

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 24, 2026

TO Honorable Members of the Housing and Homelessness Solutions Committee: Cara Mendelsohn (Chair), Lorie Blair (Vice Chair), Adam Bazaldua, Zarin Gracey, Jesse Moreno, Jaime Resendez, Gay Willis

SUBJECT **Fair Housing Update**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview and update to the Housing and Homelessness Solutions Committee on the role of Fair Housing which includes Fair Housing Investigations and Development Project Reviews. The work is guided by the 1968 Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination in housing, lending, and rentals based on seven protected classes: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, and familial status. While recent federal executive actions and guidelines have removed protections for sexual orientation and gender identity that were previously recognized at the federal level, the Dallas City Ordinances continue to protect these groups. Under local law, discrimination in housing based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and source of income remains expressly prohibited.

This April our office will commemorate the 1968 Fair Housing Act during National Fair Housing Month.

Background

Fair Housing is a critical activity in our city's goal to create safe strong neighborhoods under Drivers of Opportunity (DO!) by addressing barriers that hinder access to safe quality housing throughout our city and ensuring opportunity for residents to thrive economically.

Fair Housing Investigations address discriminatory practices so that protected classes have equal access to housing everywhere in the city.

In addition, Fair Housing conducts assessment reviews of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) developments to review for site selection in neighborhoods with strong opportunity indicators, reducing segregation and promoting mobility, while ensuring housing development connects residents to schools, jobs, and transit.

Fair Housing education and outreach efforts complement this work by training housing providers and engaging the public on the importance of this work.

Fair Housing Division - Scope and Pillars

In keeping with the federal mandate, the Fair Housing team operates under three primary pillars - Fair Housing Investigations, Furthering the Purpose of the Fair Housing Act and Education and Outreach.

Fair Housing Investigations

The Fair Housing team focuses on investigating allegations of housing discrimination in both public and private markets, covering protected classes such as race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, and familial status. These investigations address common violations, including refusal to rent, sell, or lend based on protected characteristics, as well as discriminatory practices by landlords, property managers, real estate agents, lenders, homeowners’ associations, and condominium boards. During October 1, 2024 – December 30, 2025, the Fair Housing Division processed 622 incident reports, of which 73 were converted to formal investigations after meeting the criteria for qualifying fair housing cases. The Division issued seven cause recommendations to the City Attorney’s Office and successfully facilitated seven conciliations, reflecting ongoing efforts to evaluate, resolve, and address potential fair housing violations within the community.



Furthering the Purpose of the Fair Housing Act

The Fair Housing team advances the purpose of the Fair Housing Act (eliminating discriminatory housing practices and ensuring equal access to housing opportunities) by taking proactive steps to address segregation, expand housing choice, eliminate disparities in access to opportunity, and foster inclusive, discrimination-free communities. This work includes inter-departmental collaboration to identify and remove systemic barriers such as the loss of affordable housing, restrictive zoning and occupancy codes, and subsidy policies that limit mobility and reinforce inequities.

To support this mission, the city utilizes housing development strategies such as the Fair Housing Assessment Tool (FHAT), a framework that evaluates how proposed housing developments advance fair housing objectives. The FHAT centers on six Fair Housing Goals:

- **Increasing access to affordable housing in high-opportunity areas** which are locations with strong schools, transit access, job proximity, and healthy environmental conditions.
- **Preserving existing affordable housing and promoting mixed-income development** which promotes balanced development across high-opportunity and historically disinvested communities, discouraging economic segregation and ensuring that investment in market-pressure areas advances equity rather than deepening disparities
- **Ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities** through accessible units, universal design, reasonable accommodation policies, and improvements to surrounding infrastructure.
- **Preventing displacement and promoting inclusive investment** by supporting right-to-return policies, affordability covenants, and community benefits in reinvestment areas.
- **Providing support services and amenities for residents** which prioritizes targeted, high-impact services over general or referral-based models, with a focus on services identified through resident-driven needs assessments.
- **Advancing fair housing education, outreach, and access** which advances awareness of fair housing rights and removes barriers for underrepresented communities by incorporating staff training, robust language access strategies, and formal partnerships with qualified fair housing organizations.

Each goal is assessed on a 0–5 scale using clear, measurable criteria, such as poverty rates and opportunity indicators for Goal 1; depth of income integration for Goal 2; accessibility features for Goal 3; anti-displacement strategies for Goal 4; resident-focused services for Goal 5; and training, outreach, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) inclusion for Goal 6. The combined score (0–30 points) provides an overall impact rating (ranging from High Positive to High Negative) reflecting how strongly a project supports or undermines fair housing outcomes.

Together, the team’s work and the FHAT evaluation tool helps ensure that City policies, investments, and housing decisions consistently expand meaningful housing choice across Dallas.

Education and Outreach

The Fair Housing team conducts outreach efforts that target both the housing industry and the public. For housing professionals, technical training is offered on fair housing compliance, criminal record use, credit policies, and eviction considerations. Public engagement initiatives include advocacy campaigns, fair housing testing, and enforcement activities designed to strengthen awareness and compliance.

April is Fair Housing month and OHCE is preparing a series of engagement, education, and outreach initiatives.

The events include:

- A relaunch of Fair Housing PSA (April 1, 2026) – The Division will relaunch its Fair Housing public service announcement through the City’s website and official communication channels to expand public awareness.
- “More You Know Mondays” Campaign (April 6–30) – A weekly, month-long educational series that will provide residents and staff with timely fair housing information and resources throughout April.
- Fair Housing Trivia Thursdays (April 6–30) – Interactive trivia activities designed to strengthen community understanding of fair housing laws in an engaging and accessible format.
- Community Engagement Walk (April 18, 2026) – Staff will participate in a community walk, providing tabling, informational materials, and onsite guidance regarding fair housing rights.
- Partnership with Communications and 311 (CCX + 311 Together) – Joint outreach events, including “Coffee with the Community,” will offer residents direct access to fair housing information and City services.

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Current Priorities

OHCE is prioritizing efforts to strengthen its investigative capacity, deepen collaboration with developers, and expand education and outreach to reduce systemic barriers within housing markets. These efforts are included in the proposed Housing and Homelessness Framework and include building the resources necessary to address the rising number of discrimination complaints and integrating fair housing principles and tracking metrics aligned with DOI.

Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact myself or Thor Erickson, Director, Office of Housing and Community Empowerment at 214-460-3632 or Thor.Erickson@dallas.gov.

Service First, Now!



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