

## Local Fair Housing Group Testimonials on the Impact of Funding Cuts

**Lila E. Hackett, Executive Director**  
**Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama**  
**Birmingham, Alabama**

"The Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama serves twenty-nine of the sixty-seven counties in the northern portion of the state, a majority of which are rural. We also cover the largest cities in population; Birmingham, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Anniston-Gadsden, and Decatur. Approximately 70 percent of our complaints come from people with disabilities, both elderly and families with children with disabilities. We also serve a large concentration of veterans in the Huntsville, Decatur, and Birmingham communities, many of which suffer from varying disabilities, such as PTSD and mobility issues. Any reduction in services during the government shutdown, such as a lack of access to housing or other needed amenities such as transportation and food, will greatly impact our most vulnerable citizens, resulting in homelessness for some. Due to the government shutdown, we were unable to receive our Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) voucher for the final payment on our Year-1 grant from HUD and will be unable to receive our FHIP voucher for our start up payment for Year-2. This will result in either closing or reducing services at a time when our clients need us the most. If unable to secure local funding, residents of our entire service area (29) counties will face issues without our services."

**Jay Young, Executive Director**  
**Southwest Fair Housing Council**  
**Tucson, Arizona**

"The Southwest Fair Housing Council (SWFHC) was established in 1986. We are a non-profit, tax-exempt fair housing organization based in Tucson, Arizona that provides services throughout Arizona. Our HUD PEI and EOI grants expired at the end of June 2025. We received awards for a new PEI and EOI on September 30<sup>th</sup> but have not been able to start work because of the shutdown. We have not had funding to provide fair housing enforcement services outside of the City of Tucson, Pima County, and the City of Yuma. Our HUD PEI grant funded our statewide fair housing enforcement efforts for over 20 years. We do not currently have funding to provide enforcement services to the Phoenix metro area or the rest of the state's smaller cities, towns, and rural areas. Due to the uncertainty of HUD FHIP funding, we laid off four out of our eight staff members at the end of June. Three out of the four staff members had been with SWFHC for three to four years and had received extensive fair housing training."

**Ian Wilder, Executive Director**  
**Long Island Housing Services, Inc.**  
**Bohemia, New York**

"The Long Island Housing Services, Inc., a fair housing and housing counseling nonprofit, is located in Bohemia, New York, and serves Suffolk and Nassau counties. We serve any resident of Long Island facing housing insecurity, including low-income tenants, homeowners facing foreclosure, people facing homelessness, and people being denied housing due to housing discrimination. Our programs advocate for Long Islanders using all legal means available including government programs that ensure that the law is being followed. The government shutdown is impacting our clients by denying them the enforcement of laws passed by Congress. For example, a housing counseling client had an open escalation to HUD National Servicing Center with an FHA mortgage. We're urgently trying to stop a foreclosure sale because we have documented that the servicer dual-tracked the foreclosure by moving forward with the foreclosure while claiming to process our client for a loan modification. The bank never completed a proper loss mitigation review and moved to take the home through foreclosure. In the past, HUD would stop the sale until the client has had the legally required review of their loan modification application. The government shutdown prevented that from happening and the client needlessly and improperly lost their home."

**DeAnna Eason, Executive Director**  
**Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc. (HOME)**  
**Buffalo, New York – Serving 8 counties of Western New York**

"HOME investigates allegations of housing discrimination and provides landlord/tenant counseling, fair housing education and outreach, mobility services for housing choice voucher holders, trainings for homeowners, renters, buyers, and real estate professionals, as well as technical assistance to government officials and community-based organizations with fair housing inquiries. We serve all communities. The government shutdown has intensified existing barriers for our communities, especially those already impacted by previous federal office closures and staff reductions. Many individuals who filed discrimination complaints with HUD months ago remain without updates, and the current shutdown has only deepened this backlog. Vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, families with children, and low-income renters, are left feeling frustrated and fearful as their cases go unresolved. Our organization continues to provide intake, investigation, and fair housing education, but our ability to connect clients with federal enforcement is severely limited. HUD is almost unavailable as a referral option, leaving many clients in limbo and undermining confidence in the fair housing process. Families relying on Housing Choice Vouchers are increasingly worried about funding cuts and the risk of losing their homes. At this time, HUD is not a useful resource for enforcing the Fair Housing Act, which further restricts our ability to protect those we serve."

**Marlene Zarfes, Executive Director**  
**Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc. (WRO)**  
**White Plains, New York**

"My name is Marlene Zarfes and I am the Executive Director of Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc. (WRO), a non-profit located in White Plains, in Westchester County, NY and serving clients in Westchester County and the lower Hudson Valley. Our services include fair housing, mortgage default counseling, independent living case management and housing, eviction prevention, first-time homebuying and affordable marketing services. We have a diverse clientele of people with low and low-to-moderate income including all ages, all races, people with disabilities, families with children, and senior citizens. As a result of the shutdown, we currently have no federal funding to investigate, uncover and enforce fair housing laws. This is particularly harmful to people with disabilities and people using housing vouchers (generally people of color) who often face housing discrimination. We have already expended all of our annual funding for eviction prevention so there will be an increase in homelessness. Federal layoffs will only add to the homelessness crisis. Clients come to us seeking various forms of relief including rental assistance, shelters and food pantries. We've seen a noticeable increase in people looking for food pantries and shelters since the shutdown. Food pantries are struggling to keep up with the demand and, if the shutdown reduces SNAP, we will see clients unable to feed their families."

**Michelle Rydz, Executive Director**  
**High Plains Fair Housing Center**  
**Grand Forks, North Dakota**

"High Plains Fair Housing Center is the only full-service fair housing organization serving North Dakota and South Dakota. Since opening our doors in 2016, we have worked to eliminate housing discrimination and ensure equal housing opportunities for all people through education, advocacy, enforcement, and outreach. From our base in Grand Forks and satellite offices in Fargo and Bismarck, we respond to housing concerns and provide critical support to underserved rural communities as well as urban areas. Seeing a gap in fair housing services across South Dakota, we expanded into the state in late 2024 to make sure that residents there, too, have access to the protections promised under federal law. Each year, High Plains receives more than 1,000 calls from individuals and families facing housing challenges. The majority of our clients are people with disabilities, and because of the large number of military bases in our region, many of the people we serve are veterans. Families with children also make up a significant number of the discrimination cases we see, as housing providers too often impose unlawful restrictions or barriers.

"Our staff works to resolve these issues, mediating disputes between housing providers and residents and finding equitable solutions so people can stay stably housed without resorting to lengthy administrative or legal complaints. These mediation and advocacy services continue despite the current government shutdown. But when mediation breaks down, and a case must be filed formally, our clients' rights are now being left unprotected. One of our clients is a young woman who was struck by a drunk driver and now uses a wheelchair. She lives in a federally-subsidized building, where her requests for reasonable accommodations— such as accessibility modifications that would allow her to remain in her home— have been ignored. Under normal circumstances, her

case would be actively investigated. Instead, because of the shutdown, she is left waiting, vulnerable, and unable to secure the reasonable accommodations to which she is entitled under the law.

"If the government shutdown persists, people experiencing housing discrimination will be left without a path to justice. Fair housing laws exist to ensure that no one is denied the right to live in safe, stable housing because of who they are—but laws are only as strong as their enforcement. Every day of delay compounds the harm. For people with disabilities, for veterans returning home, for families raising children, this shutdown is not simply a matter of political stalemate. It abandons people at their most vulnerable moments and allows discrimination to go unchecked. Justice delayed is justice denied, and the real cost of this shutdown is measured in the lives of those left unprotected."

**Patricia Kidd, Esq.**

**Executive Director, Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc. (FHRC)**

**Painesville, Ohio – Serving Lake, Geauga, Ashtabula, and Trumbull Counties**

"As the Executive Director of FHRC, a qualified Fair Housing organization and HUD-Certified Housing Counseling agency, I see first-hand how the government shutdown is threatening to deepen the housing crisis in our community. FHRC primarily serves low-income families, seniors, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and victims of domestic violence—people already at heightened risk of housing instability and discrimination. The shutdown is directly harming the communities we serve by cutting off access to critical protections and resources at a time when families are struggling to remain housed. Tenants experiencing illegal evictions or discrimination now face longer delays in receiving help, and families seeking stable housing free from bias are left without timely assistance. Fear and uncertainty are widespread, as many residents are unsure how housing benefits and other supportive services will continue without interruption.

"For FHRC, the shutdown is disrupting our ability to operate effectively. While our Year-2 FHIP enforcement grant remains active, HUD's delay in announcing the start date of newly awarded grants has created serious uncertainty. Our HUD-certified Housing Counseling grant expired on September 30th with no word on renewal, forcing us to close our Landlord-Tenant Hotline after 20 years of continuous operation. This hotline has been a trusted lifeline for thousands of households navigating evictions, unsafe housing conditions, and landlord-tenant disputes. FHRC has also had to suspend foreclosure prevention counseling, leaving families at risk of losing their homes without vital assistance. Without swift resolution and restored funding, FHRC and other local fair housing organizations will be unable to provide the essential protections families need to secure housing free from discrimination and remain in safe, stable homes."

**Vincent B. Curry,**

**Executive Director, Fair Housing Advocates Association**

**Akron, Ohio - Serving various communities throughout Northeast, Central, and Southern Ohio**

"The Fair Housing Advocates Association (FHAA) is a private nonprofit located in Akron, Ohio and serving various communities throughout Northeast, Central, and Southern Ohio. While our services are available to all, the majority of people that we serve are persons with disabilities, single mothers with children, veterans, many of whom are homeless or under the threat of being homeless, and women who are victims of domestic violence.

"In the Akron, Summit County, Ohio community, the shutdown will have the following impact:

- "Stopping Citizens from Receiving Vital Housing Assistance due to Agency Budgetary Constraints. Many of our local agencies like FHAA that provide housing counseling, housing referrals, etc. to people who are homeless, being subjected to discrimination, etc. will no longer be able to do so because the funding that they receive from the federal government to operate will not be available during the shutdown. For example, many victims of discrimination find much needed relief and direction when provided assistance by private non-profit organizations. Without support from these agencies, they will lack the necessary guidance and resources to proceed effectively and fight the discrimination they are subjected to. Housing discrimination damages communities and goes against the values and policy of the United States.
- "Exacerbating the Homelessness Crisis. Homelessness is an ongoing problem in our community, and the shutdown is only going to further exacerbate it. Our local agencies provide funding to help provide housing and shelter to hundreds of homeless people. These people will no longer receive this assistance

because funds will not be available during the shutdown. One of our local agencies, which provides housing to homeless young people has indicated that it will no longer be able to provide rental assistance."

**Adria Buchanan, Executive Director**

**The Fair Housing Center of Washington**

**Tacoma, Washington – Serving 23 counties in Washington State**

"The Fair Housing Center of Washington serves 23 counties, helping individuals with disabilities, seniors, families with children, survivors of domestic violence, and others facing housing discrimination. For years, HUD was our partner in this work — issuing guidance, investigating cases, and supporting efforts to expand housing opportunity. But today, HUD is nowhere to be found. They've literally left the building. In their absence, discrimination has become the most reliable worker in housing — a tireless, unpaid employee who never takes a day off, eats the lunch of the fired staff, and roams the halls while Congress sleeps. Those of us who believe in a world free from discrimination must outwork it, so that the woman waiting a year for justice and the 95-year-old senior enduring harassment can finally live in peace. Because where people remain perpetually committed to justice, discrimination cannot thrive."

**Marley Hochendoner, Executive Director**

**Northwest Fair Housing Alliance**

**Spokane, Washington – Serving 17 counties in Eastern and Central Washington State**

"Northwest Fair Housing Alliance (NWFHA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit based in Spokane, WA, serving 17 counties in Eastern and Central Washington State. Our mission is to support and promote equitable housing opportunities, eliminate housing discrimination, and ensure affordable and accessible housing in Washington State by providing education, outreach, counseling, research, advocacy, and consulting services about housing transactions, programs, and community development. Annually, thousands of households rely on NWFHA for fair housing advocacy and counseling, including pre-eviction support and challenges related to housing instability, inaccessibility, and unsafe living conditions. Most of the households we serve live below the poverty line and include senior citizens, families with children, veterans, and people with physical or mental disabilities. 75 percent of our fair housing cases involve assisting people with disabilities to request reasonable accommodation or modifications so they can access, maintain, or stabilize their housing. The government shutdown couldn't come at a worse time, in the middle of an affordable housing crisis. NWFHA has a HUD FY23 FHIP grant but there are no HUD FHEO staff working to approve developed materials or grant payments or conduct intake and investigation of housing discrimination complaints. The recent layoffs of more HUD FHEO staff are alarming — employees in Region X were already also working in Region IX to cover staffing shortages. After months of delay and reissuance of the FY24 FHIP NOFO, NWFHA was awarded a FY24 FHIP grant on the last day before the shutdown; but there are no HUD staff working to negotiate the grant agreement, delaying the start of needed services in our communities. HUD has not yet issued a FY25 FHIP NOFO; and so far, there is no FY26 HUD FHIP appropriation. The uncertainty of funding is demoralizing and distracting for our staff who need to be focused on helping people in need of securing housing. Our ability to share information with the public about how to avoid, identify, and report housing discrimination has also been hampered by HUD's ambiguous cease and desists notices relating to materials developed with HUD funds that include HUD's logo or name. Lack of clarity regarding use of existing materials, the absence of HUD staff to approve new materials, and the recent withdrawal of numerous HUD guidance documents has left us with nearly nothing to share with housing providers, local governments, and social service agencies that look to us for information on fair housing compliance. This is the first time in NWFHA's 30 years of existence that NWFHA has faced such prolonged uncertainty about whether HUD will fulfill its fair housing obligations in our communities."