

Arkansas Fair Housing Commission



FY 2018 – FY 2019 Strategic Plan

ARKANSAS FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION

FY 2018 – FY 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION:	The mission of the Arkansas Fair Housing Commission is to receive, investigate, conciliate and/or resolve complaints alleging violations of the Arkansas Fair Housing Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under the age of 18) and disability; to cooperate with and provide technical and other assistance to federal, state, local and other public or private entities that are formulating or operating programs to prevent or eliminate discriminatory housing practices; and to establish an education and outreach program to prevent discriminatory housing practices.
VISION:	To create equitable housing opportunities in Arkansas free from discrimination and to foster and promote open access to housing, lending and community services to make Arkansas the best state to work, live and raise a family.
CORE VALUES:	"Fairness, Equity, Leadership, Integrity, Professionalism, Neutrality and Efficiency."

GOAL 1 ENFORCE THE FAIR HOUSING ACT

AFHC Goal 1 Aligns with Strategy of Arkansas Goals: Safe, Efficient and Responsive, Quality of Life

Measurable Objective 1: Receive, intake and investigate fair housing and fair lending complaints from Arkansas residents.

Strategy 1: Ensure access to the Arkansas Fair Housing Commission and its services

Strategy Detail

- Provide multiple channels of access to file a complaint to include: Telephone, Internet, In-person, Mail and Facsimile options.
- Timely return phone messages.
- Interview "walk-ins" same day when possible during normal business hours.

Measurable Objective 2: Conduct efficient and neutral Investigations

Strategy 1: Provide a systematic approach to complaint processing

Strategy Detail

- *Follow established case processing guidelines to include:*
 - *Notification of parties*
 - *Investigative plan*
 - *File maintenance*
 - *Use of an electronic management system*
 - *Interviewing witnesses*
 - *Use of subpoenas to obtain necessary documents*
 - *Conducting dispute resolution throughout the process*
 - *Conducting on-site tenant surveys of witnesses and documents*
 - *Conducting thorough file reviews*
 - *Drafting Final Investigative Reports*
 - *Drafting court-worthy Final Determinations*

Strategy 2: Facilitate Dispute Resolution prior to the formal adjudication of a case

Strategy Detail

- *Conduct conciliation between the parties as per federal and state guidelines during all phases of the investigative process*
- *Educate parties on the conciliation process and ensure they are aware that it is a voluntary process*

Strategy 3: Conduct a multi-level review of completed investigation

Strategy Detail

- *Investigator conducts the investigation and drafts the Final Determination*
- *Chief Investigator reviews the Final Determination*
- *Director makes a final review of the Final Determination*
- *The Full Commission provides an administrative review Final Determinations which fail conciliation and are not presented for judicial adjudication (See below)*
- *Work toward gaining approval for sufficient investigative staff to meet agency investigative objectives*

Strategy 4: Adjudicative Process (Administrative or Judicial)

Strategy Detail

- *The Full Commission conducts an administrative hearing if a judicial remedy is not elected*
- *The Office of the Arkansas Attorney General represents the State of Arkansas in all administrative or judicial adjudications*
- *The parties may elect to proceed with a private lawsuit*

GOAL 2 EDUCATE HOUSING PROVIDERS, INDUSTRY LEADERS, LENDERS, REALTORS, DEVELOPERS, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE FAIR HOUSING ACT

AFHC Goal 2 Aligns with Strategy of Arkansas Goals: Educate and Quality of Life

Measurable Objective 3: Continue to conduct statewide specialized educational training designed to meet industry and stakeholder needs while promoting open housing access. Included below are existing Agency programs designed to provide general public education and to provide continuing education credits (including legal, social work, architecture, real estate, etc.) to those working in industry. The Agency offers several courses each year.

Strategy 1: Management and Best Practices Training (8-hour course)

Strategy Detail

- *Provide specialized full-day trainings conducted by knowledgeable staff targeted at housing professionals in the areas of lending, real estate sale and management, public housing providers, private housing providers, housing insurers, housing developers, and potential renters and homebuyers.*
- *Conduct multiple statewide trainings each year across the state of easier geographical accessibility.*
- *Encourage professional attendance by offering Continuing Education for Realtors and Attorneys.*
- *Encourage public attendance by offering full scholarships for non-industry attendees.*

Strategy 2: Design and Construction Training (8-hour course)

Strategy Detail

- *Provide full day trainings conducted by knowledgeable staff targeted at architects, developers, contractors, and owners*
- *Conduct multiple trainings each year*
- *Schedule training in various locations throughout Arkansas*
- *Encourage professional attendance by offering Continuing Education for Architects*
- *Encourage public attendance by offering full scholarships for non-industry attendees*

Strategy 3: Fair Housing and Fair Lending Legal Updates Training (8-hour course)

Strategy Detail

- *Provide annually a full-day seminar conducted by attorneys knowledgeable in fair housing and fair lending laws, rules and regulations.*
- *Encourage professional attendance by offering Continuing Legal Education credits for Attorneys and Realtors.*
- *Encourage attendance by all audiences by hosting national Fair Housing and Fair Lending experts from across the United States.*
- *Encourage attendance by all audiences by offering seminar at no cost to attendees.*

GOAL 3 CREATE A STATEWIDE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH INITIATIVE DESIGNED TO REACH THE PUBLIC AT-LARGE AND HOUSING INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

AFHC Goal 3 Aligns with Strategy of Arkansas Goals: Educate and Quality of Life

Measurable Objective 4: Conduct specialized outreach opportunities designed to meet the public need to obtain open housing access.

Strategy 1: Annual Fair Housing Conference

Strategy Detail

- *Conduct an annual, nationally recognized, multi-day conference targeted at housing professionals in the areas of lending, real estate sale and management, public housing providers, private housing providers, housing insurers, housing developers, potential renters and homebuyers, and the general public.*
- *Offer sessions on a vast variety of fair housing and fair lending issues taught by national experts from across the United States.*
- *Encourage professional attendance by offering Continuing Education for Realtors, Architects and Social Workers, and by offering Continuing Legal Education for Attorneys.*
- *Encourage attendance by all audiences by offering this annual conference at no cost to attendees.*

Strategy 2: Educational Tours and Outreach

Strategy Detail

- *Conduct Town Hall Meetings in each of Arkansas' four congressional districts.*
- *Conduct Focus Groups in each of Arkansas' four congressional districts.*

- *Conduct University Outreach to students attending colleges and universities throughout the State of Arkansas.*
- *Design and distribute brochures, pamphlets, press releases and media kits to ensure broad coverage of fair housing and fair lending news and information.*
- *Utilize social media to raise awareness of fair housing and fair lending issues.*
- *Utilize media outlets, such as public television, radio, newspapers and others, to raise awareness of fair housing and fair lending issues.*
- *Distribute promotional items related to services provided by the Arkansas Fair Housing Commission to garner greater awareness of available services and provide information on how to easily access that information.*

Strategy 3: Special Events

Strategy Detail

- *Provide opportunities to facilitate discussion on fair housing and fair lending by creating opportunities that appeal to different demographic and the socio-economic groups, etc.*
- *Hold focus groups, town-hall meetings and listening tours across the state on the issues of housing the re-entry community.*

Strategy 4: Provide and Maintain an Agency Website

Strategy Detail

- *Maintain website with links to Fair Housing Laws, Trainings, News and other pertinent fair housing and fair lending information.*

AFHC Efficiency Goal: *The Agency will work within state and federal guidelines to ensure the enforcement of civil rights protections through fair housing and fair lending adjudication, education and outreach. AFHC will accomplish this goal by carefully evaluating existing resources and processes over the next two years to refine case intake and case management within regulatory parameters to best meet the housing needs of Arkansans.*

APPENDIX: AGENCY CONTACT

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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APPENDIX: AGENCY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

