

**PY 2021 Ohio Consolidated Plan  
Fair Housing and New Horizons Program  
Advisory Committee Virtual Meeting  
November 4, 2020  
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

**Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:**

Mary Church, City of Ashtabula  
Matt Currie, Advocates for Basic Legal Equity (ABLE)  
Missy Frost, City of Fairborn  
Dawn Gates, Ashtabula County Community Services  
Michelle Hyer, Buckeye Hills Regional Council  
Kris Keniray, Housing Research and Advocacy Center  
Julie Kiser, Ohio Regional Development Corporation  
Heather Martin, LUC Regional Planning Commission  
Angie McConnell, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership  
Karen Sprague, Gallia County  
Kristie Tidd, Greene County  
Charlene Watkins, Seneca Regional Planning Commission  
Melissa Zoller, Buckeye Hills Regional Council  
Nathan Simons, Hocking Athens Perry Community Action  
Heidi Barringer, Ashtabula County Community Services & Planning  
Nicholas Coggins, Trumbull County Planning Commission  
Katie Thomas, The Ability Center  
Joe Maskovyak, Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)

**Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) Employees:**

Timothy Allen  
Sheilah Bradshaw  
Shana Garrett  
Ian Thomas

**Overview: Office of Community Development Fair Housing Actions**

Tim Allen presented an overview of the Office of Community Development's (OCD) ongoing fair housing actions including:

Fair Housing Training for OCD local government grantees

OCD includes fair housing presentations in grant application and implementation training events, and offers individual grantee training upon request.

OCD's Civil Rights and Fair Housing Technical Assistance webpage

OCD provides an extensive collection of training and technical assistance materials on its [Civil Rights and Fair Housing](#) webpage. Specific topics include:

- Fair Housing Basics
- Civil Rights Technical Assistance
- Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH)
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice
- Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications
- Section 3
- State of Ohio Fair Housing

OCD also maintains a list of local government grantee fair housing contacts on the Civil Rights and Fair Housing website. The Ohio Fair Housing Contacts List is updated annually and includes all local governments with active, federally-funded OCD grants.

#### Standard Fair Housing Program

The Standard Fair Housing Program is a community-based framework of analysis, outreach, training, and technical assistance that serves to affirmatively further the purposes of the Fair Housing Act. Through this program, local governments actively promote fair housing by appointing a local contact, analyzing impediments to fair housing choice, and providing targeted public education. Local government recipients of Community Development Allocation and Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP) Program grants must fulfill Standard Fair Housing Program requirements.

#### Grant Application Review and Grant Agreements

Local governments submit Standard Fair Housing Program proposals with Community Development Allocation and Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP) Program grant applications. OCD's Civil Rights Compliance Specialist reviews Standard Fair Housing Program plans and provides technical assistance. Community Development Allocation and CHIP Program grant agreements include special conditions regarding Standard Fair Housing Program requirements and the grantee's obligation to affirmatively further fair housing.

#### Monitoring of OCD Grants

OCD monitors all of its grants for compliance with program requirements, including completion of approved Standard Fair Housing Program plans.

#### Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

Local government recipients of Community Development Allocation and CHIP Program grants conduct an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) as part of the Standard Fair Housing Program. OCD reviews local government AI documents and compiles data regarding locally identified impediments to fair housing choice to inform the statewide AI that is submitted to HUD with the Ohio Consolidated Plan. Local government grantees submitted AI documents to OCD in July 2019, and ODSA submitted the statewide AI to HUD in May 2020.

#### New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program

The New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program is a competitive program that provides funds to units of local government to affirmatively further fair housing and eliminate impediments to fair housing. Activities funded with New Horizons grants must be in addition to a grantee's Standard Fair Housing program, which is required as a part of the Community Development Program and Community Housing Impact a Preservation (CHIP) Program applications. New Horizons fair housing strategies are based on locally assessed needs, and further the State's initiative to affirmatively further fair housing.

#### Fair Housing / New Horizons Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee

As part of the citizen participation process for the Ohio Consolidated Plan, OCD convenes a Fair Housing/New Horizons Advisory Committee each year. The committee meeting is open to the public and OCD draws committee members from fair housing organizations, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO), Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA), entitlement and non-entitlement local governments, and advocacy organizations. The annual meeting provides an opportunity for a wide array of stakeholders to engage in productive discussion regarding OCD's programs, fair housing requirements, and training efforts. The committee also discusses the state of fair housing in Ohio, and offers recommendations on how OCD can enhance training and outreach to address specific issues.

## **Grantee Training and Oversight**

Tim described the fair housing training opportunities offered to OCD local government grantees. Individual grantee training is available upon request, and OCD includes a fair housing component in the grant application and implementation training events associated with the Community Development Program and Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP) Program.

Tim discussed the Fair Housing File Guide and Monitoring Tool, two of OCD's primary tools for grantee guidance and oversight. The File Guide provides a detailed outline of the documentation requirements for the Standard Fair Housing Program, and the Monitoring Tool directs OCD's oversight efforts. Basic Standard Fair Housing Program monitoring is a required component of the Community Development Program monitoring conducted by OCD staff. The Civil Rights Compliance Specialist also conducts targeted specialist monitoring.

## **Local Government Grantee Fair Housing Requirements**

Tim discussed the required Standard Fair Housing Program for OCD local government grantees. Each local government grantee must certify that it will affirmatively further fair housing, and the Standard Fair Housing Program is the primary mechanism through which local governments fulfill this obligation. Standard Fair Housing Program requirements are incorporated into the Community Development Allocation Program and CHIP Program applications.

Tim outlined the four components of the Standard Fair Housing Program – education, outreach, analysis of impediments, and a local contact - and asked the committee for comments and suggestions regarding the effectiveness of the program.

### Local Fair Housing Contact

The local fair housing contact is a local government employee who provides general information, receives and processes fair housing complaints, and refers cases to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. A qualified consultant or local agency may serve as the local fair housing coordinator, upon OCD's written approval. The contact's name, address, and phone number must appear in all fair housing materials and on the grantee's official website.

There are currently 112 communities in OCD's Fair Housing Contacts list. Fifty communities (45%) use consultants for some aspect of the Standard Fair Housing Program. The consultants are divided among Regional Planning Commissions (10), Community Action Agencies (12), Development Consultants (19), Fair Housing Consultants (3), Legal Aid (2), and fair housing offices of other local government entities (4).

### Education

The Standard Fair Housing Program provides essential education regarding discrimination and fair housing rights. Local governments design an annual training program that includes presentations to residents of areas targeted for federal assistance; special populations affected by federally assisted projects; direct beneficiaries of federal housing assistance; and three additional schools, organizations, or civic groups schools (per calendar year during the grant period). During the pandemic, OCD is allowing maximum flexibility in the implementation of fair housing training plans.

### Outreach

To reach a broad community audience, local governments also develop an annual plan to distribute fair housing brochures, pamphlets, posters, and other informational materials to 10 area agencies,

organizations, or public events each quarter during the grant period. Grantees must also provide fair housing outreach materials on their official website.

#### Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing

To help target education and outreach efforts, local governments must conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify impediments to fair housing choice within their jurisdiction. The analysis should identify policies, actions, omissions, or decisions that restrict housing choices on the basis of the seven protected classes listed in the Fair Housing Act and the two additional classes included in Ohio's Fair Housing Act (ORC 4112). Local governments use the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) to develop strategies to address and overcome discriminatory policies and practices. Local government grantees generate a new AI every five years, and in the intervening years provide an annual update. All local government grantees submitted comprehensive AI documents on July 1, 2019.

The State of Ohio compiles and analyzes data regarding locally identified impediments to fair housing choice to inform a statewide AI that is submitted to HUD with the Ohio Consolidated Plan. ODSA submitted the statewide AI in May 2020 and it was approved by HUD in June 2020.

On August 7, 2020, HUD published a Final Rule entitled "Preserving Community and Neighborhood Choice" that repealed the 1994 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice requirements where they appear in regulation. Nevertheless, the Standard Fair Housing Program will remain intact: OCD will require grantees to continue to maintain a fair housing contact and provide training and outreach. Grantees will also continue to provide annual updates to their 2019 AI documents in grant applications.

The committee agreed with OCD's decision to keep the Standard Fair Housing Program intact and recommended no changes at this time.

Committee members shared examples of how they had implemented fair housing training and outreach during the ongoing pandemic.

A committee member commented that outreach efforts at the local county fair reached a smaller than normal audience this year. They supplemented their outreach program by making fair housing materials available to voters at the nearby Board of Elections location.

A committee member described how they held virtual zoom meetings, recorded attendance, and emailed materials to the organization or directly to attendees. Once the travel ban was lifted they were able to hold several meetings by implementing social distancing requirements. During the summer some meetings were held outdoors.

A committee member stated that indoor gathering restrictions severely limited the number of events they could hold. In response, they increased their web presence, added new brochures, and initiated outreach to college students through social media

#### **New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program**

Tim described the New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program (New Horizons) application and instructions. New Horizons is a competitive program that provides funds to units of local government, or consortia of units of local government, to affirmatively further fair housing and eliminate impediments to fair housing. Activities funded with New Horizons grants must be in addition to a grantee's Standard Fair Housing Program. OCD provides New Horizons application information on the OCD Civil Rights and Fair Housing webpage, and staff promotes the program at Community Development Allocation Program and CHIP Program training events.

OCD allocates \$50,000 of CDBG funds each year for the New Horizons Program. Grant recipients may receive up to \$15,000 for one jurisdiction, and up to an additional \$5,000 for each additional eligible jurisdiction in a consortium, for a maximum award not exceeding \$30,000. Applicants must be direct Allocation Program cities or counties. Per a recommendation of the PY 2018 Advisory Committee, consortium members may now be direct Allocation Program cities or counties, or CHIP Program CDBG-eligible jurisdictions.

### **State of Ohio Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice**

The AI documents submitted by local government grantees on July 1, 2019 informed the State of Ohio's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, which was submitted in May 2020 and accepted by HUD in June 2020. The State of Ohio AI focuses on the four impediments most commonly identified by local government grantees:

- **Lack of affordable housing.** The statewide shortage of affordable housing limits housing choice and disproportionately impacts members of protected classes, especially minority populations, families with large households, and individuals with disabilities.
- **Need for fair housing education.** Non-entitlement local governments overwhelmingly indicate that citizens in their communities lack a basic understanding of fair housing rights.
- **Lack of accessible housing.** An estimated 14% of Ohioans identify as having a disability, and 64% of discrimination complaints in non-entitlement communities are based on disability. This suggests that individuals with disabilities face a disproportionate difficulty in accessing suitable housing.
- **Limited access to public transit in rural areas.** The scarcity of public transit options in Ohio's small cities and rural communities presents impediments to housing choice for those with disabilities, older adults, and individuals without personal automobiles.

### **Other Issues and Recommendations**

Tim opened the meeting to general comments or recommendations from the Committee:

- A committee member suggested that OCD should review the recommendations of the Minority Health Strike Force and how they relate to the State-identified impediments regarding affordable housing and limited access to public transit in rural areas.
- A committee member noted that several communities have passed local ordinances prohibiting housing discrimination based on source of income.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.