

# *2020 ANNUAL REPORT*

**About Us:**

*The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan is a private, non-profit fair housing organization committed to providing comprehensive fair housing services, including education, outreach, research, advocacy, and enforcement. The Fair Housing Center is the front door to housing choice, ensuring that everyone in our community has equal opportunity to choose housing that's right for them. Through education, research and advocacy, we prevent housing discrimination, remove barriers that allow it to persist, and restore housing choice when discrimination happens.*

**Services and Programs Include:**

- *General information sessions/presentations*
- *Technical training on fair housing laws and practices*
- *One-on-one technical support via phone or email*
- *Annual community fair housing events and interactive workshop series*
- *Housing tester program to survey the market for housing discrimination*
- *Complaint filing and case management for alleged incidents of discrimination*
- *Mediation and resolution support for alleged incidents of discrimination*
- *Fact sheets, guidebooks, and more on our website*
- *Classroom activities and other learning opportunities*

*Fair Housing Center of West Michigan:  
Opening Doors to Housing Choice*

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## 2020 Education & Outreach Data

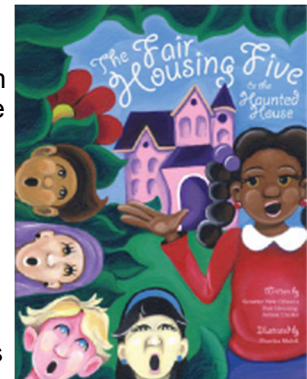
The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan's education and outreach services provide housing consumers the awareness necessary to recognize and assert their fair housing rights and also empower the housing industry with the knowledge of the law in order to prevent future fair housing violations. In 2020, the Center provided comprehensive fair housing education and outreach services to 17,818 people throughout west Michigan and distributed 19,821 fair housing materials, including brochures, guidebooks, newsletters, fact sheets, press releases, and more.

### Educating from a Distance

Due to government and public health restrictions in place, the FHCWM was not able to host the 33rd Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series as originally planned for May 7, 2020. The FHCWM got creative and instead offered online trainings and conducted socially distanced outreach with fair housing rights materials targeted towards populations that would most likely be impacted by the pandemic.

The Center designed and provided a brand new fair housing training opportunity, 'Fair Housing Webinars: Assistance Animals in Housing', which was offered twice in June via Zoom webinar. A total of 89 people attended, including third party property managers, individual landlords, attorneys, state government and Civil Rights representatives, public housing authorities, social service agency employees, college and university staff, and beyond. The webinars focused on HUD's Notice on Assistance Animal in Housing, which was released on January 28, 2020. Topics that were covered included an overview of the new guidance and processes provided in the Notice as well as best practices and resources available to assist with compliance. Attendees received the Center's newest resource, which is based on the new guidance, the *FHCWM Resource Guide on Assistance Animals in Housing* as well as updated assistance animal sample policies and guidebooks from both the industry and housing consumer perspective on reasonable accommodations and modifications, among other resources.

The Center is also pleased to have successfully partnered with the Literacy Center of West Michigan and ReadGR to conduct outreach remotely to greater Grand Rapids area families through providing fair housing children's books to over 700 children. The book, *The Fair Housing Five & the Haunted House*, is a colorfully illustrated children's book that tells the story of five children that take action in response to a landlord who is discriminating in their neighborhood. The family who experiences housing discrimination works with their local fair housing center to secure their housing choice. It was developed by the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center and New Orleans educators, parents, and students. The FHCWM provided copies of the books in English and Spanish with bilingual fair housing bookmarks. The outreach materials also included a brochure on fair housing rights, signs of possible housing discrimination, steps to take, and how to report it to the Center.



*The Fair Housing Five & the Haunted House*

## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing



Jim McCarthy

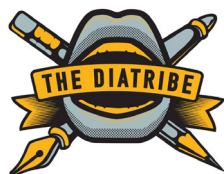
For the first time in its 40-year history, the FHCWM successfully hosted a fair housing event online! The 14th Annual *Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing* breakfast event was held on November 5, 2020 for 86 attendees. Lakeshore Advisory Board Member Lyn Raymond remotely presented the *Lakeshore Fair Housing Award* to Esther Fifelski, the Human/International Relations Director for the City of Holland, for her passionate commitment to and active advocacy for fair housing. Keynote speaker Jim McCarthy (President & CEO of the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center, Inc.) provided an in-depth look at the current state of fair housing as well as discussed current fair housing cases and trends, including fair housing concerns in light of the pandemic.

## Fair Housing Trainings

During 2020, the Fair Housing Center transitioned to developing and providing a wide range of virtual fair housing curricula and trainings. Staff trained over 1,340 housing professionals on their fair housing responsibilities as well as over 600 community members on their fair housing rights through conducting a total of 66 fair housing trainings and presentations. These sessions were attended by a great variety of groups, including home-seekers, social service agencies, municipal employees, non-profit organizations, landlords, property managers, condominium associations, lenders, and real estate sales professionals. The Center collaborated with many organizations to provide targeted information to each audience based on their needs and interests.

## Fair Housing Classroom Curricula

The FHCWM continues to offer Writing to Right Wrongs (WRW) programming in partnership with fellow non-profit, The Diatribe. WRW is an interactive, fair housing and social justice-themed program designed to enrich students' and their families' understanding of equal housing opportunity and civil rights; it features The Diatribe's teaching artists Gleason, Marcel "Fable" Price, G Foster II aka AutoPilot, Sprout "KFG" Foster-Goodrich, and Ericka "Kyd Kane" Thompson (also Grand Rapids' Poet Laureate!). Center staff assist them in illustrating the connection of *where* one lives impacting *how* one lives. WRW includes interactive presentations, simulation experiences, and slam poetry performances by the artists as well as the students. The poetry and creative components provide students with the opportunity to create their own art and share their voice, as well as further their speaking and writing skill sets. For the 2019-2020 school year, the programming reached 120 students in 3 different Grand Rapids Public School high schools as well as East Lee Campus in the Godfrey-Lee Public School District. The programming will continue in Ottawa Hills, Union, and Godwin Heights high schools in the 2020-2021 school year. The Center is very pleased to have received continued funding from the City of



Wyoming Community Development Block Grant program for WRW. The program continues to include a poetry contest for participating students, offering winning students the opportunity to perform their piece and a cash prize.



## Complaints and Casework

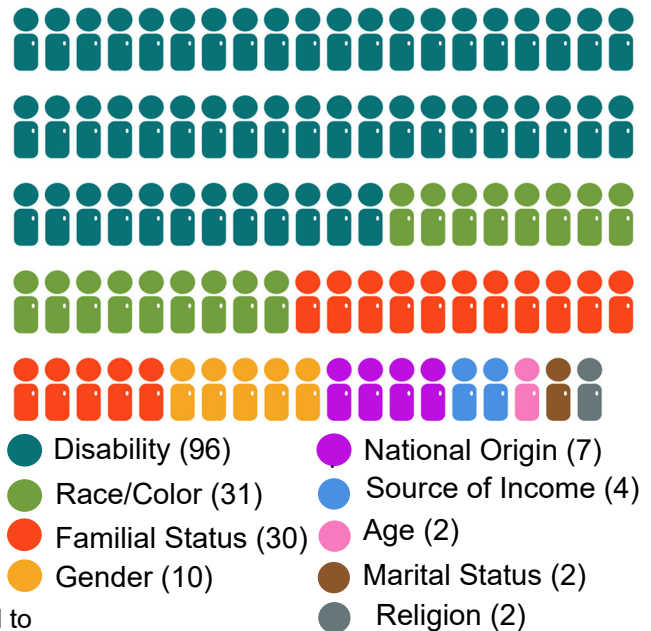
In 2020, the Fair Housing Center managed a total of 242 fair housing cases, 176 of which were newly initiated. The 176 cases initiated resulted from 184 allegations received throughout the year. These allegations pertained to people and/or property within 38 different municipalities throughout west Michigan, spanning 14 different counties. **See chart at right for distribution of allegations by the protected basis.** Of the 176 cases, 98 were initiated by individual clients or anonymous bona fide allegations, while the remaining 78 were agency-initiated as a result of the Center's independent research or investigation.

The cases managed in 2020 continued to highlight systemic barriers to fair housing choice, specifically on the bases of disability, race, and familial status. This past year, and notably for the 6th year in a row, disability represented the most common basis of cases handled and refusal to make a reasonable accommodation/modification is one of the most prevalent allegations handled by the Center.

As a result of casework and investigation, the Center resolved and closed a total of 185 cases in 2020, which included the closure of 133 of the 176 cases initiated in 2020. Through research, investigation, mediation and advocacy, the Center accomplished the following:

- helped people obtain 35 reasonable accommodations and 14 reasonable modifications to have access and full use of their homes;
- helped 16 people to retain safe, affordable housing;
- helped 12 people to obtain safe, affordable housing;
- filed 6 cases with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights;
- referred 2 cases to the U.S. Department of Justice;
- referred 1 case to a cooperating attorney;
- formally settled/conciliated 9 cases;
- secured over \$79,000 in monetary compensation for individuals that alleged housing discrimination;
- made 416 housing providers aware of their fair housing rights and responsibilities, wherein 356 formally committed to fair housing training;
- prompted 392 housing providers to modify their policies/practices to comply with the law; and
- opened 74,082 housing units up from discrimination, 624 of those units in senior housing communities.

2020 Allegations by Protected Class

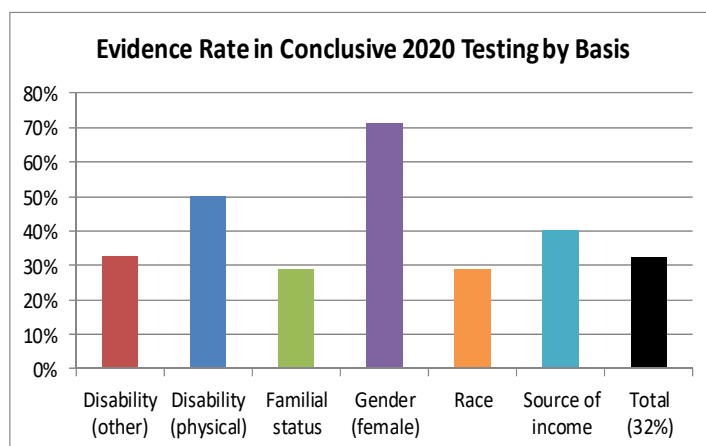


## Highlighted Cases

**We believe you — Combatting sexual harassment in housing** — The Center received an individual allegation of sexual harassment against a west Michigan landlord. After thorough and efficient investigation, the Center referred the case to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) with evidence of a systemic pattern and practice of sexual harassment against female tenants. Numerous women had allegedly been subjected to sexual harassment by this landlord, including entering their homes without consent, unwanted sexual advances and requests for explicit photos, offers to make repairs or reduce rent in exchange for sex, and evicting tenants who refused his advances. The DOJ filed a lawsuit against the landlord in mid 2020 and continues to work with the Center to identify and support the women involved.

**Bringing Fair Housing Home** — One woman's tireless multi-state efforts to find housing that would accommodate her disabilities were continually setback by health challenges, communication limitations, and other roadblocks. As a result, she had lived with her service dog in her vehicle for over 2 years and was at risk of losing a housing voucher for which she had recently qualified. Through advocacy and support by the Center, as well as facilitated coordination of other local non-profits, she secured 13 reasonable accommodations and 11 reasonable modifications that enabled her to have a safe, stable and affordable place to finally call home.

## Testing



In 2020, the Center conducted 259 fair housing tests involving people or property in over 50 municipalities throughout west Michigan. These tests were conducted to investigate equal treatment and fair housing practices throughout the housing industry. Of these tests, 67 were conducted in response to bona fide allegations of housing discrimination, while the remaining 192 were conducted as market survey

or as part of a systemic investigation. The Center detected evidence of significant differences and/or discriminatory treatment at the rate of 32% overall in testing.

The Center conducted the 259 tests on the following bases: source of income (5), gender (8), race (23), familial status (83), and disability (140). Consistent with past findings, the Center detected substantial rates of evidence of unequal treatment across several protected bases. Throughout 2020, the Center has seen high evidence rate in the following federal protected classes: race (29%); familial status (29%); disability—physical (50%); disability—other (33%); and gender (71%).

## 2020 Membership Drive

Thanks to our member's VERY generous support, the 2020 drive raised over \$13,852 for the Center's Education & Outreach programs and efforts!

### Supporting Members

- John Hunting
- Isely Family
- Tim Reimink
- Mercantile Bank
- Kate Wolters

### Corporate Members

- Allen Edwin
- Arbor Lake Apartments
- Bayberry Pointe Apartments\*
- Holland Home\*
- Horizon Bank
- Irwin Seating Company
- Land & Company
- Macatawa Bank
- Michigan Manufactured Housing Association
- Red Oak Management Co., Inc.
- Urban Pharm\*
- West Michigan Community Bank

### Business Members

- Arlington Woods\*
- Brookmeadow Apartments
- Burton's Landing Apartments
- BVW Property Management LLC
- Compass Property Management
- Cooper's Landing Apartments
- Crossroads Apartments
- Dunbar Woods Apartments
- Fieldstone Apartments
- Genesis Non-Profit Housing Corp.\*
- Georgetown West
- The Grand Castle
- Grand Rapids Community College
- Grand Rapids Study Club\*
- Heartland Builders
- Hidden Spring, LLC\*
- High Pointe Apartments
- Lighthouse Property Management
- Management Business Solutions
- Midwest Properties of MI
- North Pointe Apartments
- Oakview Apartments
- Parkcrest Apartments
- Peppercorn Apartments
- Prairie Creek Apartments
- Samaritas
- State Farm - Koorndyk Agency\*
- TEM Property Management Co LLC
- The Fulton Group, LLC
- Thomas Classrooms & Modulares, LLC
- West Michigan Lakeshore Association of REALTORS
- Wimbleton Apartments
- Winfield/Fase Real Estate
- Woodfield Apartments
- York Creek Apartments



## Individual Members

- Zahabia Ahmed-Usmani\*
- Chris Ameen\*
- Anonymous
- Peter Armstrong\*
- Sophie Baker
- Michelle Behrenwald\*
- Kay Behrenwald
- Louis Berra
- Rosalynn Bliss\*
- Jonathan Bradford & Grace Post Bradford\*
- Otto & Jodie Brannum\*
- Elizabeth Bransdorfer\*
- Comm. Emily Bridson - City of Kentwood\*
- Mary Bueche
- Annamarie Buller\*
- Andrew Carter\*
- Rick & Willow Chapla\*
- Keith & Jillian Chapman\*
- Clapp Family\*
- Heather Collinash
- Nicole Collins
- Phil Coray\*
- Crawford & Laurie Craft Family Fund of Grand Rapids Community Foudnation\*
- Andrea Crumback\*
- Joe & Linda Czarnik\*
- David Czurak
- Marc Daneman - Daneman Associates\*
- Al & Barb Dannenberg
- Kathleen Feeney & John Stuve\*
- Twink Frey\*
- Steven Gilbert\*
- Stephanie Gingerich\*
- Comm. Carol Glanville - City of Walker\*
- Daniel Grzywacz\*
- Barbara Haynes\*
- Nancy Haynes & Bryan Bickford\*
- Gail & Kenneth Heffner\*
- Heidi Henderson
- Carol Hennessy & Kenneth Nysson\*
- Brent Hoitenga - Wintersun Properties\*
- Preston & Sylvia Hopson\*
- DJ & Mandy Hughes\*
- Win & Kyle Irwin\*
- Bart & Sharon Jonker\*
- Liz Keegan\*
- Mark Kornelis\*
- Kevin Kroondyk - Greenridge Realty\*
- Helen Lehman\*
- Bobby Lewis - Amazing Real Estate Solutions
- Thomas Logan\*
- Rhonda Lubberts\*
- Thomas Manus
- David & Mary Mapes\*
- Brian & Abigail Matzke
- Cheryl McKinney
- Dave Medema\*
- Ralph & Yolanda Metcalf
- Shirley Miles\*
- Brianna Miranda
- Alexandra Mularoni
- Cray Mulder\*
- William Murphy
- Lee Nelson Weber
- Hannah Notess\*
- Jacquelyn O'Connor\*
- Tom & Fonda Paarlberg\*
- Joe & Marie Parzych\*
- Carol Perschbacher\*
- H. Rhett & Jeralyn Pinsky\*
- Demera Platt - Fifth Third Bank\*
- Lyn Raymond\*
- Cami Reister Estep - Jumping Frog Communications\*
- Julie Rietberg\*
- Tony & Carolyn Roussey\*
- Leslie Ruppel\*
- Jay & Teri Schrimpf\*
- Sharon Smith\*
- William Stellin\*
- Ruth Stevens & Thomas Stellard\*
- Dennis & Deborah Sturtevant\*
- James & Suzanne Swanlund\*
- Jim & Pat Talen\*
- Hattie Tinney Beenen\*
- Carol Townsend\*
- Sharon Umlor\*
- Lydia Vanderveen\*
- Matthew & Amy VanZetten\*
- James Vaughn\*
- Rachel VonIns\*
- SuLyn Weaver\*
- Elizabeth Welch\*
- Herb & Ann Weller\*
- Casey & Lucia White
- Mike & Mary Alice Williams\*
- Michael Yates
- Milinda Ysasi & Rafael Castanon\*
- Betty Zylstra & David Baak\*

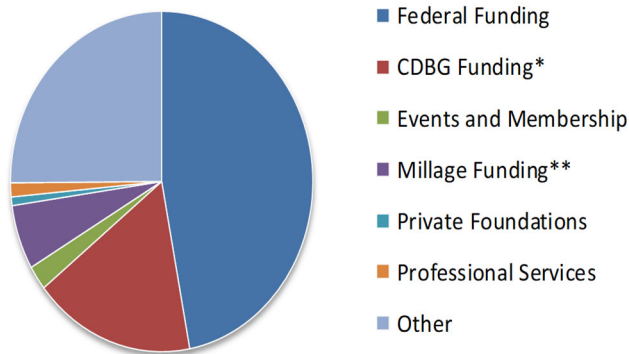
*\* Members who contributed to the \$40 for 40 more years campaign.*

**Visit [www.fhcwm.org/giving](http://www.fhcwm.org/giving) to become a member if you are not one already!**

MEMBERS

## 2020 Financial Report

### Revenue Sources 2020



\*Cities of Grand Rapids, Holland, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Norton Shores, Wyoming and Kent County.

\*\*Kent County Senior Millage and Muskegon County Senior Millage

The Fair Housing Center received \$914,375.15 in revenue in 2020. Forty-seven percent of the revenue came from federal grants with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Fair Housing Initiatives Program for the Private Enforcement Initiative and the Education and Outreach Initiative; 17% came from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) contracts or other federal contracts with the County of Kent, and the Cities of Holland, Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Norton Shores and Wyoming; 6% came from contracts under the Kent County Senior Millage and Muskegon County Senior Millage; and .8% from private foundation grants. The grants and contracts are used to fund education, enforcement and advocacy services, compliance monitoring, and administrative services.

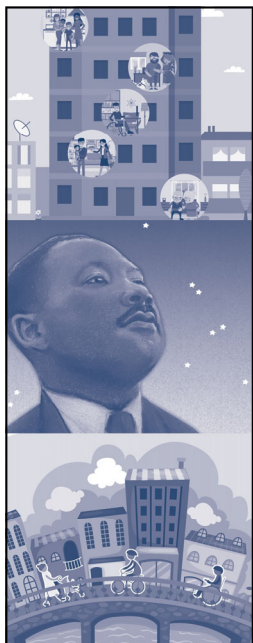


Due to the pandemic, the Center held one (1) major event in 2020, the 14th Annual Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing breakfast event, which, when combined with membership contributions, accounted for 2.3% of the total revenue for the year. Contracted professional services, including trainings and other fair housing services, and other income, such as investment interest and settlements, accounted for the remaining 26% of the revenue in 2020.

Program service costs, including, but not limited to, staffing, supplies, contract services, professional services, and printing, represented approximately 91% of the total expenses in 2020. Other operating expenses represented approximately 9% and event and membership expenses represented 0.3% of the total expenses in 2020.

### 2020 Lakeshore Advisory Board

**PRESIDENT, Lyn Raymond**, Lakeshore Housing Alliance  
**Reatha Anderson**, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Muskegon  
**Phil Coray**, Alliance for Cultural & Ethnic Harmony  
**Esther Fifelski**, City of Holland  
**Jody Immink**, J I Consulting Services, LLC  
**Bart Jonker**, ChoiceOne Bank  
**Mark Kornelis**, City of Holland  
**Mary Libby**, Coldwell Banker Woodland Schmidt  
**Dave Stellin**, Lake Michigan Credit Union  
**Ben VanderWoude**, BVW Property Management



### Executive Board of Directors

**PRESIDENT, Doretha Ardoin**, Greenridge Realty  
**VICE PRESIDENT, Sharon Smith**, Aquinas College  
**TREASURER, Ryan VanderMeer**, Urban Pharm  
**SECRETARY, Andrea Crumback**, Mika Meyers, PLC

### 2020 Board of Directors

**Zahabia Ahmed-Usami**, GVSU Kaufman Interfaith Institute  
**Michelle Behrenwald**, Inspired Design  
**Rhae-Ann Booker**, Metro Health, U of M Health  
**Susan Cervantes**, Kent County Community Action  
**Floriza Genautis**, Management Business Solutions  
**Dan Koorndyk**, State Farm Insurance  
**Patrick Lonergan**, Fifth Third Bank  
**Sarah Lucas**, Housing North  
**Kathryn Mullins**, Grand Rapids Community College Foundation  
**John Smith**, Legal Aid of Western Michigan  
**Dave Stellin**, Lake Michigan Credit Union  
**Kristin Turkelson**, City of Grand Rapids Planning Department  
**Mike Yates**, Mercantile Bank of Michigan  
**Troy Zapolski**, Inner Circle Holdings

### Staff

**Nancy Haynes**, Executive Director  
**Liz Keegan**, Director of Education and Outreach  
**Elizabeth Stoddard**, Director of Advocacy  
**Gabe Chapla**, Investigations Manager  
**Becky Nespital**, Enforcement Coordinator  
**George Jeffries**, Intake Specialist / Office Coordinator  
**Brianna Miranda**, Education and Outreach Coordinator



*Preventing and eliminating illegal housing discrimination,  
ensuring equal housing opportunity, and promoting  
inclusive communities through education, outreach,  
research, advocacy, and enforcement.*



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Website: [www.fhcwm.org](http://www.fhcwm.org)

Serving the Michigan counties of Allegan, Grand Traverse, Ionia,  
Isabella, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana,  
Osceola and Ottawa.