



ENGAGE

Free the Deeds is a public-art project. We want you to get creative and offer you creative way to engage with this history. The questions that we have below are intended to call on your heart, gut, body, soul, not just your mind. These prompts can become:

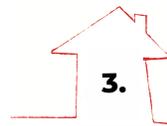
- A family art project to do with your kids, grandparents, siblings, or whoever you define as your family
- Writing prompts for you to do on your own in a private journal
- An activity station at a block party for National Night Out or any other block-wide gathering
- Chalk drawings in front of your home
- Content to share through social media to help have conversations about the themes of this work with your online network

Setting the table



1.

A thank you note from your house



3.

What can you learn from your body?



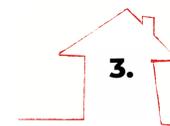
2.

Look around and reflect



4.

What would be in your "freed-deed?"



3.

Read the deeds



5.

Moving towards your vision

You can choose one and dive deep, or give each one a try. They are intended to engage people of every age and from any racial/cultural background. Make these yours.



1.

A thank you note from your house

Pretend you are your house. You had a covenant placed on you. The people who lived in you removed it. Write a thank you note to them for removing the covenant. You want them to take more steps on the road towards housing and racial justice. What else do you want them to do or how else do you want them to be? You can:

- **Draw your house and have it speak in your drawing**
- **Create your own thank you letter.**
- **Use the prompts below.**

Dear you,

I want to say thank you for discharging the covenant. Having the covenant on my deed felt _____ for far too long.

When it was first written I felt _____.

When you learned about the covenant, I saw you _____.

But you didn't let those feelings paralyze you. You took actions. You _____

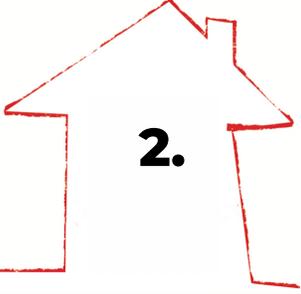
_____. Now together, we

_____. Let's make sure to remember _____

_____.

I love you,

Your house



2.

Look around and reflect

Look around your home, your yard, your block. What if you were prevented from buying your home because of your race? Has anyone in your family line been prevented from buying a home? Why or why not? How would you feel if you were not allowed to buy your home? What would you do? What would you have wanted other people to do?

and/or

Imagine your block before the land was stolen from the Dakota people. Reflect on how the history of forced removal of Indigenous people is connected to the creation of racial covenants. What are the beliefs that drove these separate yet connected periods of history? Who held these beliefs? How are these histories playing out to this day? What can you do to see and stop these repeating histories?



3.

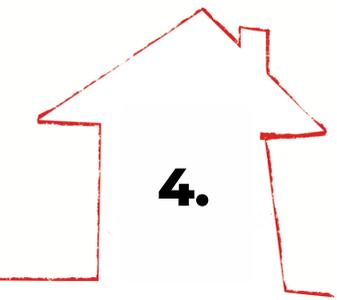
Read the deeds

Covenant language was put on deeds from 1910 to 1953. It was ostensibly illegal starting in 1968. Read the the text from racial covenants. You will draw on this reading for exercises four and five.

“It is further stipulated and agreed by and between parties hereto for themselves, their heirs, and assigns as part of the consideration hereof, that the within described premises shall not be sold, mortgaged, or leased to or occupied by any person or persons other than the members of the Caucasian race.”

“That the said land or buildings thereon shall never be sold, transferred, or conveyed to, nor shall the same be occupied by negro or colored person or person of negro blood.”

“No persons of any race other than the Aryan race shall use or occupy and lot, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant.”



4.

What can you learn from your body?

When you read the language of the racial covenants, how do you feel? Where in your body do you feel it? What are these feelings trying to teach you? How do you feel about your feelings? What can you do to keep feeling and learning from your feelings?

Constricted

Loose

Itchy

Achy

Bloated

Burning

Open

Closed

Raw

Fuzzy

Heavy

Jittery

Jumbly

Airy

Warm

Cold

Nauseous

Numb

Dull

Dizzy

Tight

Wobbly

Frantic

Dull

Ragged

Stuck

Still

Spacious

Congested

Sharp

Brittle

Fizzy

Clammy

Jagged

Stuck

Knotty

Pressure

Throbbing

Quivering

Intense

Quiet

Full

Stretchy

Bubbling

Drenched

Pulsing

Lumpy

Queasy

Gut turning

Empty

Full

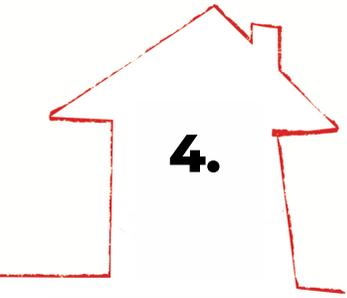
Unsteady

Fidgety

Breathless

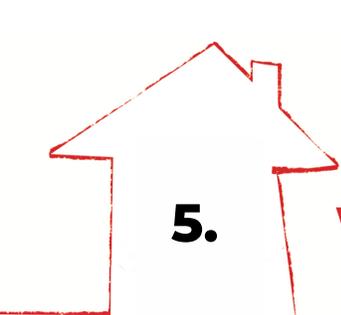
Jumpy

Tender



4. What can you learn from your body? continued...

Make an outline of your body below. Write where you experience sensations. What color are they? Name or draw how you feel when you face this history.



5.

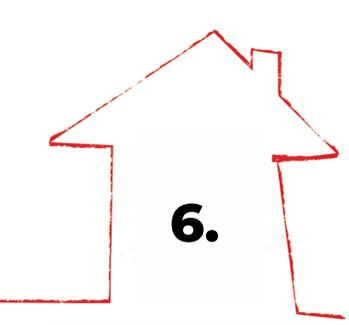
What would be in your "freed-deed"?

After reading through the language of racial covenants that were written onto deeds and acknowledging your body sensations, breathe. As you breathe, see if you can start to believe that repairing this history is possible. As your body starts to feel more tuned into the potential for change, see how it feels for you to believe with your body that you could be a turning point in history.

From this place, dream into what language you would want your deed to include. What would a "freed-deed" have in it for future people to read?

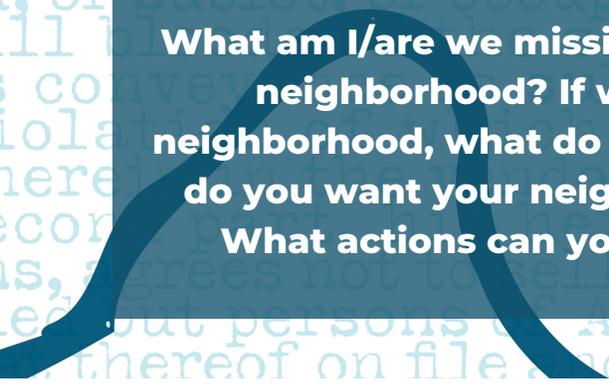


My "freed-deed"



6.

Moving towards your vision



What am I/are we missing out on by living in a predominantly white neighborhood? If we live in a racially/culturally integrated neighborhood, what do we appreciate about living in this mix? What do you want your neighborhood to look like in 10, 20, or 50 years? What actions can you take to take steps towards your vision?



Keep moving

Thank you for going inward and interacting with this material. There are many more ways to engage with this project on freethedeeds.org



Learn

Our "Learn" page has links to more in-depth articles, documentaries, and other art projects across the country that are facing our history.



Engage

Our "Engage" page features portrait work and essays inspired by two Black families, the Moores and the Fords, whose history of homeownership was impacted and shaped by redlining. At the end of those essays you will find discussion questions to have deeper conversations with what you read.



Participate

Our "Participate" page helps you look up property addresses to see where there are racial covenants throughout Minneapolis with links to Just Deeds where you can get support to remove the covenant. You can also make financial contributions to down payment assistance funds for African American homebuyers.

We encourage you to share what you created through these exercises with us! If you are willing to take photos of what you created based on these prompts and you give us permission to share your images and story through our social media platforms, please:

- **Email us photos of what you made, your answers, and any part of your discovery process you want to share at freethedeeds@gmail.com**
- **Post pictures of yourself with your creations and use the hashtag [#freethedeeds](https://twitter.com/freethedeeds)**

If you don't share with us, share with your family, your neighbors, and your neighborhood! Together we can heal the scars of racism and co-create equity, one deed at a time.