



Dakota County CDA Fair Housing Policy

I. PURPOSE/VISION

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendment Act of 1988, establishes federal policy for providing fair housing throughout the United States. The intent of Title VIII is to assure equal housing opportunities for all citizens. Local governments that receive community development funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 are obligated to certify that they will affirmatively further fair housing. The seven classes protected under the federal Fair Housing Act include: color, disability, familial status, national origin, race, religion, and sex. The Minnesota Human Rights Act has the same fair housing protections as Title VIII with the addition of creed, age, marital status, public assistance status, and sexual orientation.

The Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA) resolves to promote fair housing and the opportunity for low- and moderate-income families of all races, ethnicities, national origins, religions, ethnic backgrounds, and with all types of disabilities to participate in CDA programs and services.

To comply with these obligations or requirements, the CDA has developed this Fair Housing Policy.

II. FAIR HOUSING POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Dakota County CDA to ensure that fair and equal housing opportunities are available to all persons in all housing opportunities and development activities funded by the CDA regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, status of regard to public assistance, familial status, national origin, or disability. This shall be done through external policies that provide meaningful access to all constituents and fair housing informational and referral services; internal practices and procedures that do not discriminate and that affirmatively further fair housing; housing finance policy as a funder of affordable housing developments; and through the landlord role of affordable rental housing operated and managed by the CDA.

III. EXTERNAL PRACTICES

A. Fair Housing Officer. Dakota County CDA has designated the following person as the Fair Housing Officer:

Administrative Coordinator
1228 Town Centre Drive
Eagan, MN 55123
651-675-4434
info@dakotacda.state.mn.us

The Fair Housing Officer is responsible for providing public information regarding this policy and applicable federal and state fair housing requirements and resources, and referral of all fair housing complaints. While not expected to be an “expert” in fair housing laws or to conduct any investigation or bring any enforcement actions, the Officer will be familiar with state and federal fair housing laws and the state and federal agencies that handle complaints.

B. Meaningful Access to Online Information. Dakota County CDA will have information about fair housing and its Fair Housing Officer displayed on its website. The website will also have links to various fair housing resources, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Minnesota Department of Human Rights, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, and others. The website will also link to state and federal fair housing complaint forms and the State of Minnesota Olmstead Plan.

C. In-Person Information. Dakota County CDA will provide fair housing information to anyone requesting such information at the CDA office building (1228 Town Centre Drive, Eagan, MN 55123). Information provided will include:

- I. A list of fair housing enforcement agencies
- II. Fair Housing Complaint Information

Multi-language Fair Housing posters will be prominently displayed in the front lobby of the CDA office as well as smaller posters in staff cubicles where staff meet with program participants. The CDA will continue to supply additional posters to the other service organizations. The Fair Housing symbol will be displayed on all CDA brochures as well as on the CDA website.

D. Languages. Material in other languages can be requested and handled on an individual basis.

E. Promotion of Fair Housing Month. April is National Fair Housing month and is a time to promote fair housing awareness. The Dakota County CDA will engage in marketing strategies to reach protected groups using conventional methods such as newspapers and other media, flyers, as well as personal contact and mailings.

F. Landlord Education. The Dakota County CDA will strive to host landlord/owner training annually for local landlords and rental property owners to discuss a variety of issues related to rental housing and the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Fair housing and equal access to housing will be discussed in the trainings. Trainings will be instructed by contract attorneys that specialize in fair housing law to ensure that the landlords and property owners receive the most current, accurate information regarding fair housing.

In addition, the Dakota County CDA will strive to offer regularly scheduled workshops about the Housing Choice Voucher Program for rental property owners and landlords that provide tools, tips and information on requirements and policies, in addition to fair housing information.

G. FHIC Member. Dakota County CDA is a member of the Fair Housing Implementation Council (FHIC), which is a collaborative group representing the Twin Cities metropolitan area entitlement jurisdictions (recipient of federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development) and other governmental agencies. The purpose of the FHIC is to facilitate and initiate implementation of activities having metro-wide significance identified in the regional Analysis of

Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). Examples of fair housing activities funded in the past by FHIC members include educating individuals on fair housing rights and supporting organizations to create fair housing videos.

IV. INTERNAL PRACTICES

Dakota County CDA commits to the following steps to promote awareness and sensitivity to fair housing issues in all of its government functions.

- A. Staff Training. The Dakota County CDA will regularly train staff and elected officials on fair housing considerations, including working with people with disabilities and limited English proficiency constituents.
- B. Community Engagement. The Dakota County CDA commits to ongoing community engagement. Specifically, the Dakota County CDA commits to conversations with communities regarding potential affordable housing projects.
- C. Analysis of Impediments. An analysis of impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) is required of local jurisdictions and organizations that receive federal housing funds which provides a review of barriers to fair housing choice. It serves as the basis for fair housing planning and provides information to policy makers, housing providers, lenders and the public. The CDA is required to complete an AI every five years and does so in conjunction with the FHIC.

V. HOUSING FINANCE TOOLS

The CDA is committed to assist in the financing of affordable rental housing and homeownership for low to moderate income households. The CDA will consider assisting in the development, acquisition, and substantial rehabilitation or acquisition and preservation of multifamily rental housing facilities or homeownership with a variety of local, state, and federal funding sources. It is the policy of the CDA to ensure fair housing requirements are adhered to for all CDA-financed projects.

VI. CDA RENTAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

The Dakota County CDA is a developer, owner, and operator of affordable rental housing units throughout Dakota County. As a landlord, the CDA ensures the Agency's rental housing programs shall be in compliance with all non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and fair housing laws and practices, as specified in the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policies (ACOP) that can be found on the Dakota County CDA website (www.dakotacda.org). ACOPs are reviewed, revised, and approved on an as needed basis by the CDA Board of Commissioners.

CDA adheres to fair housing requirements regarding rental housing issues, including Title VIII and the Human Rights Act that makes it unlawful to: (i) discriminate in the selection/acceptance of applicants in the rental of housing units; (ii) discriminate in terms, conditions or privileges of the rental of a dwelling unit; (iii) engage in any conduct relating to the provision of housing that otherwise make unavailable or denies the rental of a dwelling unit; (iv) make or publish (or have anyone else make or publish) advertisements that indicate preferences or limitations based on any of the protected classes.; (v) tell a person that because of race, etc., a dwelling unit is not available when it is; and (vi) deny access to, or

membership or participation in, associations or other service organizations or facilities relating to the business of renting a dwelling or discriminate in the terms or conditions of membership or participation.

Discrimination Complaints

If an applicant or tenant family believes that any family member has been discriminated against by the CDA, the family should advise the CDA (specifically the Property Management Department). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the CDA to make every reasonable attempt to determine whether the applicant or tenant family's assertions have merit and take any warranted corrective action. In all cases, the CDA may advise the family to file a fair housing complaint if the family feels they have been discriminated against under the Fair Housing Act. Upon receipt of a housing discrimination complaint, the CDA is required to:

- Provide written notice of the complaint to those alleged and inform the complainant that such Dakota County CDA Public Housing ACOP notice was made.
- Investigate the allegations and provide the complainant and those alleged with findings and either a proposed corrective action or an explanation of why corrective action is not warranted.
- Keep records of all complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions.

Applicants or resident families who believe that they have been subject to unlawful discrimination may notify the CDA either orally or in writing (preferred). The CDA will attempt to remedy discrimination complaints made against the CDA and will conduct an investigation into all allegations of discrimination. Complainant's may also choose to contact the local HUD office.

For all the fair housing details associated with the CDA rental housing programs, please review all current ACOPS on www.dakotacda.org.

Adopted by CDA Board of Commissioners: August 20, 2019