<http://www.gnofairhousing.org>

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

GNOFHAC is a non-profit civil rights organization that seeks to eradicate housing discrimination through education and enforcement work.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC) is a non-profit civil rights organization dedicated to eradicating housing discrimination. Recent studies by GNOFHAC show that housing discrimination is still a frequent occurrence in the greater New Orleans area. For example a 2007 audit showed a 58% rate of discrimination against African-Americans, and a 2009 audit showed widespread discrimination against people with disabilities. Families with children are particularly vulnerable to discrimination; according to HUD, 1,500 families reported that they were discriminated against on the basis of having children in 2010. Because of these statistics, GNOFHAC seeks an innovative strategy for reaching families with information about fair housing and the impact of discrimination.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

The Equal Opportunity Game is a tool for educators and advocates that GNOFHAC developed in partnership with schools, community centers, and youth-serving organizations. The game and associated curriculum educate young people about civil rights, the importance of diversity and equal opportunity, and the impact of discrimination. GNOFHAC believes that youth should be educated about housing discrimination so that they may become advocates for equity and watchdogs for injustice in their communities. Because GNOFHAC intends for students to share their experiences of the Equal Opportunity Game with their parents, guardians or teachers, the workshop also functions to educate adults in the community about fair housing rights. Families with children are particularly vulnerable to housing discrimination and are specifically protected under the Fair Housing Act. Thus the Equal Opportunity Game represents an innovative form of outreach to a population deeply affected by discrimination.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

GNOFHAC partners with dozens of educators, schools, youth-serving organizations and advocacy groups to bring the Equal Opportunity Game and its related children's book "The Fair Housing Five & the Haunted House" to youth in New Orleans and as far away as Michigan, Alabama, and Washington, DC. The game is designed to build empathy and cultivate critical thinking about social issues by putting students in the shoes of a person who has experienced the impact of housing discrimination. In the game, students are assigned characters and must work in teams to find

the housing that best meets their characters' needs. Some of the characters "experience" housing discrimination, and students see the impact discrimination has on access to education, healthcare, jobs, and other resources via "situation cards" that they draw periodically. Students complete journal entries throughout the game to reflect on their experiences. The Equal Opportunity Game builds an appreciation of diversity, and a vocabulary around justice and equity in participating youth. As our next generation of leaders, it is important that youth learn about the impact of discrimination and the importance of equal opportunity at a young age so that they may bring these insights to their communities and work throughout their lives. GNOFHAC hopes to expand the reach of the project by partnering with schools throughout Louisiana to conduct workshops, as well as by producing copies of the game materials and facilitator guide to distribute to schools and fair housing organizations around the country.

Sustainability

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

GNOFHAC is part of a national network of fair housing agencies, as well as a community of organizations and educators interested in engaging young people in conversations about justice and equity. Currently, there is a dearth of materials about fair housing and housing discrimination for young people and families. GNOFHAC seeks to fill that void with its Equal Opportunity Game and youth workshops.

About You

Organization:

Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center

About You

First Name

Hannah

Last Name

Adams

Twitter URL

<http://www.twitter.com/GNOFairHousing>

Facebook URL

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Greater-New-Orleans-Fair-Housing-Action-C...>

About Your Organization

Organization Name

Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center

Organization Country

, LA, New Orleans, Orleans Parish

Country where this project is creating social impact

, LA, New Orleans, Orleans Parish

Your role in Education

Other.

The type of school(s) your solution is affiliated with

Public (tuition-free)

How long has your organization been operating?

More than 5 years

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen..

Innovation

How long has your solution been in operation?

Operating for 1 5 years

Now that you have thought out your entry, help us pitch it.

Define your company, program, service, or product in 1-2 short sentences [136 characters]

GNOFHAC is a non-profit civil rights organization that seeks to eradicate housing discrimination through education and enforcement work.

Identify what is innovative about your solution in 1-2 short sentences [136 characters]

The Equal Opportunity Game is an innovative tool for building empathy and engaging youth in dialogue about civil rights and equity.

Social Impact

What has been the impact of your solution to date?

Since spring, 2010, when GNOFHAC launched its youth outreach project, staff have partnered with 11 (eleven) schools, community centers and youth-serving organizations to conduct 23 (twenty-three) youth workshops. All together approximately 350 (three hundred and fifty) students and their parents or guardians as well as fifteen (15) teachers have been served by GNOFHAC's civil rights workshops. Students and teachers have attested to the positive and transformative impact on participants. One teacher reflected, "This workshop, superbly designed and executed, prompted challenging discussion and higher level thinking in our classroom community. We have been using themes and lessons learned as a jumping off point for further investigation and as connection to other areas of the curriculum." Students have said, "I loved the board game, because I think that it was an awesome and fun game" and "I learned a lot about fair housing... especially that discrimination needs to be stopped!"

What is your projected impact over the next 1-3 years?

Over the next 1-3 years, GNOFHAC hopes to expand the reach of the Equal Opportunity Game youth civil rights workshops. By 2015, GNOFHAC will have reached students in all sixty-three (63) New Orleans public schools serving students in grades one through six through workshop facilitation and/or distribution of its children's book "The Fair Housing Five & the Haunted House." In addition, GNOFHAC will develop curricula for high school students about fair housing and begin working in five (5) area high schools. Finally, GNOFHAC will train staff from at least five (5) fair housing agencies around the country to facilitate workshop activities with youth in their districts and build partnerships with local schools.

What barriers might hinder the success of your project? How do you plan to overcome them?

GNOFHAC staff have found it challenging to market its youth workshops to public schools and teachers who have limited time for enrichment activities and must connect all curricula to state Grade Level Expectations and testing standards. GNOFHAC will overcome this barrier by developing a set of materials that outline the connections between workshop elements and required curricula. In addition, GNOFHAC staff have built a partnership with Young Audiences, a national organization whose local chapter coordinates extracurricular programming in a number of area schools, and staff will work to build similar relationships with other youth-serving organizations.

Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve and track growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact

Develop and publish a facilitator guide in order to share the Equal Opportunity Game with other organizations and educators.

Identify three major tasks you will have to complete to reach your six-month milestone _____

Task 1

Consolidate existing curricular and training materials and develop new workshop curricula for high school students.

Task 2

Organize focus group of educators and advocates to review and provide feedback on draft facilitator guide.

Task 3

Publish facilitator guide; develop and implement distribution plan.

Now think bigger! Identify your 12-month impact milestone

Conduct Equal Opportunity Game workshops at three (3) new schools and train two (2) new organizations in workshop facilitation.

Identify three major tasks you will have to complete to reach your 12-month milestone _____

Task 1

Conduct outreach to area schools and teachers.

Task 2

Work with teachers at three new schools to tailor curricula to their classroom needs.

Task 3

Distribute facilitator guide; plan and implement webinar-style or in-house facilitation trainings for three organizations.

Founding Story: We want to hear about your "Aha!" moment. Share the story of where and when the founder(s) saw this solution's potential to change the world [125 words]

The idea for the Equal Opportunity Game came out of the friendship between a fair housing advocate and a New Orleans teacher. One day at a coffee shop the GNOFHAC staff member was expressing her frustration at the number of housing discrimination complaints received recently from families with children who encountered landlords with formal or informal "no kids" policies. The staff member suggested that there was a need to engage youth in conversations about equal housing opportunity because of the ways in which housing discrimination impacts their quality of life. Meanwhile, the teacher was sharing her interest in implementing a unit on social justice and equity that connected to required English Language Arts and social studies curricula. And thus, a mutually rewarding partnership was born. GNOFHAC partnered with the teacher and her classroom of fourth and fifth grade students to develop the Equal Opportunity Game and implement its flagship workshop in April 2010.

Sustainability

Tell us about your partnerships

To date, GNOFHAC has partnered with eleven (11) entities, including six (6) schools, two (2) community centers, and three (3) youth-serving organizations to implement youth workshops. These include Audubon Charter School, Langston Hughes Academy, McDonough 32 Elementary School, Alice Harte Charter School, Eisenhower Elementary School, The Urban League, Young Audiences, Ashe Cultural Arts Center, and the Freret Neighborhood Center in New Orleans, LA, as well as the Dumas-Wesley Community Center in Mobile, AL. GNOFHAC also works with a network of partner fair housing agencies nationwide.

What type of team (staff, volunteers, etc.) will ensure that you achieve the growth milestones identified in the *Social Impact* section? [75

words]

Two full-time GNOFHAC staff members will work to implement project milestones- the Education Coordinator and the Outreach Specialist. In addition, GNOFHAC will utilize volunteers and interns to help with administrative and programmatic activities related to the project.

Please elaborate on any needs or offers you have mentioned above and/or suggest categories of support that aren't specified within the list

GNOFHAC is looking for educators, schools, and youth-serving organizations to partner and share resources with. GNOFHAC would love to share its curricula, materials and children's book with more children and families around the country.

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/empathy/entries/fair-housing-five-youth-workshops>