

Get Involved! Join the Fair Housing Implementation Council

Are fair housing issues important to you personally or professionally? Join the Fair Housing Implementation Council (FHIC), a forum where problems may be raised and addressed by other like-minded individuals and organizations.

The FHIC generally meets bi-monthly and keeps the membership informed electronically as needed. To be included in FHIC updates, complete the form below and mail it to the FHIC.

Name

Organization

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Phone

Fax

Email Address

To learn more about FHIC or if your organization is interested in funding fair housing efforts in the metro area, please contact Mark Hendrickson, FHIC Chair, at (612) 348-2920 or by email at Mark.Hendrickson@co.hennepin.mn.us.

Give Everyone A Fair Chance!

Fair Housing Implementation Council
c/o Mark Hendrickson, Chair
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Twin Cities Metro Area Fair Housing Implementation Council



*A Partnership of local
governments, housing
industry professionals and
advocates working together
to unlock doors and expand
housing choice.*



Fair Housing Do's and Don'ts

Do Not:

- Ask illegal questions about an applicant's national origin, religion, age or familial status.
- Advertise preferences.
- Require different fees, charges, deposits, etc. for similar units.
- Falsely deny that housing is available for inspection or sale.

Do:

- Treat everyone equally and be consistent.
- Document contacts in writing.
- Inform employees about Fair Housing laws and practices.

If you suspect unfair housing practices, contact:

**U.S. Department of Housing &
Urban Development's (HUD)
Fair Housing Hotline**
1-800-669-9777
TDD 1-800-927-9275

**Minnesota Department of
Human Rights**
651-296-5663

Other Twin Cities Area Resources:
Housing Equity Law Project (HELP)
651-222-5863

Housing Discrimination Law Project
612-827-3774; TDD 612-827-1491

HousingLink
612-522-2500

Twin Cities Metro Area Fair Housing Implementation Council (FHIC)

About the FHIC

The FHIC was established in July 2002 to affirmatively further fair housing throughout the housing market area. Participating members administer federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funding, as well as other programs with a commitment to Fair Housing. The FHIC also has representation in a number of area-wide agencies and organizations interested in affirmatively furthering fair housing.

FHIC Members

Participating members include the counties of Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington, the cities of Bloomington, Minneapolis, Plymouth and St. Paul, and the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (representing Carver and Scott counties). Collaborating stakeholders include the Board of Realtors, Minnesota Multi-Housing Association, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, Legal Aid of Minneapolis and other housing industry representatives and advocates.

FHIC Committees

FHIC has three sub-committees that focus on Fair Housing issues and how to improve shortcomings:

- Public Sector
- Homeownership
- Private Rental Housing

What Does the FHIC Do?

The FHIC initiates activities that are designed to stop discrimination and promote integration. Such activities are a response to the 2001 Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI), funded by participating metropolitan jurisdictions.

The AI evaluates housing related policies and practices that may prevent people from living where they would like. It's an educational tool for housing planners, policymakers and industry professionals and directs FHIC's affirmative activities. An Action Guide based on the AI outlines affirmative Fair Housing actions.

The AI and Action Guide are available on the web at www.metrocouncil.org/planning/housing/FHActionGuide.htm.

Based on Action Plan Recommendations, the Council has taken actions to address several impediments:

Tenant Screenings

Collecting, verifying and disseminating credit, criminal background and eviction information is expensive and limits choice for many tenants. FHIC investigated four metro area screening companies to identify best practices and recommend ways to assure that reports are fair and accurate.

Recommendations include: 1) creating opportunities for tenants to see reports prior to renting, 2) improving the accuracy of public records, and 3) educating property owners, managers and renters.

Accessible Housing

FHIC worked with HousingLink to 1) evaluate the mismatch between the supply and need for physically accessible housing in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and 2) to launch a marketing initiative that would more effectively link tenants with available accessible units. HousingLink is now offering custom links that can match specific features with renter needs.

Limited English Proficiency

FHIC organized Metro Area public housing authorities to translate commonly used housing assistance documents into Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali and Spanish languages. FHIC is optimistic that the documents will soon be available on the web.

Fair Housing Testing & Enforcement

One of the newest activities focuses on complaint based testing. Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, Inc./Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance will join forces to investigate, prosecute and negotiate settlements to remedy discriminatory practices in the metropolitan area. FHIC jurisdictions may also recommend testing for multi-family projects financed with entitlement funding.

Information & Outreach

FHIC members participate in a variety of workshops presented by associate members and are available for presentations regarding fair housing and affirmative action. For example, FHIC was involved with the Human Rights Conference in 2004, the

Regional Section 504 training and a training conference on accessibility requirements for architects, builders, developers and owners of rental properties.

Rental Application Fees

FHIC supported adoption of the Minneapolis rental application fee ordinance to help ease the difficult and often costly process of finding rental housing. Landlords must disclose tenant selection criteria before accepting an application fee and refund the fee if the tenant is rejected for reasons other than stated.

Predatory Lending

Although several jurisdictions have individually supported efforts to curb predatory lending through education and outreach, the FHIC did support adoption of a Minneapolis city ordinance prohibiting predatory lending. The ordinance did not pass, but the City did take steps to develop a comprehensive response to the issue, including state legislative action.

2005-2006 FHIC Priority Activities

- A "reasonable accommodation" educational campaign for rental housing owners and managers and persons with disabilities.
- Sponsoring a public forum on fair housing and tenants with limited English proficiency living in federally assisted housing.
- Fostering Inclusive Communities through outreach and action.