

FAIR HOUSING PLAN

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

I. **Policy Statement**

It shall be the policy and commitment of Arlington County to ensure that fair and equal housing opportunities are granted to all persons, in all housing opportunities and development activities funded by the County, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, lawful source of income, familial status, national origin, ancestry, age or mental or physical disability. This shall be done through a program of education, an analysis of impediments, and designation of a Fair Housing Office and development of a procedure for complaints of discrimination. This plan will incorporate the directives of state, federal and local laws and executive orders, including, but not limited to:

- a. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- b. The Fair Housing Act – Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended
- c. Executive Order 11063, as amended by Executive Order 12259
- d. Section 104(b) of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended
- e. Section 109 of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended
- f. Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968, as amended
- g. Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
- h. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- i. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended
- j. Executive Order 11246 (as amended by Executive Orders 12375 and 12086) Equal Opportunity Under HUD contracts and HUD-assisted Construction Contracts
- k. Executive Order 12892, Leadership and Coordination of Fair Housing
- l. Virginia Fair Housing Law
- m. Arlington County Fair Housing Ordinance

Arlington County commits to providing and promoting racial and economic integration in any housing development or federally assisted program. It will take affirmative steps to reach beneficiaries from all racial and ethnic groups, persons with disabilities and families with children and to reach a broad range of income eligible beneficiaries for appropriate and applicable housing opportunities.

II. Selection of Fair Housing Officer

In accordance with Title VIII, Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, the Fair Housing Officer below has been designated to handle fair housing complaints and activities

Raul Torres, Assistant County Manager
Executive Director, Arlington County Human Rights Commission
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22201
(703) 228-7045

The Fair Housing Officer is responsible for the intake and processing of all housing complaints as well as implementation of the Fair Housing Plan activities and actions. The officer will be familiar with the complaint process and federal and state laws, which address Fair Housing. Records which show the date, time, nature of complaint and decisions made in the complaint process(es) will be fully documented. A separate file will maintain a record of all housing discrimination complaint and follow-up actions.

III. Complaint Process

Housing discrimination complaint forms such as Forms HUG903 and HUG903A (Spanish version) from HUD and the bilingual Fair Housing Complaint Form from the Commonwealth of Virginia's Fair Housing Office which may be accessed at <http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/dporweb/forms/fh/fhcomplaint.pdf>, as well as a summary of actions which constitute housing discrimination, and instructions for completing and filing housing discrimination complaints will be made available to citizens at Courthouse Plaza, 2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22201. Forms will also be distributed to lenders, realtors, and at other public places such as the public libraries periodically.

The Fair Housing Officer will reasonably assist the complainant in submitting the complaint to the appropriate body by providing assistance in explaining the form and/or contacting the appropriate office and allowing the use of County phones for communication.

The individual(s) filing the complaint will then be advised of the option of filing directly with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Virginia Fair Housing Office, or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or with all agencies simultaneously. The Fair Housing Officer will keep a record of the progress on the number of complaints filed, actions taken, and the status of each complaint.

IV. **Affordability Determination**

According to the 2004 study by Virginia Association of Realtors® and the Center for Housing Research, the Northern Virginia-Fairfax region, which includes Arlington County, is the least affordable jurisdiction in the Commonwealth. 31.5% of a median family income would have to be spent on the principal and interest payments of an average home. This implies that the average home is not affordable to the average family.

V. **Implementation and Action Steps**

The County will take specific action steps and implementation activities over the next five-year period following the guidelines provided by the analysis of impediments.

1. It is recommended that the County increase outreach to and education of tenants and owners about rights and responsibilities

- Expand tenant-landlord program, housing fair, housing coordination, and foreclosure prevention in Housing Services.
- Conduct an education campaign on predatory lending, focusing efforts on County neighborhoods that are vulnerable to predatory lending. Actively distribute HUD's [citizen guides](#) on how to identify and avoid unfair lending practices, and file a complaint.
- Provide housing and credit repair education to households on Section 8 - HCV and Housing Grants waiting lists.
- The Human Rights Office (HRO) and the Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development (CPDH) develop annual fair housing and AI workshops to educate the community and receive feedback. Hold a Latino specific forum related to fair housing, discrimination, and service access

2. It is recommended that the County improve physical and language accessibility.

- Enhance the process to identify available accessible units and marketing them.
- Explore having an Affordable Housing Goal and Target for accessibility. One Target should relate to accessible bathrooms (roll in showers; units on ground floor), and the other should address accessibility compliance.
- Quantify the need for accessible units in the County and strive for commensurate baseline accessibility standards for County supported units.
- Include principles of visitability and universal design in all new construction and rehabilitations. Create a local visitability certificate program possibly modeled after Montgomery County, MD.'s [Design for Life](#) program.
- Develop accessibility public education campaign and expand County staff accessibility training.
- The LEP tool ("check off sheet") should be used for all programmatic outreach efforts by County staff and partners who administer housing programs. Ensure nonprofit

partners provide multilingual versions of the Housing Choice Voucher application form and application forms for CAF rentals.

- Create a public service announcement (PSA) on Arlington TV in Spanish, Vietnamese and the other most prevalent non-English languages on affordable housing programs, the fair housing complaint process, and public services.
- Help create “Arlington Language Access Coalition,” a community group to oversee implementation of the Arlington Language Access Plan.
- Regularly update the County’s [LEP Plan](#). Prominently post each department’s LEP plan on the County website and provide progress reports on efforts to meet LEP goals. Create an LEP brochure to educate the community. Work with the regional language access coordinators group and the multicultural outreach network.
- Ensure that all major County publications are available to County residents in multiple languages (Spanish, Korean, Amharic, Vietnamese, Russian) where appropriate to the needs of the consumers.

3. It is recommended that the County increase the number and value of the local Housing Grants.

- Work with the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness Implementation Task Force to find new funding streams to increase Housing Grants.
- Expand Housing Grants’ eligible categories to include homeless singles.

4. It is recommended that the County work to limit housing barriers based on credit histories, criminal background checks, and source of income.

- Identify housing models that are currently excluded from the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) and explore amending ACZO to include these models.
- Develop a “Ready to Rent” program to help applicants avoid leasing barriers, possibly modeled after this [Portland, OR program](#).
- Require all landlords who receive AHIF to waive the minimum income requirement or base the minimum income requirement on the tenant’s portion of the rent, to the extent permissible under fair housing law.
- Work to expand the state fair housing ordinance to include source of income.
- More widely disseminate fair housing rental testing report and increase resident participation in the Arlington County Human Rights Commission fair housing process.
- Develop a master lease program/policy to reduce barriers in the rental application process.

Additional Steps

Arlington County will adopt annually the Fair Housing Policy Statement and Resolution as an indication of its commitment to Fair Housing Month during the month of April.

Arlington County shall periodically prepare, solicit and provide public service announcements for local radio and/or TV stations in order to provide knowledgeable and information about Fair Housing.

Arlington County will display Fair Housing posters identifying the County's Fair Housing Officer, title, address and phone number in prominent locations. In addition, fair housing information will be distributed outside of traditional municipal locations including local realtors and banks.

All advertising of residential real estate developed by subrecipients of Arlington County for sale, rent or financing will contain the Fair Housing logo, equal opportunity slogan as a means of educating the home seeking public that the property is available to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, national origin, age, ancestry, or lawful source of income. All bid advertisements by County sponsored programs must include the phrase "Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer." The type of logo, statement or slogan will depend on the type of media being used (visual or auditory). All logos/statements must appear at the end of the advertisement.

VI. Analysis of Impediments

The County will periodically update its Analysis of Impediments and conduct a review of policies, practices and procedures that affect the location available and accessibility of housing.

VII. Amendments

The County shall amend and revise this Plan as required to keep current with state/federal affirmative action and equal opportunity policies and procedures and local actions and activities to further the purposes of this Plan.

Jay Fiset, Chair
Arlington County Board

Date