



MIAMI VALLEY FAIR HOUSING CENTER NEWSLETTER

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JIM MCCARTHY, PRESIDENT/CEO

National Fair Housing Alliance Signs Agreement with LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance To Focus Attention on Impact of Housing Discrimination on the LGBTQ Community

Memorandum of Understanding Will Ensure Collaboration between Two Groups

St. Paul, Minn. – The new LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) allowing for joint efforts to identify and rid the nation of housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Founded in June 2020, the LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance is a 501(c)6 non-profit dedicated to empowering the LGBTQ+ community on the path to homeownership. The LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance is an all-inclusive organization that works to improve the professional lives of its members through a public-facing Alliance Referral Community. The Alliance began accepting members in October 2020 and has more than 50 chapters in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. For more information visit realestatealliance.org.

The MOU, the first signed by the new LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance, calls for the two groups to cross-promote Fair Housing initiatives, educate the public about Fair Housing rights, provide Fair Housing training to LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance members and collaborate to showcase instances of housing discrimination. NFHA will have a seat on the LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, the LGBTQ+ Mortgage Advisory Council and the Sponsor Advisory Board.

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Meet Your Miami Valley Fair Housing Center Board Members

Tawana Jones is the Operations Manager for Montgomery County Business Services—Community & Economic Development. Tawana has worked for Montgomery County for almost 24 years and has lived in Ohio for just slightly longer. Tawana has been a Board member of MVFHC for the past year and a half and was a Funding Liaison for the previous five years. Tawana serves on the Board because she believes strongly in the mission of the organization, which is to eliminate housing discrimination and ensure equal housing opportunity for all. All her professional jobs – from her first job working for an area development district serving an eight-county region in Eastern Kentucky, to her job working for Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government in Lexington, Kentucky, to working in the Dayton region – have been about increasing the quality of life for residents, including their access to housing. As a career public servant, it has been highly rewarding to see the positive impact of these programs on individuals lives.

Tawana is a Board member for a number of other organizations, including Kettering's Board of Community Relations, the Ohio Conference for Community Development, the HomeOwnership Center of Greater Dayton and Graceworks Lutheran Services. Tawana also serves on a number of internal County boards and committees related to homelessness, beautification and food equity. Tawana has been a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland's Community Advisory Council for the past two years.

Tawana has a son, Seth, who is a senior at the University of Dayton, a bonus son, Tyler, who is an air traffic controller in Chicago, and life partner David, who encourages spending time together by taking adventurous road trips.



*Tawana Jones
MVFHC Board Member*

Fair Housing Update: Help for residents that want to learn English and who need interpretive services

Many landlords rent to people from other countries. Many of these tenants speak English well but others have what is known as “limited English proficiency” (LEP). What is the definition of LEP? In April 2018 the Department of Justice published this definition: LEP “individuals have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English, they are limited English proficient, or “LEP.”

Recognizing many landlords do not want to miss opportunities to serve LEP individuals, here are some resources that can be given to residents that want to learn English and/or who need interpretive services.

- ✓ [Vocalink Language Services](#) are located in downtown Dayton and can be reached at 937-223-1415.
- ✓ [Global Communications Services](#) can be reached at 888-716-3330.
- ✓ [Miami Valley Interpreters](#) can be reached at 937-222-8200.

Other resources in the community for immigrants that landlords can tap into are Welcome Dayton and the many *English for Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL) courses available across the Miami Valley. The [Welcome Dayton](#) website tells us that “The Welcome Dayton effort promotes immigrant integration into the greater Dayton region by encouraging business and economic development; providing access to education, government, health and social services; ensuring equity in the justice system; and promoting an appreciation of arts and culture.” The site also has a page of the Dayton area’s [English Language classes](#) with an interactive map.

Interpretive services are sometimes also needed by people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Call [Interpreters of the Deaf](#) at 937-242-6047 or Community Services for the Deaf at 937-640-8032.

This information was gathered by John Zimmerman, VP Miami Valley Fair Housing Center from local resources, HUD and the Department of Justice.

Fair Housing Update: Are your older apartments visitable?

The definition of visitability: it is a concerted effort to increase the physical access to housing for people with disabilities at nominal cost.

People with disabilities are a huge market and data shows that people with disabilities stay in their apartment homes up to five times longer than non-disabled individuals. Budgeting the addition of basic access features is a good long-term strategy to reduce turnovers and increase profits.

Visitability is an international movement to change home construction and rehab practices. There are (at least) 3 key features that a landlord can review and rehab to make apartments more appealing to the market:

- ✓ At least one zero-step entrance
- ✓ All interior doors providing at least 32 inches of unobstructed passage space
- ✓ At least a half bathroom on the main floor accessible to a wheelchair (which means a wheelchair can enter, close the door for privacy and use each of the fixtures in the bathroom)

What a landlord can ask themselves is this: can my residents invite their relatives and friends who use wheelchairs to their homes for dinner? After all, to really visit one should be able to get in the door, go from room to room and use the bathroom privately.

Visitability features make homes easier for people who develop a mobility impairment to visit friends and extended family rather than having to turn down invitations, or not be invited at all. These features also provide a basic shell of access to permit formerly non-disabled people to remain in their homes if they develop a disability, rather than forcing them to do expensive renovations, relocate to a different house, live in an inaccessible home which endangers their health and safety, or move from the community into a nursing home.

The information in this article was collected by John Zimmerman, VP Miami Valley Fair Housing Center from resources from HUD which has a long standing commitment to promoting visitability in housing.

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“So many are stunned to learn that the LGBTQ+ community does not have the full breadth of protections at the federal level under our nation’s fair housing and fair lending laws,” said Ryan Weyandt, CEO of the LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance. “While our industry, led by the National Association of Realtors®, has been proactive in working with our community in the fight for housing equality, we have a long way to go. Only 27 states and Washington, D.C. have explicit local laws to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The partnership with NFHA will allow us to work collaboratively and hopefully get us to a much better place as a community.”

Founded in 1988, NFHA is a consortium of more than 200 private, nonprofit fair housing organizations and state and local civil rights agencies from throughout the United States.

“The National Fair Housing Alliance is thrilled about partnering with the LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance to advance fair housing, particularly at a time when civil rights are under attack and key tools for strengthening equity are being systematically eviscerated,” said Lisa Rice, president and CEO of NFHA. “The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently passed its harmful Disparate Impact rule, which will gut civil rights protections for LGBTQ+ people and members of other vulnerable communities, making it exceedingly harder to challenge systemic discrimination by housing providers. We must fight back, and our new partnership with the LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance will give us another avenue through which to do just that.”

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., NFHA works to eliminate housing discrimination and ensure equal housing opportunity for all people through leadership, education, outreach, membership services, public policy initiatives, community development, advocacy, and enforcement. The Miami Valley Fair Housing Center is a proud Operating Member of the National Fair Housing Alliance. Visit nationalfairhousing.org to learn more.



Dance to *THE MOVEMENT*

Need a gift idea for the holidays?

In 2018, the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center Board of Directors commissioned Alice Gatewood Waddell to create a masterpiece called **Dance to *THE MOVEMENT*** to honor the 25th anniversary of Miami Valley Fair Housing Center and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act. A limited number of 17” x 22” signed and numbered prints are still available for \$250. To reserve a print, call the fair housing center at 937-223-6035. Framed prints are also available for an additional cost.



- November 1 Daylight Saving Time ends
- November 3 Election Day
- January 9 & 10, 2021 [Greater Dayton Home Show](#)
- January 16 & 17, 2021 [Greater Dayton Home Show](#)

MVFHC Mission Statement

The mission of the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center (MVFHC) is to eliminate housing discrimination and ensure equal housing opportunity for all people in our region, the State of Ohio, and nationally.

Specifically, the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center seeks to eliminate housing discrimination against all persons because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, familial status, or any other characteristic protected under state or local laws. In furthering this goal, MVFHC engages in activities designed to encourage fair housing practices through educational efforts; assists person who believe they have been victims of housing discrimination; identifies barriers to fair housing in order to help counteract and eliminate discriminatory housing practices; works with elected and government representatives to protect and improve fair housing laws; and takes all appropriate and necessary action to ensure that fair housing laws are properly and fairly enforced throughout our region, the State of Ohio, and nationally.

MVFHC Vision Statement


The Miami Valley Fair Housing Center recognizes the importance of “home” as a component of the American dream. We envision a country free of housing discrimination where every individual, group and community enjoys equal housing opportunity and access in a bias-free and open housing market. We envision a country where integrated neighborhoods are the norm, and private and public sectors guarantee civil rights in an open and barrier-free community committed to healing the history of discrimination in America.

MIAMI VALLEY FAIR HOUSING CENTER, INC.

505 Riverside Drive
Dayton, OH 45405
Phone: 937-223-6035

E-mail: info@mvfairhousing.com

Visit us online

www.mvfairhousing.com  



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