



THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY PROGRAMS

Presents



Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing: What That Means for Fairfax County and You

Thursday, April 25, 2024



Fair Housing Month Program Agenda

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing: What That Means for Fairfax County and You

Program Activity	Time Designation	Minute Increments
Arrivals & Continental Breakfast	9:30 - 10:00	30 minutes
Welcome & Introduction to the Program	10:00 - 10:05	5 minutes
Proclamation Presentation: Providence District Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik	10:05 - 10:15	10 minutes
Introduction of Keynote Speaker	10:15 - 10:20	5 minutes
Keynote Speaker Presentation: Sara Pratt	10:20 - 11:00	40 minutes
George Mason University Fair Housing Benchmarking Study	11:00-11:20	20 minutes
<i>~ Intermission ~</i>	11:20 - 11:30	10 minutes
Presentation of Student Arts Contest Winner	11:30 - 11:35	5 minutes
Introduction of Panelist: Sabrina Wear, Larisa Zehr, Gloria Crawford, Susan McClannahan, Maria Flaks and Mary Paden	11:35- 11:45	10 minutes
Panel Discussion: Overview of the services and work of the panel organizations and remarks regarding AFFH	11:45 - 12:25	40 minutes
Closing Remarks	12:25 - 12:30	5 minutes
Lunch & Reception	12:30 -1:00	30 minutes

Welcome to the Fairfax County Office of Human Rights & Equity Programs' Fair Housing Month Program, **"Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing and What That Means for Fairfax County and You"**.

We are extremely excited to celebrate and commemorate Fairfax County's Golden Anniversary of 50 years of the County's Human Rights Ordinance and proactive work and steadfast policy to guarantee fair housing and human rights protections for all. As part of our celebration, this year's event centers attention on HUD's "affirmatively furthering rule" and how it will impact our Fairfax community and residents. We have planned an engaging program that will also offer key information on the various resources available to help individuals and advocacy groups understand where to turn for housing assistance when faced with potential challenges of discrimination.

We have an excellent line up of speakers that are experts in the fair housing industry to share their wisdom, thoughts, and analysis on those fair housing issues and topics of discussion scheduled for this program.

Our History

On July 29, 1974, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the Human Rights Ordinance, establishing the Human Rights Commission and to create an affirmative human rights program designed to address and eliminate discrimination and provide citizen recourse for discriminatory acts.

The Office of Human Rights & Equity Programs (OHREP) is a federally accredited enforcement agency tasked to enforce the Fairfax County Human Rights Ordinance and Fairfax County Fair Housing Act. In addition, OHREP manages the County's Equal Employment Enforcement Program, which includes receiving and investigating complaints filed by individuals or groups that believe they have been discriminated against in Fairfax County by a private business or organization in violation of the County's Human Rights Ordinance. OHREP takes pride in ensuring the County's compliance with all federal, state and county mandates granting equal access to all County services, programs and employment opportunities and administering the County's Fair Housing Program.

The OHREP in its mission and enforcement capacity is overseen by the Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission is an appointed body that consists of twelve (12) county residents that represents each of the county districts. Each member of the Commission serves a three-year term. The Commissioners are mandated to elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary annually, as officers of the Commission body. The Commission meetings are regularly held twice a month.

The Commission is dedicated to receiving and overseeing the investigation of complaints that allege a violation of the County's Human Rights Ordinance and the Fair Housing Act. In addition, the Commission also fosters cooperation with the employers, the housing industry, and other business stakeholders in the County to make sure the spirit and principles of equal opportunity and fair and equal access are promoted, understood, and adhered to throughout Fairfax County.

Our Speakers

Sara Pratt is a fair housing icon and trailblazer. Ms. Pratt is an attorney at the prominent civil rights law firm, Relma Colfax, PLLC., where she is deeply involved in the firm's civil right litigation practice focusing on the issues related to the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and related civil rights laws.



Prior to joining the law firm, Ms. Pratt was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing Enforcement and Programs and Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. At HUD, she directed civil rights enforcement for the agency nationally and led the development of regulations and policy guidance on numerous emerging civil rights issues, including the application of the Fair Housing Act to domestic violence in housing, criminal background criteria for housing, accessibility, the obligation to affirmatively further fair housing, and zoning and land use issues. Ms. Pratt also helped develop HUD's final rules on harassment, discriminatory effects, affirmatively furthering fair housing, and the housing for older persons exemption for familial status discrimination. During

her tenure at HUD, she also led the negotiations for the government, which resulted in the settlement of *HUD v. Associated Bank*, HUD's largest lending redlining settlement and *HUD v. Wells Fargo*, HUD's largest maternity leave lending settlement.

A true giant in the space of fair housing and civil rights, Ms. Pratt has received numerous awards and recognitions, including a Department-wide award from former HUD Secretary Julian Castro for Excellence in Performance for leading a team to address maternity and paternity leave discrimination by lenders, a special commendation from the U.S. Department of Justice for outstanding performance and invaluable assistance in the work of the Civil Rights Division, the 2015 Texas Housers Award, and the Mildred and Richard Loving Award from the Connecticut Fair Housing Center.

Panelists



Sabrina Wear is currently the Deputy Director for Advocacy with Legal Services of Northern Virginia, where she serves on the organization's executive leadership team. Ms. Wear has spent nearly the entirety of her career in direct civil legal services, including fourteen years with Maryland Legal Aid as a Staff Attorney and Supervising Attorney. She also worked as a Staff Attorney with Community Legal Services of Prince George's County and a Managing Attorney with the DC Bar Pro Bono Center. Ms. Wear enjoys

collaborating with colleagues on impact cases and tackling systemic issues, as well as fostering a positive and supportive workplace. Ms. Wear received her undergraduate degree from the College of William & Mary and law degree from the University of North Carolina. She is a member of the Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia bars.



Susan McClannahan is the Senior Fair Housing Rights Program Manager with the Equal Rights Center (ERC). Ms. McClannahan joined the ERC in August 2016 putting her skills and passion for civil rights to work. In her role as Senior Fair Housing Rights Program Manager, she oversees all fair housing program staff and activities. Prior to joining the ERC, Ms. McClannahan worked as the Education Coordinator for the Kansas City Anti-Violence Project in Kansas City, Missouri. In this role, Ms. McClannahan provided trainings and technical assistance regarding domestic violence

and sexual assault in LGBTQ communities so that service providers could better support queer and trans survivors. Ms. McClannahan graduated from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas with a Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies and International Studies and East Asian Languages and Cultures.



Larisa Zehr is the Senior Staff Attorney with the Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC). Ms. Zehr joined the Legal Aid Justice Center in September 2020. She focuses on housing justice and community lawyering with Northern Virginia's Latinx immigrant communities. Before attending law school, she worked for several years in Colombia, supporting rural community movements in their efforts to build peace, achieve reparations and social justice, and tell their historical memory. She is a graduate of Eastern Mennonite University and a 2020 graduate of Northeastern University School of Law, where she was a Public Interest Law Scholar with a concentration in

Poverty Law and Economic Justice.



Commissioner Gloria Crawford

serves as Chairperson leading the Fairfax County Human Rights Commission. A long-standing member of the Commission, Ms. Crawford previously served as Vice Chair and Secretary of the Commission. Ms. Crawford was an attorney who practiced in the Federal sector specializing in labor relations and labor disputes arising under the Federal Service Labor Management Relations Statute.

In her civic capacity, Ms. Crawford also served as an attorney member on the Fairfax County Board of Equalization of Real Estate Assessments. Prior to becoming an attorney, Ms. Crawford served as

Associate/Professor Counselor at the Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Virginia and as Acting Associate Dean of Students at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia. Ms. Crawford is a graduate of Howard University receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree and received a Juris Doctorate from George Washington University School of Law. Ms. Crawford is a member of both the Virginia State and District of Columbia bars.



Maria Flaks serves as the Senior Director of Legal Affairs at the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS®, where she provides guidance on a variety of matters, including governance, compliance, and regulatory issues. Ms. Flaks also supervises NVAR’s Legal Hotline, answering various and nuanced legal questions related to the real estate industry on topics such as contract law, fair housing, ethics, and licensing.

Prior to joining NVAR, Ms. Flaks worked as an associate attorney for a boutique litigation firm as well as a national litigation firm, representing numerous clients in a wide range of civil defense

litigation claims, including toxic tort, insurance defense, product liability, premises liability, property damage, negligence, and general liability matters.

Ms. Flaks is a graduate of University Maryland College Park receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language and Literature. She received a Juris Doctorate from the University of North Carolina School of Law.



Mary Paden is the Fairfax NAACP Housing Committee Chair and served on the Regional Fair Housing Advisory Committee of the Metro DC Council of Governments, which coordinated the new *Regional Fair Housing Plan* adopted by eight jurisdictions. Her committee made strong recommendations to Fairfax County on its input to the metro plan.

Through NAACP, Ms. Paden works with the county on affordable housing, homelessness, fair housing, tenants’ rights, and equitable development. A current member of the County Affordable Housing Advisory County, and the Fairfax Healthy Communities Network, she has

received awards from the NAACP and the Greater Washington Coalition for Smarter Growth. Ms. Paden grew up in Detroit, graduated from the University of Detroit (BA) and University of Michigan (MS) and worked in communications.