

FAIR HOUSING PLAN

Genesee County

January, 2018

I. Introduction

Genesee County understands the importance of taking action to further fair housing in the community and is committed to meeting its responsibilities in this respect as a recipient of Federal Community Development Block Grant funds. To ensure that residents are aware of fair housing provisions under Federal and State law and of the processes and assistance available to obtain compliance with existing statutes, the County has developed this Fair Housing Plan. The Plan describes the procedures developed to further fair housing in the community.

II. Availability Of Information

The County's Fair Housing Plan recognizes that public knowledge of fair housing provisions is the first step in expanding equal opportunity. Toward that end, the County has taken, or will take the following actions:

A. *Appoint a Fair Housing Officer*

The Fair Housing Officer, who holds the title of Assistant County Manager, appointed by the County Legislature, has the following responsibilities:

1. Maintain Federal and State fair housing information in the County Manager's Office including brochures issued by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the New York State Division of Human Rights.
2. Record initial information regarding housing discrimination complaints on a standard form.
3. Forward copies of all complaints to and, as appropriate, consult with the Fair Housing/Equal Opportunity Division of the applicable HUD Office.

B. *Provide Information*

The County will make available, upon request, copies of applicable Federal and State laws which contain anti-discrimination provisions, including: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and the Human Rights Law (Executive Law, Article 15) of the State of New York.

C. *Promote Fair Housing Activities and Available Resources*

The County will designate the month of April as *Fair Housing Month* and will promote said designation through County Legislature proclamation.

The County will further promote fair housing and housing resources by posting Fair Housing posters in visible locations within all County buildings.

The County will actively pursue Federal and State funding sources that primarily assist low and moderate income persons to achieve affordable housing opportunities. The County will carefully monitor the activities of agencies and contractors engaged in these programs to ensure that the funds are primarily benefiting low to moderate income persons and benefiting the target population of the program. The County will require agencies to report data and performance statistics to the County as part of any contract the County enters into with an agency performing housing services as a condition of receiving payment from the County.

The County shall have a representative at meetings of the Genesee Region Housing Initiatives Committee to advocate for affirmatively furthering fair housing practices in the community and require that the Housing Initiatives Committee take affirmative steps to promote fair and equal access to housing, regardless of the type of grant.

The County will require contractors and/or agencies who the County contracts with to administer CDBG funded housing programs to:

- A) Demonstrate they afford equal employment opportunities to all persons.
- B) Take affirmative steps to ensure that all segments of the community regardless of economic, racial or ethnic status are informed of grant opportunities.
- C) Demonstrate that their program benefits are not awarded in ways that discriminate.
- D) Take affirmative steps to promote fair and equal housing.
- E) In addition to equal access, affirmatively further fair housing accessibility for persons with disabilities.

All CDBG funded projects for which the County is the recipient whether it is for housing, infrastructure, or economic development, attention to the civil rights, fair housing and equal opportunity component for the CDBG project must be all inclusive, from the project design phase to the final progress report..

The County shall incorporate and promote fair housing opportunities in the County's Comprehensive Plan.

The County shall notify local banks and realtors of fair housing activities and enlist their support and active participation.

III. Discrimination Complaints

The County will provide information and assistance to individuals who feel that they have been the victims of discrimination in regard to housing.

A. *Discriminatory Housing Practices*

For the purpose of this Plan, a discriminatory housing practice means an act that is unlawful under sections 804, 805, 806 or 818 of the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended). Such discriminatory housing practices include discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, discrimination in the provision of brokerage services, or interference, coercion, or intimidation, as defined under the Act, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or familial status.

B. *Receiving Complaints*

The Fair Housing Officer will record information on a standard form to ensure that a complete file is established. Following this, the Fair Housing Officer will then contact the Department of HUD and/or the New York State Division of Human Rights to review the particulars of the complaint and request guidance in the formal filing of the complaint in cases where the individual decides to use this method. Copies of all complaints will also be forwarded to the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Division of the HUD Office in Buffalo, New York. If the complainant decides to take his/her case directly to Federal Court, the County will refer the complainant to the Lawyer Referral and Information Service Hotline, sponsored by the New York State Bar Association (1 800 342-3661), for securing affordable legal services if the individual is of low- or moderate-income.