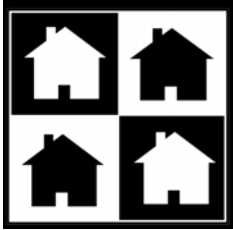


**The  
Housing**



**Policy Research  
&  
Advocacy Center**

*Annual Report  
Winter 2008*

**Center**

**news**

## *2007 Year in Review*

In 2007, the Housing Center was involved in several exciting projects and partnerships to ensure that everyone has equal housing choice in Northeast Ohio.

### **Grants & Contracts**

In the last year, the Housing Center received funding from the **Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening Foundation**; the **Cuyahoga County Department of Development**; the **Catholic Campaign for Human Development**; the **City of Lakewood**; the **City of Parma**; the **City of Shaker Heights**; the **Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts**, **Fifth Third Bank, Trustee**; and the **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**.

In September of 2007, the Housing Center was awarded two fair housing grants by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The first was a one-year education and outreach grant that will fund us to provide various types of fair housing education, including two conferences. The second grant is a three-year enforcement grant

that will fund us to conduct research and fair housing enforcement activities in the region. The Housing Center was one of only two agencies in the county to receive two grants in 2007.

Thank you to the all of the individuals and agencies who supported the Housing Center's fair housing programs in 2007.

### **Education & Outreach**

In 2007, we held a number of educational events on fair housing laws and landlord/tenant laws. Additionally, we conducted a series of predatory lending seminars for consumers about how to avoid a predatory loan. The Housing Center also conducted two conferences on issues relating to accessible housing and fair housing issues for disabled individuals. In April, which is Fair Housing Month, the Housing Center hosted it's second annual Wine & Cheese reception to celebrate the release of the updated "State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio" report. In addition, in 2007, we created three new fair housing brochures, including a general fair housing

law brochure, a fair housing and disability brochure, and a fair housing and familial status brochure. Copies of the brochures, which are available in English, Spanish, and Arabic, may be obtained by contacting the Housing Center.

### **Research**

In 2007, the Housing Center released five separate reports on issues related to fair housing and fair lending.

In February, the Housing Center and Policy Matters Ohio released a joint report of payday lending entitled: "Trapped in Debt: The Growth of Payday Lending in Ohio." The report found that the number of payday lending stores licensed in Ohio increased from 107 in 1996 to 1,562 in 2006, a more than 14-fold increase in a decade.

In April, the Housing Center release it's updated "State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio." The report found that complaints of discrimination rose in each of the last five years in the region, reaching their highest level in 17 years in 2006.

### *2006 in Review (continued):*

In the summer of 2007, the Housing Center released the “Cuyahoga County Community Lending Factbook,” and the “City of Cleveland Community Lending Factbook.” These reports provide basic demographic and lending information about each of the County’s 58 communities, and each of the City’s 36 Statistical Planning Areas.

In November, the Housing Center released the “Occupancy Codes in Northeast Ohio” report, for which we collected and reviewed occupancy codes for every city in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties.

All of the Housing Cen-

ter’s reports are available to download from our website at [www.thehousingcenter.org](http://www.thehousingcenter.org).

### **Enforcement & Litigation**

In 2007, the Housing Center continued to conduct both complaint-based and systemic testing of the rental, sales, lending, and homeowners insurance markets. As a result of the testing, the Housing Center filed six fair housing complaints with HUD and/or the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC). Two of the complaints were filed on the basis of familial status discrimination, another complaint alleged discrimination on the basis of race, and one complaint was filed on the basis of disabil-

ity. An additional complaint was filed alleging discrimination on the bases of familial status and disability; and a final complaint alleged discrimination on the basis of familial status and religion in transitional housing.

The Housing Center also assisted potential victims of housing discrimination by taking complaints and referring people to the correct agencies for non-fair housing issues.

### **The Housing Center needs your support!**

To make a donation or to volunteer, please call the Housing Center at 213-361-9240.

### *The Housing Center would like to thank all of our donors in the last year (current as of 1/15/08)*

Anonymous  
Ruby Appling  
Sheryl King Benford  
Jessica Berg & John Niederer  
Thomas & Dorothy Bier  
Patricia Burgess & John Shelley  
Joann Byerly  
Catholic Committee on Community Action  
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Diane Citrino  
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Cleveland Community Relations Board  
Nathaniel & Nancy Cook  
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Mike & Jan Devereaux  
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SEIU Local 3  
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Charna Sherman & David Weiner  
Allen & Henrietta Silberger  
Gary Simson  
South Westerly Apartments  
Third Federal Savings & Loan  
Jerome Walcott  
Cheryl Williams  
Harold & Bonnie Williams

## **The Housing Center**

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 Sheryl King Benford, *Treasurer*  
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 Carrie Pleasants,  
*Director of Research &  
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 Hope Farmby,  
*Fair Housing Specialist*  
 Darlene English  
*Education & Outreach Coordinator*  
 Irving Graves  
*Office Assistant*  
 Meran Chang  
*Fair Housing Intern*

### **Mission:**

To eliminate housing discrimination and assure choice in Northeast Ohio by providing those at risk with effective information, intervention and advocacy.

## **Ohio Fair Housing Law to Change in March 2008**

Starting March 23, 2008, an individuals' military status will be protected from discrimination under Ohio's civil rights laws governing discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations. The new law, passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Strickland on December 24, 2007, defines "military status" as "the performance of duty, on a voluntary or involuntary basis, in a uniformed service, under competent authority." For more information, contact the Ohio Civil Rights Commission.

## **Spotlight on The Staff: Darlene English**

The Housing Center Board and staff are proud to welcome our newest staff member, Darlene Norwood English, as the Education & Outreach Coordinator. Darlene joins us from Lake Hospital System's marketing department, where she was marketing generalist/team member relations. Her work there included coordinating special events, such as the groundbreaking for the new hospital in Concord. This Cleveland Heights native received her Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Cleveland State University. After work in advertising and public relations, Darlene served as marketing assistant at the Living in Cleveland Center, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting homeownership in the City of Cleveland. In 2006, she was named Greater Cleveland Community Shares' Volunteer of the Year



for her countless hours of volunteer work, including chairing the committee that organized the *It's a Wing Thing!* fundraiser. In addition to enjoying yoga and participating in a book club in her spare time, Darlene is a licensed massage therapist. She resides in the North Collinwood neighborhood of Cleveland with her husband and son.

## **Moving forward in 2008**

In the coming year, the Housing Center will host a series of educational events including seminars on predatory lending, fair housing for landlords, fair housing for transitional housing providers, and fair housing law for assisted living housing providers. In addition, we will be conducting two fair housing conferences in 2008, one on accessible design of newly constructed multi-family housing, and a second on new strategies for fair housing.

The Housing Center will also partner with other non-profits and local governments to host a Fair Housing luncheon in on April 1, 2008 to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act.

Check our website for updates and registration information for all of our events.

Heights Community  
Congress Presents:

*Hip Hop for Dummies:  
Demystifying the  
Culture and Closing the  
Generation Gap*

Wednesday  
February 20, 2008

Cleveland Heights  
Community Center  
1 Monticello Blvd.  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Moderated by Dan Moulthrop,  
host of 90.3 WCPN's "The  
Sound of Idea"

For more information contact  
Dawn at 216-321-6775

**THE HOUSING  
RESEARCH & ADVOCACY  
CENTER**

*A New Era of Housing Justice*

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Check out  
our Website!

[www.thehousingcenter.org](http://www.thehousingcenter.org)



*Upcoming Housing Center Events:*

The Housing Center's  
3<sup>rd</sup> Annual  
Wine & Cheese Reception

Thursday  
April 24, 2008  
6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

Trinity Commons  
2230 Euclid Ave.  
Cleveland, OH 44115

*Accessibility  
Design & Construction  
Conference*

Wednesday  
June 11, 2008  
8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Visiting Nurse Association  
2500 E. 22nd St.  
Cleveland, OH 44115

**New Strategies for Fair  
Housing Conference**

**Friday  
November 14, 2008**

**Cleveland  
Ohio**

The Housing Center will also be conducting a number of smaller fair housing trainings for landlords and realtors, as well as predatory lending seminars for consumers. For information about any of our events, please contact the Housing Center's Education & Outreach Coordinator, Darlene English, at 216-361-9240 or [denglish@thehousingcenter.org](mailto:denglish@thehousingcenter.org).