



FAIR HOUSING NEWS

Produced by Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

August 2023

FHCWM News

SAVE THE DATE

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan and Lakeshore Advisory Board are pleased to announce the 17th Annual Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing: Opening Doors to Housing Choice Breakfast on **October 18, 2023** at **The Pinnacle Center (Hudsonville)** from **8:30 - 10am**. We are also happy to announce our Keynote Speaker for the morning will be **Steve Tomkowiak**, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit.

Thanks to our Sponsors to date:

Underwriter: BVW Property Management

Stakeholder: ChoiceOne Bank

Support also from: City of Holland and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

[Learn more](#)

NEW WEBSITE

The FHCWM has upgraded our website! Our new & improved website allows for easier access to our resources through filtering by language, protected class, or topic; better accessibility on the site with options to change contrast or font size; local resources; and a fresh new look!

Thanks to the [Grand Rapids Community Media Center](#) for their hard work transitioning and upgrading our site!



BECOME A MEMBER

When you give as a member, you help us provide vital education on fair housing laws and practices, research the state of housing discrimination in communities, and restore housing choice to people who may have been discriminated against. Your membership is an important way to annually demonstrate our community's commitment to open housing.

With a gift of any size, you can become a member of the FHCWM and will receive regular updates about our work. Please consider supporting the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan and becoming a fair housing advocate! Learn more [here](#).

[Donate today!](#)

Check it out now!

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CASE HIGHLIGHTS

FHCWM opens doors to people with criminal histories

In June of 2022, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued a **memorandum**, emphasizing the importance of its previous guidance on the use of criminal record screening by housing providers. HUD's guidance states that overly restrictive criminal background policies unfairly discriminate against people who are Black or African American and people who are Hispanic or Latinx. Through the lens of HUD's guidance, FHCWM examined numerous criminal background policies and developed cases as concerns arose. In one such case, FHCWM enabled a large housing provider, who has 19 properties in Michigan and over 3,000 units, to update their criminal background policies state-wide.

Want more information on criminal background screening? Check out our [Fact Sheet](#).

Settlement reached in Michigan Department of Civil Rights case

FHCWM received an allegation of discrimination on the basis of disability. Complainants, who are both people with disabilities and both require the use of assistance animals, alleged that a housing provider informed them they have a 1-animal limit, no exceptions. FHCWM investigated the claim and found that the housing provider continued to deny reasonable accommodations, and continued to enforce a 1-animal limit, even for assistance animals. A complaint was filed with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and a settlement was reached, awarding Complainants \$2,000. Additionally, the housing provider agreed to adopt a reasonable accommodation policy, receive fair housing training for all of its agents, and display fair housing posters at all of its office locations.

Michigan News

"Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair" or "CROWN Act" Prohibits Discrimination Due to Natural Hair and Texture

On June 15, 2023, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed the CROWN Act into law. The Act is immediately effective. The law adds the definition of "race", which was previously not defined. Under the Act, "race" is defined as follows:

"'Race' is inclusive of traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles. For purposes of this definition, "protective hairstyles" includes, but is not limited to, such hairstyles as braids, locks, and twists."

Read more about the CROWN Act on the [Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit's News & Updates](#).

Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan Aides in \$750,000 Disability Lawsuit Settlement - 6/22/23

Recently, the Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan (FHCSEMM) settled a case against the City of Howell for the moratorium (ban) on new sober living and other, similar group homes after neighbors opposed the launch of the Amber Reineck House, which houses women recovering from substance use disorders. People in recovery are considered

to have a disability under the Federal Fair Housing Act and banning homes of this nature poses differential treatment for people with disabilities. To read the press release and more information visit FHCSEMM [website](#).

National News

The [National Fair Housing Alliance](#) (NFHA) released their 2023 Trends Report earlier this month. The [latest Fair Housing Trends Report](#) showed that the number of housing discrimination complaints **rose to more than 33,000** nationwide last year, the highest on record. In a troubling turn, domestic violence related complaints saw a noticeable increase along with complaints based on source of income, according to new data published in the report.

These new findings show that housing discrimination is still affecting many people and communities. But even the unprecedented number of complaints don't account for the many incidents of housing discrimination that fail to get reported at all due to fear of retaliation or eviction. In other cases, incidents of housing discrimination go undetected or unreported because they are difficult to identify or document.

Here are some of the report's key findings:

- Private nonprofit fair housing organizations processed 73.94% of complaints, compared to 5.80% by HUD, 20.15% by FHAP agencies, and 0.11% by DOJ.
- Discrimination based on disability accounted for the majority (53.26%) of complaints filed with fair housing organizations, HUD, and Fair Housing Assistance Program agencies.
- In 2022, there were 2,490 complaints based on sex, the highest number recorded since 2005 when NFHA began collecting data specifically on sex complaints.
- In 2022, there was an uptick in all the "other" category of complaints, regarding source of income, marital status, age, and domestic violence with significant increases in complaints regarding source of income and domestic violence.

Upcoming Events

Oct 18

8:30 - 10am

***Pinnacle
Center***

Lakeshore Breakfast

17th Annual Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing: Opening Doors to Housing Choice Breakfast featuring **Steve Tomkowiak**, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit, as the Keynote Speaker.

Registration opening soon!

[Learn More](#)

Tester Training (Remote)

If you are interested in taking on the challenging and rewarding role of a tester, register to attend an upcoming training session online. Our comprehensive tester training sessions are held on a

Nov 2

3 - 5pm

Zoom

regular basis. This two (2) hour training session reviews testing procedures, role play scenarios, and a detailed overview of all test forms to be completed for each individual test.

[Learn More](#)



You can find FHCWM newsletters on our [website](#) in English and Spanish.

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Fair Housing Center of West Michigan | 20 Hall SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507

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