

Airbnb takes new steps to fight discrimination

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Global home-sharing giant Airbnb announced Thursday it is implementing new policies aimed at curbing racial discrimination by hosts and creating a permanent team aimed at fighting bias.

The new policies come from a review launched earlier this year in the face of concerns over [discrimination](#) on the platform, which allows users to rent out a room, a bed or an entire lodging.

"Discrimination is the opposite of belonging, and its existence on our platform jeopardizes this core mission," Airbnb chief Brian Chesky said in an email to hosts and guests.

"Bias and discrimination have no place on Airbnb, and we have zero tolerance for them. Unfortunately, we have been slow to address these problems, and for this I am sorry... We will not only make this right; we will work to set an example that other companies can follow."

Chesky said that a new "Open Doors" policy starting October 1 will allow a guest anywhere in the world who feels subject to discrimination to be booked in a similar place on Airbnb, or an alternative accommodation elsewhere.

Airbnb will also seek to increase its "instant book" lodgings which do not require approval of a specific guest.

The home-sharing group will also create "a permanent team of

engineers, data scientists, researchers, and designers whose sole purpose is to advance belonging and inclusion and to root out bias," according to a document produced by its review committee.

Airbnb earlier this year asked former American Civil Liberties Union executive Laura Murphy to head up a review, which included input from former US attorney general Eric Holder.

The report said Airbnb should also de-emphasize the use of photos, which may lead to discrimination.

"Airbnb's new product team dedicated to fighting discrimination will experiment with reducing the prominence of guest photos in the booking process and enhancing other parts of host and guests profiles with objective information," the report said.

The high-profile campaign to ferret out discrimination came after an Airbnb host in the US state of North Carolina fired off hateful, race-based messages to a black woman while canceling a stay she had booked at his home.

Airbnb operates in more than 190 countries and has been valued at an estimated \$30 billion.

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