

The Opportunity Agenda

Opportunity Values and Human Rights Taking Hold in Public Policy

The Opportunity Agenda recently marked two important developments in its efforts to translate the values and ideas of opportunity and human rights into public policy.

The first exciting development is that the Obama Administration has included language proposed by [The Opportunity Agenda](#) in the implementation of the economic stimulus package requiring all federal agencies to adhere to the full range of equal opportunity laws. Specifically, thanks to the efforts of the [Leadership Conference on Civil Rights](#), the Administration used the language in the [Office of Management and Budget's "Initial Implementing Guidance"](#) for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The impact of this language is that agencies must ensure that federally-funded projects have neither an intentional nor an unintended discriminatory impact based on race, gender, disability, language ability, or other grounds. The implementation will cut across diverse sectors, including employment, housing, education, transportation, lending, and others.

The OMB guidance, available [here](#), is a crucial step in The Opportunity Agenda's *State of Opportunity Initiative*, which seeks to ensure that economic recovery efforts expand opportunity for all communities. The next step in this initiative will be to collaborate with partners across the country to push for implementation of the mandate at the federal, state, and local levels.

The second development is the use of the organization's opinion research in the [Montana Legislature's](#) recent hearings on the human right to health in that state. You can find a recording of the hearing [here](#). Pioneering Montana lawmakers and advocates, in partnership with the [National Economic and Social Rights Initiative](#), are at the forefront of the effort to establish health care as a domestic human right consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As part of its [US Human Rights Initiative](#), The Opportunity Agenda is providing opinion research, communications tools, advocate training, and policy ideas to advance this goal.

Finally, The Opportunity Agenda is currently engaged in new opinion research to identify the most effective ways to talk about key issues in terms of human rights and to engage the target audiences—segments of the American public who are open to the human rights frame. They are conducting sixteen focus groups on social justice topics, including health care as a human right. For more information about this project, please contact Eleni Delimpaltadaki, Opinion and Media Research Coordinator, at eleni@opportunityagenda.org.