

October 31, 2014

TO: PY 2015 Fair Housing/New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program Advisory Committee Members

FROM: Michael A. Hiler, Deputy Chief, Office of Community Development
Michael A. Hiler

SUBJECT: PY 2015 Fair Housing/New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

On October 15, 2013, the PY 2015 Fair Housing/New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program Advisory Committee met at the Creekside Conference and Event Center in Gahanna, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The following is a summary of the major topics discussed during the meeting.

Introduction

Tim Allen, Office of Community Development (OCD) Section Supervisor of Training and Technical Assistance, opened the meeting and welcomed the members. The advisory committee members and participants introduced themselves.

Program Update

The PY 2015 Fair Housing/New Horizons Fair Housing Program Advisory Committee Meeting packet was distributed to the group. In addition to the agenda and list of committee members, the packet included:

- PY 2014 Fair Housing/New Horizons Fair Housing Advisory Committee Meeting minutes;
- A list containing the contact information of PY 2015 Committee Members
- A copy of the Local Government Certification to the State from the FY 2014 Ohio Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan
- Information on the New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program from the FY 2014 Ohio Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan

Tim Allen presented the Training and Technical Assistance website. He also gave a background of the office and the services OCD provides, including training and technical assistance. He also discussed what was expected of the grantees in terms of OCD's Standard Fair Housing Program. Tim Allen showed committee members a sample of OCD's monitoring tool and file guide. Finally, he discussed the monitoring process for OCD's Standard Fair Housing Program.

Performance of Grantees

The committee offered two main suggestions in order to enhance grantee performance and the special outreach and technical assistance OCD provided to new grantees, as well as those who have had a history of issues related to performance and compliance. The first suggestion was to analyze whether consultants help or hinder the performance of OCD's grantees. The committee felt that consultants are a good resource; however, they could hinder OCD's grantees if the grantees rely too much on the consultants instead of being an effective first point of contact during the intake process. The second suggestion involved OCD monitoring and the committee agreed that program representatives should perform a more detailed monitoring of the Standard Fair Housing Program on their site visits.

Application Documents and Instructions

The committee discussed the format of the Standard Fair Housing Program that is included in the Community Development Program application and the annual Ohio Consolidated Plan. The committee

expressed that grantees should have fair housing contact information listed on their official website. The committee agreed that the annual Consolidated Plan should remain online for public viewing.

The format of the fair housing requirements for the Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) application was discussed. The committee expressed concern with the fair housing requirements in regards to training and how it may cause an undue burden on communities. Smaller communities already conduct several trainings with their CDBG activities and additional trainings may degrade the quality of their outreach efforts due to the fact that the community already has had several trainings. The committee agreed that the trainings for each activity and outreach (5 additional distribution points) for OCD's grantees were redundant and grantee's time would be better spent thinking about the quality of fair housing training, as well as focusing on other aspects of the program.

The fair housing implementation period was discussed. OCD is changing the fair housing program period to a "calendar year" implementation period of January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016 beginning with PY 2015. The committee did not have any comments on this proposed change.

The New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program application and instructions were discussed. The new requirement to submit a 'letter of intent' before applying to the program was introduced. No new changes or clarifications were recommended by the committee. One grantee expressed that time is a huge factor in a community determining whether or not to apply for the program. The committee was assured that the Training and Technical Assistance staff will continue to provide guidance and support in regards to the program. Tim Allen commented that grantees were allowed to work with consultants to achieve the goals identified in an application. The committee recommended that OCD provide examples of New Horizons activities on the New Horizons page of OCD's website.

Program Review Process and Rating Criteria

The committee briefly discussed the New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program review process and rating criteria. Tim Allen said that the Training the Technical Assistance Staff will continue to encourage eligible applicants to apply for New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program funding, including at the application and implementation training as well as OCD's annual conference. The committee made two suggestions regarding the New Horizons Program. The first was to ask grantees to monitor the quality of their fair housing consultants and contacts. The second suggestion was to ask grantees to include any sort of incentives used in order to encourage people to pay attention to fair housing.

For both the Standard Fair Housing Program and the New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program, the committee agreed that the grantees receiving the grant should justify their training and outreach programs by explaining how they are relevant to their community.

Policy or Program Issues

The committee emphasized that the proposed changes to the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) requirements for HUD program participants allows for an opportunity to improve OCD's Standard Fair Housing Program. The draft assessment tool was discussed and individual committee members expressed an interest in reviewing the tool and sending their personal comments to HUD. The general consensus was that the draft should be heavily edited in order to make it manageable for non-entitlement grantees in our state. The committee and OCD agreed to meet if the AFFH proposed rule becomes final before the next advisory board meeting.

The committee discussed the advantages of regional fair housing information sharing and this should be included in the Analysis of Impediments (AI) or the proposed Assessments of Fair Housing (AFH). The committee recommended that communities identify both emerging issues specific to their regions/communities and for communities to identify their network of contacts (consultants, non-profits, etc.) that assist them in improving their outreach and training programs.

The committee expressed, several times, the importance of program quality as opposed to quantity. It was the opinion of the committee that the type of outreach was more important than the number of outreach efforts. Many of the committee members expressed the importance of using social media and

webpages as vehicles to provide information to the public about fair housing. The committee suggested that a technological component related to outreach be added to OCD's Standard Fair Housing Program.

Training Needs or Recommendations

The committee voiced satisfaction with OCD's continuous commitment to fair housing and appreciated the outreach and training that OCD provided throughout the year. The committee made the following recommendations for training and outreach for PY 2015:

- The committee asserted that there is a continued need for quality sharing of information. It was noted that it is extremely helpful to share information, discuss problems/local issues, etc. with other fair housing administrators and advocates. It was agreed that a listserv should be developed and, following the conference, Jim McCarthy created a listserv for all who are interested in fair housing and equal opportunity. Everyone on OCD's contact list was added to the listserv. The committee also expressed that there needs to be increased communication between non-profits and grantees.
- Continued training was recommended regarding the development and implementation of effective fair housing programs. The committee suggested that OCD continue to make fair housing-related training and technical assistance available to grantees and fair housing coordinators. They particularly mentioned that training should focus on how grantees can determine which complaints are landlord/tenant issues and which ones are fair housing issues. Tim Allen noted that the Standard Fair Housing Program session at the 2014 CD Conference will address this issue, and OCD intends to create additional TA materials for the website to assist grantees in determining the difference between these calls. In addition, the training should include how to prepare cases to send to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission and follow up with these complaints.
- The committee suggested that OCD should provide a list that provides examples of exemplary fair housing outreach efforts to grantees.
- Tim Allen said that OCD is working on a template complaint intake form and the committee was supportive of the idea.
- The committee stated that there should be a fair housing training provided in regards to HUD's LGBT final rule. This final rule states that housing assisted or insured by HUD must be made available without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. The rule includes the prohibition of inquiries regarding sexual orientation or gender identity for the purpose of determining eligibility or otherwise making housing available and further allows inquiries related to an applicant or occupant's sex for the limited purpose of determining placement in temporary, emergency shelters with shared bedrooms or bathrooms, or for determining the number of bedrooms to which a household may be entitled. The committee conveyed that this issue would be in the forefront in the coming year and that communities need to be ready to address LGBT discrimination claims.
- The committee recommended the continuation of periodic fair housing updates, training opportunities and other information that has been transmitted via email and through OCD's web site. They also recommended that the contact list be restructured so that it is more comprehensive. This may be achieved by adding non-profits and/or determining which organizations specialize in special fair housing and civil rights issues. The committee agreed that this suggestion needed further discussion in order to determine how to achieve this goal. Tim Allen presented the idea of a subject matter expert list. The committee discussed several complications with the idea, including determination and verification of a contact's expertise.
- The committee discussed the COHHIO Tenant Rent Information Line, funded by OCD with OHTF, and expressed that it would be a good resource for grantees to have in order to sort out fair housing and landlord/tenant issues. It was agreed that information about this service will be provided to all grantees.

Other Issues

The committee expressed only a few other comments on OCD's Standard Fair Housing Program. These comments are listed below.

- The committee requested that OCD's Analysis of Impediments be available on their website for public viewing and comment.
- The committee discussed the potential impact of the oil/gas industry growth on affordable rental housing and home ownership. Low-wage and transient workers are in need of safe, decent and affordable housing. In addition, long term residents are struggling with a lack of affordable housing. The committee recommended that training and outreach be focused on these areas.

The PY 2015 Fair Housing/New Horizons Fair Housing Program Advisory Committee adjourned at 4 p.m.



Ohio Development Services Agency
Office of Community Development

PY 2015
Fair Housing/New Horizons Fair Housing Assistance Program
Advisory Committee Meeting
Creekside Conference and Event Center
October 15, 2014

ATTENDANCE LIST

NAME

ORGANIZATION

Tim Allen	OCD
Douglas Argue	COHHIO
Elizabeth Brown	Housing Opportunities Made Equal
Matt Currie	Advocates for Basic Equality
Kelan Craig	OFHA
Kris Keniryra	Housing Center of Cleveland
Evelyn King	Cambridge/Guernsey County
Ash Lemons	The Ability Center of Greater Toledo
Tamara Lowe	City of Chillicothe
Amanda McCallister	OCD
Joe Maskovyak	COHHIO
Jim McCarthy	Miami Valley Fair Housing Center
Lisa Patt-McDaniel	OCCH
Diana Patton	Toledo Fair Housing Center
Ian Thomas	OCD
Marilyn Tobocman	Ohio Attorney General's Office
Ronnell Tomlinson	Ohio Civil Rights Commission
Sadicka White	OCD

ABSENT

NAME

ORGANIZATION

Adam Anderson	ODJFS
Don Eagar	Consultant
Missy Frost	City of Fairborn
Elizabeth Hale	Consultant
Greg Kramer	Access Center for Independent Living
Carolyn Murphy	HUD
Katie Steinberger	Marion County Regional Planning Commission
Nadine Thompson	WSOS Community Action
Carl F. White	Regional Housing Center
Spencer Wells	Rental Housing Information Network in Ohio