



CDBG & HOME Participation

Consolidated Plan General Planning and Participation - Fair Housing/Discrimination Minutes

November 19, 2025 6:00 PM

Hybrid Meeting; Mid-Continent Public Library - North Branch - 317 West 24 Highway

And over Microsoft Teams: Join via computer, tablet, or smartphone:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting?rtc=1>

Meeting ID: 226 368 881 314 9 Passcode: D2yJ6BU3 Join by telephone: 1-872-222-5977 ID: 926 441 532#

INTRODUCTION

In Person

Brian Hull, CEW Advisors, Inc.

Chris Ballinger, Community Development Program Administrator

Jodi Baker, Community Development Program Specialist

City of Independence Citizens

Online Participants

Marikate Sears, Truman Heritage Habitat for Humanity

Christina Leakey, Truman Heritage Habitat for Humanity

The meeting was opened by Brian Hull, CEW advisor, who is working with the City of Independence to prepare two key documents:

- **The Consolidated Plan** – a five-year strategic plan guiding the use of federal HUD funds.

- **The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI)** – a companion document focused on identifying barriers, discrimination patterns, and segregation that limit equal access to housing.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss fair housing, identify barriers and examples of discrimination, understand local experiences, and gather input for the upcoming AI document. A second meeting focused on broader community needs was also scheduled.

Brian explained that the AI evaluates public data (HUD, Census, lending data, discrimination cases), online survey responses, and community feedback. The goal is to determine whether protected classes face unequal access to housing and what strategies may remove existing barriers.

DISCUSSION ON FAIR HOUSING/HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

What Fair Housing Laws Cover

- The Fair Housing Act (federal) and the Missouri Human Rights Act (state) prohibit discrimination in housing based on:
 - Race
 - Color
 - Religion
 - National Origin
 - Sex/Gender
 - Disability
 - Ethnicity

Missouri does not protect "source of income," meaning landlords may legally refuse Section 8/Housing Choice Vouchers.

Types of Discrimination Presented

Mr. Hull reviewed examples of discriminatory practices:

- Refusing to rent or falsely claiming a unit is unavailable.
- Applying different rental terms (e.g., higher deposits).
- Refusing to rent to families with children.
- Not making reasonable accommodations for people with mobility or accessibility needs.

Challenges in Identifying and Proving Discrimination

Participants discussed:

- How difficult it can be to investigate or enforce discrimination complaints.
- That the most extreme historical discriminatory practices (e.g., redlining) are less common, but subtle forms still occur.
- Many people do not know how or where to report discrimination.

Local Barriers Raised by Participants

- Limited availability of accessible housing.
- Landlords refusing Section 8 despite high community need.
- Difficulty following up on questionable rental denials when landlords claim units are already rented.
- General lack of resources for both tenants and landlords.
- Concern about deteriorating or unsafe housing units and limited accountability for property conditions.
- Legal aid organizations have been involved but are not always widely known or easily accessed.

Preliminary Data Observations

- Initial public data does not show major disparate impacts related to fair housing in Independence.
- However, the city's demographic makeup is only recently diversifying, and additional local data (stories, surveys, lending data) could provide a more complete picture.

FOLLOW UP AND NEXT STEPS

Ongoing Work

- CEW and the City are continuing community meetings, surveys, and consultations with agencies and housing providers.
- More meetings are scheduled for the following week.

Draft Document Timeline

- Draft Consolidated Plan and Draft Analysis of Impediments will be developed by late December or early January.
- These drafts will be reviewed internally with City staff and key stakeholders to ensure accuracy.

Public Review Process

- Drafts will be publicly released (estimated January–February).
- Another public meeting will be held to present the findings, proposed strategies, and funding allocations.
- The public will have the opportunity to comment or suggest adjustments.

Approval and Submission

- After revisions, a final version of the documents will go to City Council for approval.
- Once approved, the documents are submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Funding Context

- The City receives approximately \$1.2 million per year through:
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds – broad eligible uses.
 - HOME Investment Partnership Program – focused on affordable housing (construction, rehab, rental, ownership, etc.).

Communication & Wrap-Up

- Participants who signed in will be notified of future meetings and the release of draft documents.
- The meeting concluded with thanks and an invitation for further conversations.