

## 10th Annual State of Fair Housing Report Released for Fair Housing Month

The State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio: 2015 report will be released in April, National Fair Housing Month.

The 10th edition includes an overview of 135 municipal fair housing ordinances enacted throughout the region, and features new information on accessible housing for group homes, and the housing choice voucher program.

The report also analyzes data on all fair housing complaints filed with HUD in the six-county region from 1990 to 2014. The report reveals that over the 25-year period:

- On average, 133.8 complaints were filed each year in the region;
- Cases filed alleging race discrimination accounted for 34.1% of the total cases, compared to 25.6% for handicap/disability,

and 21.3% for familial status;

- Complaints based on national origin accounted for 6.4% of the total, sex/gender cases made up 5.7%, religion cases made up 1.8%, and color made up 0.9%; and

- Nearly three-quarters of the complaints (74.9%) were filed in Cuyahoga County.

To compare rates of complaints across counties, Cuyahoga County had the highest incidence of fair housing complaints with 7.2 per 100,000 people. Lake County had the second highest incidence of fair housing complaints with 5.72 complaints per 100,000 people. Ashtabula, Lorain, and Medina Counties had incidences of complaints at 3.7, 3.26, and 3.55 per 100,000 people respectively, while Geauga County had the

lowest incidence of fair housing complaints at 2.57 per 100,000.

The difference in rates of cases filed in each county is likely due to a number of factors including the differential rates of discrimination, the racial and ethnic makeup of the region, the percentage of rental (as compared to owner-occupied) housing, housing mobility, and the presence or absence of fair housing organizations that might educate and assist victims of discrimination and conduct systemic testing.

The State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio: 2015 was written by Senior Research Associate Mandy Mehlman and Research Associate Michael Lepley and is available at [www.thehousingcenter.org](http://www.thehousingcenter.org).

## Housing Center Welcomed Donors, Neighbors for Sweet Celebration

The Housing Center hosted an Open House, “Sweet Celebrations,” in February to thank donors, partners and friends for their support. The staff donated delicious desserts to tempt our guests. Midtown neighbors also stopped by to learn more about the services of the Housing Center and talk with staff and board members. Board President CARLETON MOORE! and Executive Director Hilary King welcomed guests and expressed gratitude for ongoing support of the agency’s mission and encouraged newcomers to learn more about fair housing and how they can make a difference in their communities.



## Case Spotlight

### Fair Housing Movement: Empowerment Through Advocacy

Sometimes a housing provider decides not to renew a lease for any number of reasons, from deciding to convert multi-family housing to single-family housing, or because the property is being sold. When that happens, a tenant is given a specific amount of time to secure a new home. For individuals with disabilities, that process can be much harder and take much longer. Affordable, accessible housing is a scarce commodity in Northeast Ohio.

Recently, a tenant was

nonrenewed. She became anxious as the departure date was approaching with no home in sight. She contacted the Housing Center looking for advice.

Working with Housing Center Director of Enforcement, Kris Keniray, she learned of her right to a reasonable accommodation. With the Enforcement Team's help, she was able to submit a reasonable accommodation (R/A) request letter, seeking a one-month extension due to her disability.

An R/A letter is used when a

person with a disability requests a change in a policy in order to allow them to enjoy the full benefits of the housing, as someone without a disability would. In this case, the housing provider was amenable to her request and within the month, she was able to find accessible housing that met her needs.

How will you advance the Fair Housing Movement? Please share your stories with us, and they may be featured in future editions of *Connect!*

### Housing Center Partners with Shaker Heights to Build Outreach Program

The City of Shaker Heights has partnered with the Housing Center for the Small City Fair Housing Outreach Program. The initiative serves to broaden the reach and expand the effectiveness of existing fair housing programs offered through the Shaker Heights Fair Housing Review Board.

Shaker Heights is committed to equal housing opportunities to ensure strong, diverse, welcoming neighborhoods. The City of Shaker Heights is a Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) agency, that in part, works to eliminate housing discrimination by settling complaints and providing a forum for communication among residents on equal housing issues.

To assist with that work, the

Housing Center is reaching out to community leaders, residents and real estate industry professionals who serve the City to educate them about resources available in Shaker, and encourage greater participation in housing events, such as the Housing Expo on April 22nd. Two housing events will be held to promote services offered by the Fair Housing Review Board, as well as a Fair Housing workshop focusing on ensuring accessibility in older housing.

These events, as well as the outreach conducted by the Housing Center will deepen community connections in Shaker to foster ongoing, sustainable outreach and awareness of the benefits of equal housing opportunities for all.

#### Home Expo 2015: Spring into the Home Improvement Season!

Drop in and meet local vendors, non-profit agencies, and City representatives, and arm yourself with information and resources. Learn about home repair, fair housing, and housing-related consumer protection.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, April 22, 4 – 8 pm

**WHERE:** Stephanie Tubbs Jones  
Community Building, 3450 Lee Rd.,  
Shaker Heights

#### Fair Housing Workshop: Ensuring Accessibility in Older Housing

Learn about incorporating accessible features into existing housing, and your rights and obligations under the law. Pending approval for CE credits for real estate agents.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, May 20, 1 – 4 pm

**WHERE:** Stephanie Tubbs Jones  
Community Building, 3450 Lee Rd.,  
Shaker Heights

### Cleveland Chapter of the Girl Friends, Inc. Supports Volunteer Coordination

The Housing Center is grateful to The Cleveland Chapter of Girl Friends, Inc. for their generous contribution to support the work of the Volunteer Coordinator

Khalid Ali. In this new role for the Housing Center, Khalid is developing a sustainable volunteer program and educating high school and college students

about housing discrimination and their rights. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Khalid Ali for more information, or to volunteer at [kali@thehousingcenter.org](mailto:kali@thehousingcenter.org).

## Housing Research & Advocacy Center

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### Mission:

We promote fair housing and diverse communities, and work to eliminate housing discrimination in Northeast Ohio by providing effective research, education, and advocacy.

### Values:

Equality, Respect, Honesty, Attention,  
Acceptance, Commitment, Dedication,  
Knowledge, and Understanding

## Education & Outreach:

### Fair Housing for Immigrant Populations

The Housing Center, with generous support from Ohio Savings Bank/ New York Community Bancorp, Inc. is providing fair housing education to refugees who have settled in Northeast Ohio. Recently, Darlene English, Director of Education and Outreach, presented at the International Services Center, speaking to a large classroom of individuals from Nepal, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Eric Konopinski, Mortgage Loan Consultant from Ohio Savings Bank, delivered a presentation on establishing credit in the United States, financial literacy and homebuyer education. Translators were on hand to interpret the information for the class.



National origin and ancestry are protected classes in Ohio. Housing providers cannot discriminate against individuals who were born in other countries, or whose parents were born in other countries. It is also illegal to print ads that reflects a preference or limitation based on a protected class, such as “no foreigners” or “US-born only.”

Other housing partners were on hand to provide information and literature including the Ohio Civil Rights Commission and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## NEOFHC News

The U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development Cleveland Field Office’s Fair Housing Team members were special guests at the March meeting of the Northeast Ohio Fair Housing Collaborative (NEOFHC). Team members Allison Kretz, Equal Opportunity Specialist (Compliance); Lisa Enricco, Equal Opportunity Specialist (Enforcement); and Cynthia Goard, Equal Opportunity Specialist (Compliance) gave presentations on their activities and updates on current fair housing enforcement issues that they address. The Housing Center is grateful for the Cleveland Field Office’s participation. The NEOFHC will host “From Accessibility to Visitability - A Role for Local Governments in Promoting Equal Access to Housing and Services” in April.



## Volunteers in Action

Keisha Matthews, Housing Center volunteer, and Volunteer Coordinator Khalid Ali, tabled an event at Cleveland State University: The 5th Annual Cuyahoga County Conference on Social Welfare. The conference theme was “Is Social Work Addressing Human Needs?” The Housing Center offered literature including *Obtaining & Maintaining Housing for People with Physical and Mental Disabilities*; *Fair Housing for Seniors: Housing Rights and Avoiding Scams*; *Fair Housing for the LGBTQ Community*; and *Fair Housing for Immigrants*, among others. Twenty-six CSU students pledged to volunteer. Look for the Housing Center table at an event near you!



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**ATTENTION!!**

Soon, the Housing Center will transition to a **digital newsletter only**. Please reaffirm your subscription to *Connect!* newsletter by signing up via our website, [www.thehousingcenter.org](http://www.thehousingcenter.org). Printed editions will be available by request only.

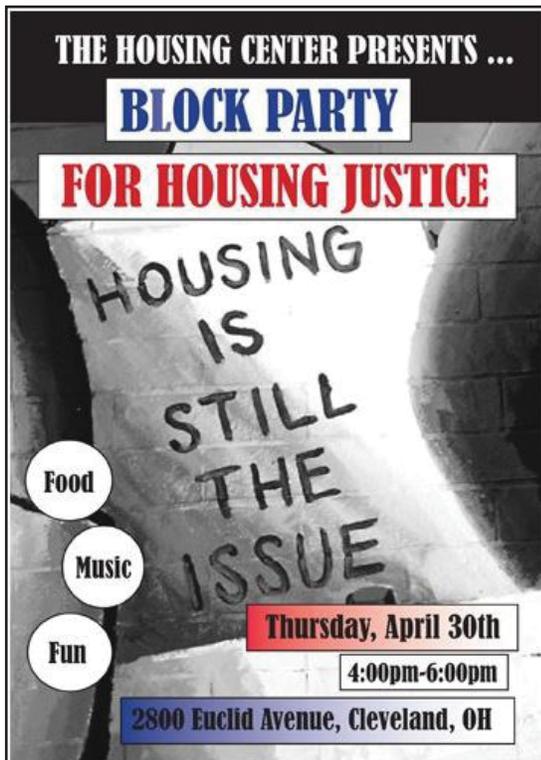


**FAIR HOUSING EVENTS**

**THE HOUSING CENTER PRESENTS ...**

**BLOCK PARTY**

**FOR HOUSING JUSTICE**



Food

Music

Fun

**Thursday, April 30th**

**4:00pm-6:00pm**

**2800 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH**

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

**The CMBA's Government Attorneys Section and the Northeast Ohio Fair Housing Collaborative present the 7th Annual Fair Housing Forum**

From Accessibility to Visitability - A Role for Local Governments in Promoting Equal Access to Housing and Services

11:30 a.m. -- 4:00 p.m. Thursday, April 16, 2015 - **3.25 CLE**

Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association

1375 East Ninth Street, Second Level, One Cleveland Center  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

To register contact the CMBA CLE Department at 216-696-2404

**Welcome Home**

**Shaker Heights Celebrates Housing**

Home Expo 2015: Spring into the Home Improvement Season!

Wednesday, April 22, 2015  
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building  
3450 Lee Road, Shaker Heights, OH 44120

To register, contact Doris Honsa, 216-361-9240 or [dhonsa@thehousingcenter.org](mailto:dhonsa@thehousingcenter.org)