



**HOWARD COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM**
Public Education for All

Media Release – for immediate release

Date: August 2, 2018

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Howard County Library System
Choose Civility Initiative Seeks to Untangle Roots of Discrimination
**“Undesign the Redline” Interactive Exhibit To
Provide Context and Launch Public Conversation
About Structural Racism and Classism in America**

ELLICOTT CITY, MD—Howard County Library System (HCLS) will host an interactive exhibit beginning August 16 at the Central Branch in Columbia to launch a public discussion about how a discriminatory federal policy from the 1930s still resonates in communities today. *Undesign the Redline*, an in-depth visual display, explores the history of structural racism and classism in America that began in the 1930s when color-coded "residential security maps" were created to show risk areas for federal backing of newly invented home ownership programs.

The maps delineated areas prime for investment and areas where no money would be lent. The neighborhoods where no investment would go were outlined in red. The red outlined areas, which were primarily Black and immigrant neighborhoods, were referred to as “infiltrated” by “hazardous populations.” Lenders had to consider the standards set forth in these maps if they wanted to receive FHA insurance for their loans. FHA appraisal manuals instructed banks to steer clear of areas with "inharmonious racial groups," and recommended that municipalities enact racially restrictive zoning ordinances. This racial discrimination in mortgage lending shaped the demographic and wealth patterns of American communities for generations and designed structural racism into 239 different cities.

The exhibit features an introduction to the concept, relative local maps, an historic timeline, personal stories, and a public input section. Customers may choose to engage in a self-guided manner with the exhibit or, for a more in-depth experience, may opt to be part of a group tour.

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Specially trained HCLS staff will serve as tour guides for periodic public group tours. Guided tours for students, community organizations, and social groups may also be arranged by calling 410-313-7750. Subsequent Redline Reflection Sessions will be held for participants to discuss the impact of the experience. The exhibit will run through December 31, 2018.

Undesign the Redline is presented in partnership with Columbia Association, Enterprise Community Partners, HCLS Friends & Foundation, Howard County Public School System, Howard Community College, and #One Howard.

Undesign the Redline is the creation of *designing the WE*, a for-benefit design studio positioned within the fields of social innovation and community driven social, cultural and economic development. The group facilitates collaborative processes to redefine how big picture systemic challenges are approached, identify opportunities for action, and co-design more holistic and resilient strategies centered on positive transformation.

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