

Fair Housing News



An e-newsletter brought to you by the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit

(Winter 2019)

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Fair Housing Training



Our office will co-sponsor a full day of technical training on the Fair Housing Act's design & construction requirements. This training will take place in Detroit on May 29, 2019. The training will be provided by LCM Architects, Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST Program Managers. This training is most applicable to architects, designers, civil engineers, landscape architects, contractors, developers, builders and enforcement officials. Due to a grant from HUD, this training opportunity is being offered free of charge. Please contact our office for further details and to register for the training.

Fair Housing Advocacy



We often advocate on important fair housing matters. At the federal level we recently advocated for retaining HUD's Disparate Impact and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulations, including the Assessment Tool for Local Governments. At the state level we have assisted with interpreting the Michigan Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act and in addressing proposed legislation concerning emotional support animals.

Enforcement Updates



Complaint Intake. We received 319 complaints in 2018. Part of the complaint volume is due to our populous Macomb, Oakland and Wayne county service area. This area includes over 3.8 million residents, nearly 40% of Michigan's population. Increased complaint activity also results from substandard rental housing. Families are forced into substandard housing due to the shortage of affordable housing for low-income households. The majority of our complaints are made by low income individuals, often women with minor children in their household.

Consent Order. In January 2019, the FHCMD entered into a \$300,000 consent order in a familial status case involving the River Park Lofts apartment complex on Iron Street in Detroit. The order includes a \$75,000 victims' fund. Attorneys Chui Karega and Stephen Thomas represented the FHCMD. U.S. District Judge George Karem Steeh presided over the case.

Settlement. In December 2018, the FHCMD entered into a \$15,000 settlement of a race discrimination case arising from the Gardens of Clinton property on Metropolitan Parkway in Clinton Township. Attorney John Lucas represented the FHCMD. U.S. District Judge Linda V. Parker presided over the case.

Appeal. In November 2018, U.S. District Judge David M. Lawson granted summary judgment, dismissing claims for nuisance and denial of a reasonable accommodation filed by Phyllis Davis. Attorneys Alan J. Gocha and Justin A. Barry have filed an appeal on Ms. Davis' behalf.

2018 Leadership Awards



We acknowledged the outstanding contributors to fair housing by the ACLU of Michigan; Margaret Brown, former FHCMD executive director; the late Michael Olshan, former FHCMD legal services coordinator; Mirriam Livingstone, vice-president of Village Green and former FHCMD board member; and Michael Simmons, a long-time fair housing tester. Pictured here are testing coordinators Engela Bertolini and Charles Shanaman presenting Mr. Simmons with his award.

Thank you again to our sponsors: Chemical Bank (*silver sponsor*); Village Green (*bronze sponsor*); and Comerica Bank, First Independence Bank, Continental Management & Gramer PLLC, Evelyn V. Caise; Lautrec, Ltd, Michigan Realtors, North Oakland Board of Realtors, Southfield Non-Profit Housing Corporation, and The Associated Management Company (*patron sponsors*).

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