



# NEWS FROM HOME

Summer 2009

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Every five years, cities and counties that receive Federal block grant funding must prepare a planning document called an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. This requirement is the Federal government's way of pushing local communities to take seriously their obligation to affirmatively further fair housing.

In 1978, Norwood became the first community in the country to lose block grant funding because the mayor openly said the city would not promote fair housing. This year, West Chester County, New York, lost approximately \$20 million in Federal funding when HUD rejected its fair housing analysis because it failed to consider racial segregation in a primarily white, suburban county.

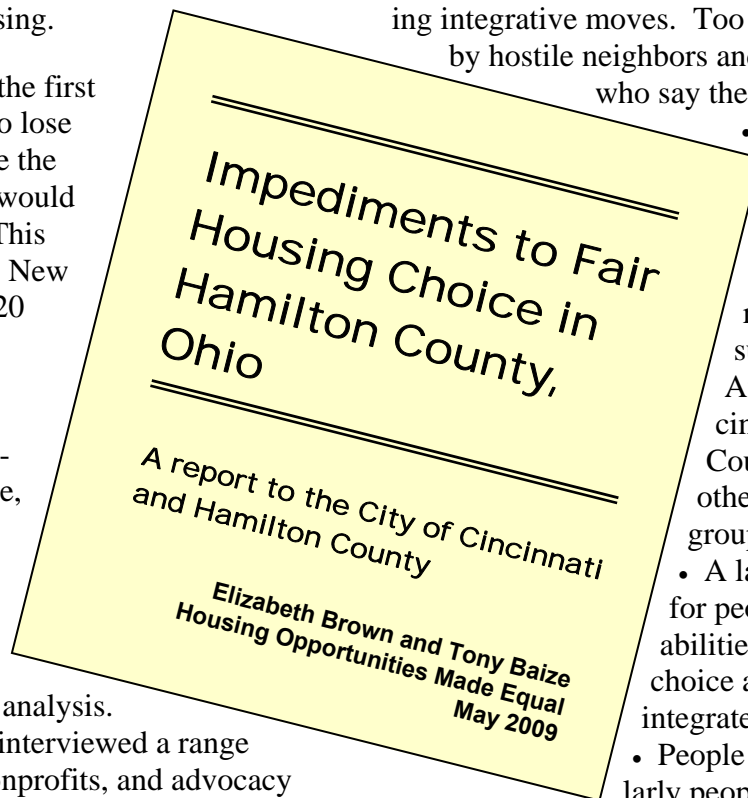
This year, Cincinnati and Hamilton County contracted with HOME to prepare a joint fair housing analysis. During April, HOME staff interviewed a range of government agencies, nonprofits, and advocacy groups about fair housing issues. In May it submitted a report to the City and County that identified seven impediments and 18 recommendations.

The impediments to fair housing choice in Hamilton County in 2009 include:

- There is a lack of a positive community vision of diverse, mixed-income communities. Progress is noticeable with County planning efforts and with civic efforts to promote stable integrated communities. However, there are regular "Not In My Back Yard" (NIMBY) outcries from neighbors

who fear that low-income people of color will "destroy" their neighborhood.

- The Housing Choice Voucher program (Section 8) has been successful in providing housing choice. However, the families have little help in finding rental units in low poverty areas or support in making integrative moves. Too often, they are greeted by hostile neighbors and community leaders who say they are not wanted.
- Predatory lending by brokers and national mortgage companies targeted Black neighborhoods. As a result the home foreclosure crisis has impacted African Americans in Cincinnati and Hamilton County at higher rates than other racial and ethnic groups.
- A lack of accessible housing for people with physical disabilities limits their housing choice and ability to live integrated in the community.
- People with disabilities, particularly people with mental disabilities and recovering alcoholics and drug users, are the target of illegal housing discrimination by individual landlords and also actions by local governments to keep them out.
- The general public does not know it is illegal to discriminate against families with children.
- Sexual harassment by landlords of female tenants is sex discrimination under the Fair Housing Act, but is often not reported.



The full report with recommendations is posted on HOME's website, [www.cincyfairhousing.com](http://www.cincyfairhousing.com).

## HOME's 2009 Annual Meeting



City Council member David Crowley (L) presented a proclamation to the guest speaker, Steve Rosenbaum with the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division.



HOME President Harold Jones presented the Founders Award to Over the Rhine Community Housing. Pictured left to right: HOME Board member Simon Sotelo, OTR Community Housing Executive Director Mary Burke Rivers, HOME President Harold Jones, and HOME Executive Director Elizabeth Brown.



HOME Board member Lydia Morgan and spouse Noel Morgan with HOME Board member Robert Harris.



HOME Board President, Harold Jones, presents certificates to Honorary Co-Chairs for the event (left) Jeanne Gollither, Executive Director of the Cincinnati Development Fund, and (right) Dr. Mitchel Livingston, University of Cincinnati Vice-President for Student Affairs. The Co-chairs exemplify the Annual Meeting theme, Together. Business and Education Building Strong Communities.

## Condo Rules that Discriminate

HOME received several complaints in the last year about condominium rules which are so restrictive they discourage families with children from living there. Such rules can constitute illegal discrimination.

In two cases, the rules essentially said that children were never allowed to play outside. Any playing in common areas was forbidden. While some restrictions may be allowed for safety purposes, for a complex with lots of greenspace and open lawns to require children to be kept inside at all times is unreasonable. As one mother told us, "I don't want to move, but children need to be able to go outside to play."

Once HOME raised the fair housing issue, the condominium management company and client met for me-

diation. They walked the property and identified several areas that would be safe for children to play.

One of the problems HOME faces in dealing with Condo and Homeowners Associations is the assumption that if a rule was adopted by the Association, it is above challenge. In addition to restrictions on children, a common problem is denying requests by owners to make modifications needed because of a disability. An owner who becomes disabled and needs a ramp to get into his condominium is told Association rules forbid exterior modifications. However, the law is clear that Homeowner Associations are subject to Federal and state fair housing laws and can be held financially liable for violations of the law, including denials of requests for reasonable modifications.

## Accessibility Class Popular with Realtors

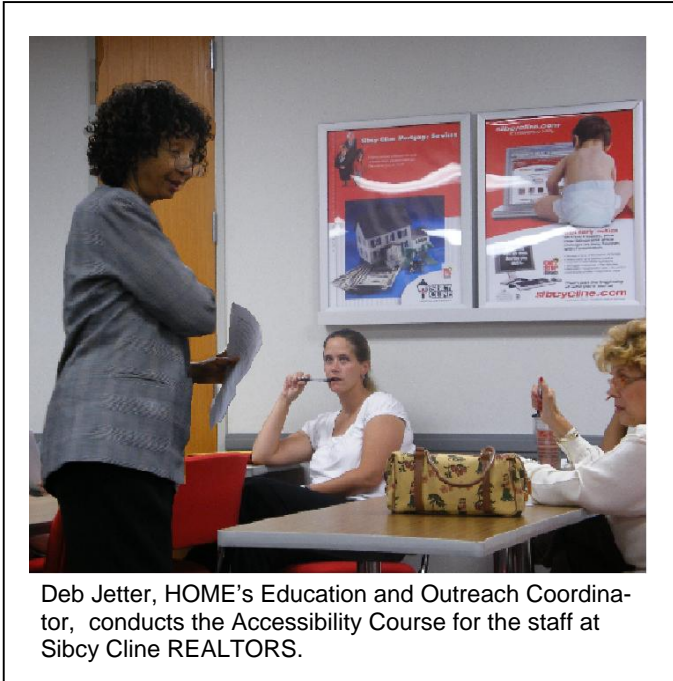
HOME's class on accessibility, visitability, and working with clients with disabilities is a hit with Realtors. In addition to classes sponsored by the Cincinnati Area Board of Realtors, Education Director, Deb Jetter, is getting requests to offer the course in-house at real estate companies. She even took the show on the road and taught a class for the Dayton Board of Realtors. The course will be offered for the Adams/Brown/Highland Board of Realtors in September.

The 3-hour course qualifies for CEUs and meets Ohio requirement for Civil Rights training. It includes technical information on the Fair Housing Act and accessibility requirements, but the highlight of the class is a panel of people with disabilities sharing their experiences in buying a

home. The course evaluations are glowing, "Great class," "Memorable," "Excellent, I learned so much

I never considered." The participants show they got the message. When asked what action they will take based on what they learned, the response is "Listen!" One participant summed up her learning as, "Listen to the client's needs and not what you think they need. Listen with your ears, not your eyes. Your client knows his housing needs and wants."

HOME, in partnership with the Inclusion Network, received 5-year funding from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council to develop and offer the Accessibility course.



Deb Jetter, HOME's Education and Outreach Coordinator, conducts the Accessibility Course for the staff at Sibcy Cline REALTORS.

## HOME Welcomes Four New Board Members



**Val Davis**  
Business  
Consultant



**Marsha Visser**  
Consulting Associate  
Lee Hecht Harrison,  
Career Management



**Darrell Miller**  
Assistant  
Professor of Law  
University of  
Cincinnati



**Stephanie Moes**  
Staff Attorney,  
Legal Aid  
Society of Greater  
Cincinnati

## HOME Staff Update



**Dickie Lee Padilla**  
Compliance Manager



**Sara Cowles**  
Summer Legal Intern

**Dickie Lee Padilla** received his Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Law. Dickie oversees pending administrative cases and advises the Enforcement staff on procedural and evidentiary requirements.

**Sara Cowles** attends the University of Cincinnati College of Law. Sara is working with HOME's Foreclosure Prevention Program.

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Your United Way Agency Partner

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# HOME's Mission

*HOME exists to eliminate illegal discrimination in housing, especially racial discrimination, and to promote balanced living patterns*



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Agency Partner

**Housing discrimination based on your:**

- Race/Color • Sex • National Origin
- Religion • Disability • Children

**IS ILLEGAL!**