



MIAMI VALLEY FAIR HOUSING CENTER NEWSLETTER

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JIM MCCARTHY, PRESIDENT/CEO

MVFHC launches the 2022 Housing Choices & Obstacles in Montgomery Co. Survey

The Miami Valley Fair Housing Center is doing a study to understand what obstacles people in Montgomery County face when it comes to housing choices. Your answers in this survey will help us identify common issues and suggest ways to reduce these obstacles to local governments. We are examining housing issues in Montgomery County, the City of Dayton, and the City of Kettering. This survey is part of the 2022 Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing which the three jurisdictions are collaborating on.

Housing affects every aspect of our lives. Where we live determines how long it takes to get to work or school, how far it is to the grocery or doctor's office, whether there's public transportation to take us where we need to go and what schools our children attend. Where we live can give us more opportunities or it can keep us from opportunities like a better job or a better future for our children. Miami Valley Fair Housing Center works to eliminate housing discrimination and ensure equal housing opportunity for all people in our region, the State of Ohio, and nationally. Robust community participation in this survey will help achieve our mission.

Take the survey at www.mvfairhousing.com/fhsurvey2022

National Fair Housing Alliance Launches Frontdoor

The Interactive Web Service Connects Users to Rental Assistance

WASHINGTON, DC - The [National Fair Housing Alliance](http://www.nationalfairhousing.org) (NFHA) has developed an interactive website that quickly connects renters who need support to pay their rent or utilities to programs that can provide assistance, addressing a problem that has become more acute because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic dislocation that followed it.

Frontdoor, as the web service is called, is designed to counteract housing instability, which was exacerbated by the pandemic by streamlining the process of distributing emergency assistance. It links renters to programs for which they are qualified, regardless of where they live in the U.S. An in-depth guide can be emailed or downloaded so that renters can be prepared to complete the processes needed to secure assistance. The guide is available in Spanish as well as English and is mobile-friendly.

Frontdoor went live on March 3, 2022, and can be accessed at <https://frontdoor.nationalfairhousing.org/>.

“Rental assistance helps 8.7 million people in rural areas, cities, and suburbs, and the ensuing economic crisis has only exacerbated that number as eviction moratoriums have expired,” said Michael Akinwumi, NFHA’s Chief Tech Equity Officer. “The Frontdoor web service was created to help renters navigate the complex and time-consuming rental assistance process and connect them to programs they may be eligible for. NFHA’s vision is for everyone to be stably and safely housed, and this new web service is just one tool we are proud to offer.”

Since the onset of the pandemic, 30-40 million renters have faced the possibility of eviction as one in six renter households fell behind on payments. Before the pandemic, Black and Latino households, which were more likely to be cost-burdened—compelled to spend 30 percent or more of their income on rent—have been more likely to fall behind. The risk of eviction increased after a Centers for Disease Control, and Prevention eviction moratorium was ended forcibly by an August 2021 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Frontdoor overcomes these limitations with a recommendation system that can connect a renter to specific, useful application information in as little as 10 minutes. It streamlines the process of distributing rental assistance by reducing the time a renter needs to search for aid regardless of the applicant’s geographic location.

2004 Guidance on Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act

One type of disability discrimination prohibited by the Act is the refusal to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services when such accommodations are necessary to afford a person with a disability the equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.

The Fair Housing Act's protection against disability discrimination covers not only tenants and home seekers with disabilities but also buyers and renters without disabilities who live or are associated with individuals with disabilities. The Act also prohibits housing providers from refusing residency to persons with disabilities, or placing conditions on their residency, because they require reasonable accommodations. Since rules, policies, practices, and services may have a different effect on persons with disabilities than on others, treating persons with disabilities exactly the same as others will sometimes deny them an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.

A requested accommodation is necessary when there is an identifiable relationship, or nexus, between the requested accommodation and the individual's disability. Some examples of Reasonable Accommodations are:

- Assigned parking space for a person with a mobility impairment
- Assigned lower mailbox for a person who uses a wheelchair
- Permitting an assistance animal in a "no pets" building for a person who is deaf, blind, has seizures, or has a mental disability

What information may a provider seek when a reasonable accommodation is requested?

A provider is entitled to obtain information that is necessary to evaluate if a requested reasonable accommodation may be necessary because of a disability. If a person's disability is obvious, or otherwise known to the provider, and if the need for the requested accommodation is also readily apparent or known, then the provider may not request any additional information. If the disability and/or the disability-related reason for the requested accommodation is not known or obvious, the requesting individual, medical professional, a peer support group, a non-medical service agency, or a reliable third party who is in a position to know about the individual's disability may also provide verification of a disability. In most cases, an individual's medical records or detailed information about the nature of a person's disability is not necessary for this inquiry.

The guidelines are available on our website at <http://www.mvfairhousing.com/accommodation.php>. Please call if you have additional questions on reasonable accommodations.

This article was prepared by John Zimmerman at the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center with assistance from various web-based resources and MVFHC fair housing curricula. Visit www.mvfairhousing.com

Reasonable Modifications: Some do's and don'ts

Reasonable Modifications (RM), structural changes to the public or common-use areas, can help landlords retain customers. A few basics on an RM: any prospect or current resident can request that a landlord make a RM if they are willing to pay* for modifications to the property and restore the unit to its original condition when the resident vacates the property if the modifications makes it hard for the landlord to rent the apartment to someone not needing that structural change. For example, the lowering or removing of counters might make the apartment unattractive to renters not needing that feature. But, if a doorway is widened, the property is actually enhanced and the resident should not have to pay for restoration.

**payment for modifications in public housing or housing that has a federal subsidy (other than choice vouchers, shelter care plus vouchers, and some LIHTC subsidies) will be made by the property owner when the modification is not deemed inappropriate due to safety reasons.*

An important topic to highlight here is structural changes to the **exterior** of a unit. This question was posed to HUD and the Justice Department in their joint statement on RM's: "If a person with a disability has made a reasonable modification to the exterior of the dwelling, or a common area, must she restore it to its original condition when she moves out?" The answer: "No. The Fair Housing Act expressly provides that housing providers may only require restoration of modifications made to interiors of the dwelling at the end of the tenancy. Reasonable modifications such as ramps to the front door of the dwelling or modifications made to laundry rooms or building entrances are not required to be restored." In this situation, if a landlord wants to remove it themselves, it is a best practice to check with the local building inspector who might give them a waiver or conditional use permit to remove the ramp.

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Reasonable Modifications continued from page 2 ...

The guidelines are available on our website at <http://www.mvfairhousing.com/modification.php>.

Click on this link and read it. Have your staff read it. It has all the information a landlord needs to see the do's and don'ts of reasonable modifications. Please call if you have additional questions on reasonable modifications.

Information for the article was gathered by John Zimmerman, VP Miami Valley Fair Housing Center from the Department of Justice and HUD.

Do you shop on Amazon.com?

If you shop at Amazon.com, did you know that by shopping instead at smile.amazon.com you can direct 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charity of your choice?

The Miami Valley Fair Housing Center is an eligible charity, and we'd appreciate your support. [Designate MVFHC](#) as your Amazon Smile charity today.



Vets Moving Forward 2022

Vets Moving Forward is an annual event focused on connecting Veterans and Resource Organizations and Jobs in the Greater Miami Valley. Guided by the charter outlined by the Greater Miami Valley myVeteran Community and the concept of collective impact, the goal of improving services to the Veteran community will reach superlative levels of effectiveness.

The event in 2022 will have a Resource Fair area for organizations to share information on their mission with Veterans. There will also be a Job Fair area for organizations to talk with Veterans about positions within their companies. In addition, there will be a Dayton VA Medical Center Enrollment Fair for Veterans to sign up for VA services.

The event will be held on Wednesday, May 18, 2022 from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Wright State University Student Union. [Click here](#) for additional information.



April 19	Greater Dayton Apartment Association Fair Housing Month Class (carries 3 credit hours for Realtors)
April 26	Fair Housing Month video conference —Current Trends and Resources
May 18	Vets Moving Forward—see article above
June 2	Grand Opening of the Dayton International Peace Museum . Reopen to the public on June 3, 2022.
July 10 to July 16	Montgomery County Fair
August 20	Miami Valley Fair Housing Center August Fundraiser—more information to come in the summer newsletter

MVFHC Mission Statement

The mission of the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center (MVFHC) is to eliminate housing discrimination and ensure equal housing opportunity for all people in our region, the State of Ohio, and nationally.

Specifically, the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center seeks to eliminate housing discrimination against all persons because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, familial status, or any other characteristic protected under state or local laws. In furthering this goal, MVFHC engages in activities designed to encourage fair housing practices through educational efforts; assists person who believe they have been victims of housing discrimination; identifies barriers to fair housing in order to help counteract and eliminate discriminatory housing practices; works with elected and government representatives to protect and improve fair housing laws; and takes all appropriate and necessary action to ensure that fair housing laws are properly and fairly enforced throughout our region, the State of Ohio, and nationally.

MVFHC Vision Statement

The Miami Valley Fair Housing Center recognizes the importance of “home” as a component of the American dream. We envision a country free of housing discrimination where every individual, group and community enjoys equal housing opportunity and access in a bias-free and open housing market. We envision a country where integrated neighborhoods are the norm, and private and public sectors guarantee civil rights in an open and barrier-free community committed to healing the history of discrimination in America.

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