

# Commission on Human Rights

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## **April is U.S. and Kentucky Fair Housing Month- Great opportunity to learn about rights to housing, free from discrimination**

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There are still many residents who are not aware of their rights to live free from discrimination in the area of housing.

The national Fair Housing Month of April began in 1968 as a celebration of the passage of the national Act, and burgeoned into an annual recognition. Many states, if not all, also adopted April as state Fair Housing Month.

In Kentucky, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights and most partner organizations that enforce civil rights or focus on housing assistance services to segments of the population, utilize April as a month of education and training.

The goal is to raise awareness to people in the state who belong to protected classes such as minorities, people with children under age 18-yrs. old, people with disabilities, people of various ethnicity or other national origins. Education and training are also provided to housing providers and housing finance providers who desire or are required to learn how to comply with fair housing law.

### **Protections from Housing Discrimination**

The Kentucky Civil Rights Act, including amendments added to it in later years, prohibits discrimination in housing, based on the protected classes of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, gender, and familial status.

Protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation is provided through city ordinances by the following six Kentucky locations: Covington, Frankfort, Lexington, Louisville, Morehead, and Vicco.

In 2012, the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued a final rule that prohibits discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status in regard to housing programs assisted by HUD or subject to a mortgage insured by the Federal Housing Administration.

### **Kentucky Civil Rights passage**

On March 15, 1968, Kentucky passed the Kentucky Fair Housing Act. Newly elected state House of Representative Mae Street Kidd of Louisville was one of just three African Americans in the legislature in 1968. (She served until 1984.) The first bill she sponsored prohibited racial discrimination in housing. After several Kentucky cities passed their own local open-housing legislation in 1966 and 1967, Kidd worked with Senator Georgia Davis Powers and Representative Hughes McGill to introduce the Kentucky Fair Housing Act to the Kentucky General Assembly. The bill passed in 1968, making Kentucky the first Southern state to enact such a law on its own.

### **U.S. Civil Rights Act passage**

On April 11, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed the federal Civil Rights Act of 1968, which prohibits discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing.

According to HUD, “[the national Act] came only after a long and difficult journey...Congress regularly considered a fair housing bill, but failed to garner a strong enough majority for its passage.”

Cities experienced rioting after Rev. Martin Luther King's assassination, and violence increased on a national level. Also, according to HUD, the Vietnam War played a great factor in that deaths of American soldiers fell heaviest among African American and Hispanic infantrymen.

As a result, HUD says, "[their] families could not purchase or rent homes in certain residential developments due to race and national origin."

Organizations like the NAACP, the GI Forum and the National Committee Against Discrimination In Housing brought more pressure to bear on Congress to pass the Fair Housing Act to remedy the inequity, according to HUD.

#### Enforcement of Fair Housing law

HUD reports that 35 years later, millions of complaints are still filed each year through nonprofit fair-housing agencies, the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Dept. of Justice, state agencies like the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights and local government agencies.

In the last 10 years, from fiscal year 2003 through 2013, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights has filed 454 housing discrimination complaints for people within the state. Many more people do not report housing discrimination due to lack of information about their rights or due to fear of legal process or fear of retribution.

As a result, recognizing the Fair Housing Month of April and providing education, outreach and training play significant roles.

## Regional Fair Housing Events

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights on April 8 held a Fair Housing Training at Patriot Bank Mortgage Inc. in Louisville, Ky. The commission also has plans to conduct

similar Fair Housing Law compliance training for affiliated partners of Patriot Bank Mortgage. Contact Juan Peña at [juan.pena@ky.gov](mailto:juan.pena@ky.gov) for more information.

Also on April 8, Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission aired on La Poderosa Radio, 620 AM and 105.7 FM on the radio dial, in Louisville, Ky., a Spanish-language radio presentation on fair housing.

On April 15, from 6 to 8 p.m. (EDT), the Northern Kentucky NAACP will be holding its fifth annual Diversity Housing Fair at the Newport Syndicate, 18<sup>th</sup> East Fifth Street, in Newport, Ky. The program will feature information on obtaining home ownership, financing, credit and buying. Home builders, financial institutions, furniture stores and agencies that speak to people about home ownership programs will be present at information booths. The program is free and open to the public. However, businesses and agencies are encouraged to take ads in the NAACP newsletter for the program to help sponsor refreshments for the housing fair. For information, contact Jerome Bowles, 859.442.7476, or [bowlesjs@yahoo.com](mailto:bowlesjs@yahoo.com).

On April 17, at 12 p.m. - (EDT), there will be a Fair Housing Home Ownership forum, The Three States of Home Ownership will be held at the Louisville Urban League, 1535 W. Broadway in Louisville. It is sponsored by the Louisville Human Relations Commission and Metropolitan Housing Coalition, Kentucky Human Rights Commission, and others. It will cover rules that apply to purchasing, maintaining, and selling a home. Panelists include: Christie McCravy of the Louisville Urban League; John Young, attorney at the Legal Aid Society; Jan Gable, a mortgage loan officer with Commonwealth Bank and Trust; and Stephanie Horne, owner of Agency Title. For more information, contact Cathy Hinko at [cathy@metropolitanhousing.org](mailto:cathy@metropolitanhousing.org).

On April 21, from 1 to 3 p.m. (EDT), there will be a fair housing training at the Pikeville Public Library, 119 College St., Room 125, in Pikeville, Ky. The training will help social service providers and government employees learn common discriminatory actions so they can better inform clients and constituencies when they have been discriminated against. Individuals

in real estate business can learn about fair housing laws that will help them avoid discriminatory practices. The training is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by the Lexington Fair Housing Council and the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. For more information, contact Juan Peña at [juan.pena@ky.gov](mailto:juan.pena@ky.gov).

On April 22, from 12:30 to 4 p.m. (CDT), there will be a fair housing education bus tour. “Get on the Bus: the path toward equal housing opportunity,” will start at State Street Baptist Church, 340 State St., in Bowling Green, Ky., 42101. Participants will be led on a guided bus tour as presenters highlight the history and impact of segregated housing in 20<sup>th</sup> century Bowling Green. The event is free and open to the public. Preregistration is required due to limited seating. To register for this event, visit the website at [www.lexingtonfairhousing.com](http://www.lexingtonfairhousing.com) or call 859.971.8067.

On April 30, from 1 to 4 p.m. (EDT), there will be a fair housing and diversity training at Ramada Inn, 2143 N. Broadway, in Lexington, Ky. The training will focus on basic fair housing law and will also include a brief diversity session. The event is being sponsored by the Lexington Fair Housing Council, the Kentucky Housing Corporation and the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission. There is no fee. Registration is required. To register, visit the website at [www.lexingtonfairhousing.com](http://www.lexingtonfairhousing.com) or call 859.971.8067.

On April 30, from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. (EDT), Housing Opportunities Made Equal, a Cincinnati-based fair housing organization that is aligned with the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, will provide a free program on rebuilding home ownership in minority communities. It will be held at the Cincinnati branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, 150 East Fourth Street, in Cincinnati, Ohio. The keynote speaker will be James H. Carr, nationally recognized consultant in housing finance, banking and urban policy. There will also be a panel discussion on home ownership programs. Advance registration is required. Contact Myra Calder at Housing Opportunities Made Equal in Cincinnati at 513.977.2623, or send an email to [myra.calder@homecincy.org](mailto:myra.calder@homecincy.org).

On May 14, from 2 to 4 p.m. (EDT), the Kentucky Fair Housing Task Force will meet at the Kentucky Housing Corporation, 1231 Louisville Rd., in Frankfort. This will be a special meeting devoted to the analysis of impediments and a discussion of the impediments currently hampering fair housing efforts across Kentucky. The meeting is open to the public. The mission of the task force is to collectively and affirmatively furthering fair housing in all areas and populations in Kentucky. For more information, contact Juan Peña at [juan.pena@ky.gov](mailto:juan.pena@ky.gov) at the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

On June 12, beginning at 5 p.m. (EDT), the Louisville Metro Housing Coalition (MHC) will present its 2014 annual meeting, to be held at The Ice House, 217 E Main St., in Louisville, Ky., 40202. The keynote speaker is Sara K. Pratt, deputy assistant secretary for Enforcement and Programs of the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO). For more information, call the Metro Housing Coalition at 502.584.6858.

Check Kentucky media for fair housing events in your area.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the state government agency that enforces laws against discrimination. For more information, call 1.800.292.5566 or visit the website at [www.kchr.ky.gov](http://www.kchr.ky.gov).