



FAIR HOUSING NEWS

Produced by the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

Volume I — 2023

Michigan Civil Rights Law

Amended to add Sexual

Orientation, Gender Identity

Gov. Whitmer signed an expansion of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) into law on March 16, 2023; it now includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as being protected from discrimination under the law. The ELCRA amendment ensures LGBTQ+ people in Michigan are protected from discrimination in housing, employment, education, and public accommodations. It defines gender identity or expression as “having or being perceived as having a gender-related self-identity or expression whether or not associated with an individual’s assigned sex at birth” and sexual orientation as “having an orientation for heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality or having a history of such an orientation or being identified with such an orientation.” It will go into effect 90 days after its enactment.

HUD & FHCWM Publish New

Guidance & Tools

On June 10, 2022, HUD published a memo on the *Use of Criminal Records by Providers of Housing* under the Fair Housing Act. It sets out examples of violations and covers topics like evictions, accommodations to a screening policy based on a disability, individualized assessments, and the potential for discriminatory algorithms in third-party... (cont. p. 2)

Please join us!

FHCWM’s 35th Annual Event

We are pleased to announce that registration is open for this year’s Fair Housing Workshop Series. The event will take place online on Thursday, **April 27, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.** and feature a single track of sessions on a simplified platform. Our theme is “*Where We*



Live Matters: Housing, Health, and the Environment.”

Dr. Andre Perry (left), Senior Fellow at Brookings Metro, will provide the morning plenary to

establish the intersection between the social determinants of health and fair housing. We are also excited to

welcome **Debby Goldberg** (right), Vice President of Housing Policy & Special Projects at National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), to



our lineup of expert speakers. The event will feature two back-to-back workshops on housing, health, and the environment as well as the 2023 Fair Housing Awards and a special poetry performance by Muskegon local artist **Ebony Davis a.k.a. Gemini DaPoet**.

Tickets are \$35. We offer a discounted rate for non-profits, students, seniors, and those experiencing financial hardship as well as full scholarships for Kent County seniors age 60 and older courtesy of the Kent County Senior Millage. To register and learn more: www.fhcwm.org/lws and www.facebook.com/fhcwm.

FHCWM Year in Review: 2022

High Demand & Caseload

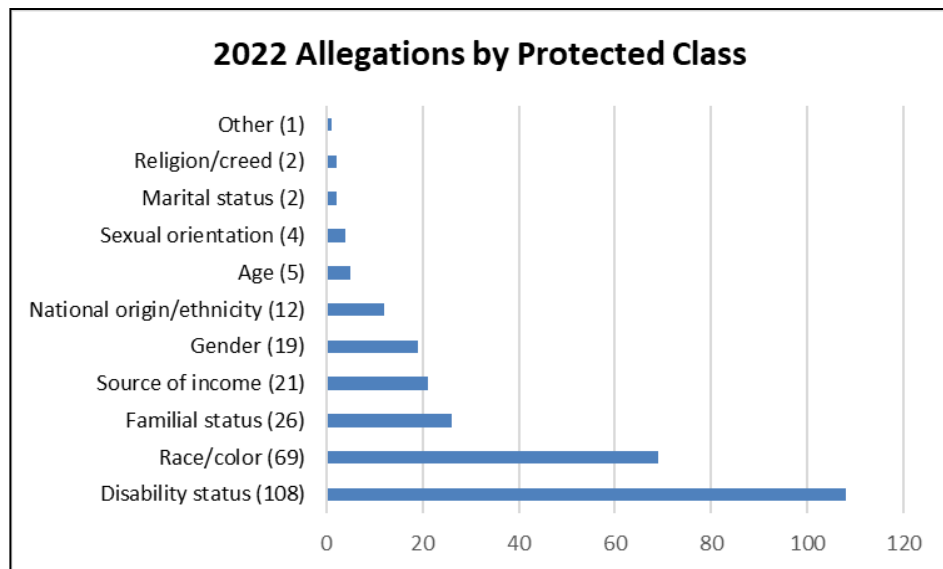
FHCWM again experienced record demand in 2022 and worked diligently to successfully provide its enforcement, advocacy, education, and outreach services in unique and creative ways. FHCWM received a total of 269 separate fair housing allegations from across west Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, resulting in 224 cases that were newly initiated in 2022. This is the second highest number of annual cases FHCWM ever recorded and marks the highest number of client-initiated cases ever.

The majority of cases represented discrimination as part of a rental transaction (57%) followed by denials of or other barriers related to requests for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities (28%). Other cases involved discrimination in sales (2%), mortgage transactions (3%), and advertising (2%); FHCWM also had cases related to illegal harassment (2%) because of a protected class. For the 7th year in a row, allegations of disability-based discrimination led the cases filed with FHCWM representing 48% of total cases, followed by allegations of race (31%), ... (cont. p. 2)

Inside this issue:

MI Law Expanded	1
New HUD Guidance & Tools	1-2
35th Annual Fair Housing Event	1
FHCWM Year in Review	1-2
Thank you 2022 Members!	3
FHCWM Updates	4

FHCWM Year in Review... (cont.) and familial status (12%) based discrimination. Disability-related cases, while still high, took a slight downturn, discontinuing a sustained, upward trend. Allegations of race-based housing discrimination rose significantly in 2022 and allegations on the basis of source of income or gender have doubled over the last 5 years.



As a result of its casework, FHCWM was able to open up an incredible total of 67,486 units from housing discrimination across west Michigan and beyond. This includes 3,526 senior housing units, which are in high demand. Further, 116 housing providers made changes to ensure fair housing compliance. FHCWM assisted 48 people in securing reasonable accommodations or modifications. Accommodations are changes in rules or policies, like assigning an accessible parking spot or allowing an assistance animal in a 'no pet' property; modifications are changes like installing grab bars or lowering kitchen counters based on a disability and disability-related need. These changes can significantly increase the safety, health, independence, and well-being of people with disabilities in their housing.

In 2022, FHCWM provided education and outreach to 15,985 people and distributed over 14,500 fair housing materials electronically and in print. Further, over 1,340 housing professionals received fair housing training focused on best practices and compliance in renting, selling, marketing, managing, and maintaining housing while more than 1,500 community members received fair housing rights via 35 presentations. Staff provided 171 fair housing trainings and just over 71 hours of one-on-one technical assistance focused on fair housing compliance and best practices to 115 unduplicated housing industry members.

A record 506 high school students participated in FHCWM's *Writing to Right Wrongs* (WRW) program, which is conducted in partnership with The Diatribe, a local artist's collaborative focused on helping youth find their voices and cope with challenges. WRW is a 10-week interactive fair housing and social justice-themed program with the purpose of enriching high school students and their families' understanding of civil rights and cultivating the students' creative writing and public speaking skills. Eleven classrooms in 8 high schools located in Grand Rapids, Muskegon, and Wyoming participated! Please contact us if you'd like to learn more about these services and stay tuned to fhcwm.org/annualreports.



**Fair Housing Center
of West Michigan**
20 Hall Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
T: (616) 451-2980

FHCWM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sharon Smith, President

Aquinas College

John Smith, Vice President

Legal Aid of Western Michigan

Andrea Crumback, Secretary

Michigan Supreme Court

Ryan VanderMeer, Treasurer

Urban Pharm

Doretha Ardoin, Immediate Past President

Greenridge Realty, Inc.

Zahabia Ahmed-USmani

GVSU Kaufman Interfaith Institute

Michelle Behrenwald

Inspired Design

Rhae-Ann Booker

University of Michigan Health-West

Susan Cervantes

Community Member

Floriza Genautis

Management Business Solutions

Dan Koorndyk

State Farm Insurance

Patrick Lonergan

Fifth Third Bank—retired

Kathryn Mullins

Ferris State University

Dave Stellan

Lake Michigan Credit Union

Kristin Turkelson

City of Grand Rapids Planning Dept.

Mike Yates

Mercantile Bank

HUD & FHCWM Guidance & Tools

... (cont.) screening. FHCWM created a new companion resource, *Fact Sheet: Fair Housing & Criminal Background Screening*, which summarizes the memo and HUD recommended best practices in procedures and policy. HUD also has released an *Assistance Animals & Fair Housing - Navigating Reasonable Accommodations* suite of products, including a webinar. Links to the suite and FHCWM Fact Sheets, Guidebooks, Resource Guides and more is available by topic at www.fhcwm.org/publications.

The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under grants with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication.

Protected classes: race, color, national origin, religion, family status, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability.

Thank You to our 2022 Members!

Our members further fair housing efforts by providing much needed support for programs and services that would otherwise go unfunded. Because of their generous support, we raised over \$13,239 for FHCWM education and outreach programs!

Special Thanks to Our Supporting Members

- Rhae-Ann Booker
- BVW Property Management
- ChoiceOne Bank
- Heartland Builders
- John Hunting
- Patrick Lonergan
- Mercantile Bank
- Fred Underwood

Corporate Members

- Arbor Lake Apartments
- Arlington Woods
- Aspire North REALTORS
- Bayberry Apartments LLC
- Irwin Seating Co
- Land & Company
- Michigan Manufactured Housing Association
- West Michigan Community Bank
- Wintersun Properties
- Wyma Properties/Lakeside Real Estate Services

Business Members

- Bellabay Realty SW - Scott Grondman
- Brookmeadow Apartments
- Burton's Landing Apartments
- Cooper's Landing Apartments
- Crossroads Apartments
- Dunbar Woods Apartments

- EnviroSafe, Inc.
- Fieldstone Apartments
- Gateway Mission (Holland Rescue Mission)
- Genesis Non Profit Housing Corporation
- Georgetown West Apartments
- GLM Companies
- Grand Rapids Housing Commission
- Grand Rapids LGBTQ Healthcare Consortium
- Hidden Creek Community
- Hidden Spring LLC
- High Pointe Apartments
- Inner City Christian Federation
- JI Consulting Services
- Lighthouse Property Management
- LINC UP
- Management Business Solutions
- Mortgage 1
- New Development Corporation
- North Pointe Apartments
- Oakview Apartments
- Parkcrest Apartments
- Peppercorn Apartments
- Prairie Creek Apartments
- State Farm/Koorndyk Agency
- TEM Property Management Co. LLC
- The Preserve at Woodfield
- Thomas Classrooms & Modulares LLC
- Urban Pharm
- Wimbledon Apartments
- Woodfield Apartments
- York Creek Apartments
- Zinnia Homes
- Jodie & Otto Brannum
- Mary Bueche
- Milinda Ysasi & Rafael Castanon
- Rick & Willow Chapla
- Madelaine & Stuart Clapp
- Phil & Janeth Coray
- Laurie Craft
- David Czurak
- Marc & Linda Daneman
- Annie Edwards
- Kathleen Feeney
- Robert Frey
- Twink Frey
- Bing & Janna Goei
- Daniel Grzywacz
- Gregory Hampshire
- Cory Hansen
- Barbara Haynes
- Lynn Heemstra
- Heidi Henderson
- Mary & Mike Hogan
- Preston & Sylvia Hopson
- Mandy & DJ Hughes
- Ryker Huizinga
- Win & Kyle Irwin
- Bart Jonker
- Kellie Kalish
- Liz Keegan
- Erin Kemple
- Jim King
- Pam Kisch
- Vickie Kochans
- Alex Lazarou
- Thomas Logan
- Rhonda Lubberts
- David & Mary Mapes
- Cheryl McKinney
- Brianna Miranda
- Cray Mulder
- Bill & Paula Murphy
- Ingrid Nelson
- Joe & Marie Parzych
- Demera Platt
- Dennis Preston
- Tim Reimink
- Alberto Serrano
- John Smith
- Dave & Marcy Stellan
- Jim & Lawren Susan
- Sue Swanlund

Individual Members

- Betty Zylstra and David Baak
- Sophia Baker
- Michelle Behrenwald
- Kay Behrenwald

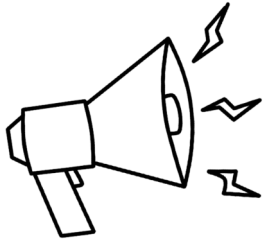
- Thomas Syrek
- Jim & Patricia Talen
- Cynthia Terlouw
- Ruth Stevens & Tom Stellard
- Laura & Michael Vizard
- Robin Wagner
- Hubert Weller
- Lucia & Casey White
- Mike & Mary Alice Williams
- Johna Willis
- Mike Yates

We are sincerely and wholeheartedly grateful for ALL of our members, many whom have been members for a long time, helping us reach 43 years of fair housing. Thank you for choosing to support us!!!

Interested in joining?

Membership is an important way to annually demonstrate our community's commitment to open housing. Not only does it enhance the FHCWM's credibility as a representative organization, it also provides an opportunity for individuals or organizations to publicly state support of the importance of ensuring equal access to housing choice. Members receive periodic newsletters full of updates about cases and Fair Housing activities, copies of the FHCWM's Annual Report and an invitation to nominate individuals and/or organizations for the Annual Fair Housing Award. Please visit: www.fhcwm.org/giving to learn more and join!

...Fair Housing Center News & Events...



Please Note: This is Our Final Printed Newsletter!

FHCWM is finalizing plans to transition to electronic newsletters. If you want to stay connected, please reach out and let us know! We are collecting preferred email contact information from our loyal readers. Send Brianna Miranda an email at bmiranda@fhcwm.org or call (616) 451-2980 ext. 13 for assistance. Please note that if you have unsubscribed to email notifications from the FHCWM in the past, we can work together to re-subscribe you.

Fair Housing Rights & Best Practices Materials Library!

Did you know? The FHCWM has a LOT of information on fair housing rights and fair housing responsibilities available on our website. You can search for fair housing information organized by protected classes (such as for seniors, families with children, persons with Limited English Proficiency) and by topic (advertising, zoning, condo associations) and much more! You can find links to federal guidance and FHCWM-produced materials at this page of our website: www.fhcwm.org/publications.

Fair Housing Trainings

The Fair Housing Center offers a variety of fair housing trainings focusing on awareness and/or compliance with the law, including *Know Your Fair Housing Rights* and *Fair Housing Training for Rental or Sales Professionals* sessions of varying lengths. Trainings can be customized based on the experience of attendees and the topics desired. Costs vary depending on the type of training; the FHCWM is able to offer some trainings at no or limited cost. Contact Liz Keegan or Brianna Miranda at (616) 451-2980 ext. 19 to learn more or request a quote.

Check our website home page for upcoming dates: www.fhcwm.org.

The Fair Housing Center hosts **tester trainings** on a regular basis. Testers are volunteers that play the role of a homeseeker and receive a stipend in return for their time and services. To inquire about registering or learn more contact Sarah Brandt at (616) 451-2980 ext. 18.

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Grand Rapids, MI
Permit No. 785

FAIR HOUSING CENTER OF
WEST MICHIGAN
20 Hall Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
www.fhcwm.org
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

