



CITY OF
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PORTLAND HOUSING BUREAU

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**Fair Housing Action Plan Calls for Holistic Approach
to Ensuring Access to Quality Housing Opportunities**

PORTLAND, OREGON – June 10, 2011 – Ending housing discrimination in the rental market requires engaged collaboration between government and industry, and demands a comprehensive, solutions-based approach that blends enforcement, education, and increased access to affordable homes and related services.

Portland's Fair Housing Action Plan – unveiled today by City of Portland Housing Commissioner Nick Fish – sets forth specific steps the City of Portland will take over the next five years to end discrimination in rental housing. John Trasviña, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), also attended today's event.

“Working with our partners, we are committed to enforcing the federal, state and local fair housing laws that prohibit discrimination based on a person's race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, source of income, familial status, marital status, and physical or mental disability. We believe our community is strongest when everyone has equal access to a safe, affordable place to call home,” says Portland Housing Commissioner Nick Fish.

The Portland Housing Bureau, along with partners in Multnomah County and the City of Gresham, is required to submit an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) every five years. The report includes a series of recommendations aimed at improving Fair Housing choice.

In 2010, PHB established a committee composed of housing providers, community advocates, and civil rights leaders to advise the Portland Housing Bureau. And, for the first time, PHB commissioned a Fair Housing audit. The results were alarming. The tests found a difference in treatment for protected classes in over 60% of the tests. PHB has provided the test results to the Civil Rights Division of the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), which will take enforcement action as complaints are filed.

"BOLI plays a critical role in enforcing state and federal fair housing laws in Oregon," said State Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, head of the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) and Oregon's Civil Rights Division. "Our role is most effective when combined with engaged community and agency partners—vigilant Oregonians helping BOLI and HUD to bring enforcement authority to bear where it's most needed."

At a community forum held June 10 in Portland City Council Chambers, Commissioner Fish and Assistant Secretary Trasviña led the discussion around how housing advocates, government, and members of the housing industry should work together to implement the Fair Housing Action Plan.

"HUD is committed to working in partnership with Commissioner Fish and other officials, our state fair housing enforcement partner and members of the community to end housing discrimination. The forum is an important opportunity to hear community leaders and residents and then take action together," says Trasviña.

Forum participants included: Brad Avakian, Commissioner, Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI); Cashauna Hill, member, Analysis of Impediments Committee and attorney for the Oregon Law Center; Deborah Imse, Executive Director, Metro Multifamily Housing Association; Carmen Rubio, member of the Coalition of Communities of Color and the Portland Housing Advisory Commission.

"Let this be clear: we do not tolerate discrimination in the City of Portland," says Commissioner Fish. "Our Fair Housing Action Plan involves unprecedented coordination among our many stakeholders, and an unwavering commitment to enforcement and education. We are ready to work."

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To learn more about our work in fair housing, visit <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/PHB/fairhousing>