

Warren County Board of Supervisors

RESOLUTION NO. 449 OF 2023

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY SUPERVISORS MCDEVITT, WILD, BRAYMER, SMITH, STROUGH, MAGOWAN AND LEGGETT

ADOPTING AMENDED WARREN COUNTY FAIR HOUSING POLICY AND PLAN

WHEREAS, the Warren County Board of Supervisors adopted the Warren County Fair Housing Policy and Plan by Resolution No. 231 of 1991 (as amended by Resolution No. 620 of 2022), and

WHEREAS, the Economic Growth & Development Committee has reviewed suggested updates to the Warren County Fair Housing Policy and Plan and recommends that the same be advanced to the Board of Supervisors for consideration, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Warren County Fair Housing Policy and Plan annexed hereto, be, and the same hereby is, adopted as the official Policy for Warren County, and be it further

RESOLVED, that any and all prior Warren County Fair Housing Policy and Plan or Resolutions are hereby repealed, effective October 20, 2023.

**COUNTY OF WARREN
FAIR HOUSING POLICY AND PLAN**

1. Introduction:

Warren County is committed to prohibiting discrimination as it concerns the rental or sale of housing, the application for a mortgage and housing assistance or other housing related activities for private and public housing and housing receiving assistance under federal and state programs. The County, in accordance with the federal Fair Housing Act, prohibits discrimination in housing because of race, color, national origin, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation, familial status and disability.

The County, as a recipient of federal Community Development Block Grant funding, seeks to ensure that residents are aware of the most current fair housing provisions under federal and state laws. This will include information, processes and assistance available to ensure compliance with the existing fair housing statutes. Warren County has developed a Fair Housing Plan that describes pertinent information, processes, and procedures to further fair housing in all communities.

The Warren County Fair Housing Plan identifies references to information concerning the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1968, the federal Fair Housing Act, state and federal housing laws, related Executive Orders, amendments to Title 1 of the Housing and community Development Act of 1968 (Section 3) and 1974 (Section 109) as amended, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Americans with Disability Act, the Age Discrimination Act, Equal Opportunity Provisions as specified under HUD Contracts and HUD Assisted Construction Contracts, the Human Rights Law of the State of New York (Article 15).

2. Appointments:

The Warren County Fair Housing Plan establishes a Fair Housing Officer. The County's Fair Housing Plan recognizes the importance of establishing a Fair Housing Officer to provide essential information to the public concerning the elements of the Fair Housing Act, assisting persons with processing complaints to ensure fair and equal treatment for all persons concerning the Fair Housing Act.

The Fair Housing Officer, will be the County Planner, and has the following responsibilities:

- Maintains federal and state fair housing information on the Warren County Planning Department Website including brochures issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the New York State Division of Human Rights.
- Records and maintains information regarding housing discrimination complaints on designated Warren County forms and reports annually to the Warren County Administrator.
- Forwards copies of all complaints to, and as appropriate, consults with the Fair Housing/Equal Opportunity Division of the applicable HUD Office and/or to the NYS Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity within the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

3. Provide Information and Identity Relevant Resources:

Warren County will make available, upon request, copies of applicable federal and state laws which contain anti-discrimination provisions, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Fair Housing amendments Act of 1988 and the Human Rights Law (Executive Law, Article 15 of the State of New York) as well as other related information on Laws and Executive Orders.

Warren County will promote Fair Housing through local legislative actions, media announcements and funding assistance requests for housing that benefit low and moderate income persons.

- A. The County will designate the month of April as *Fair Housing Month* and will promote this designation through the Warren County Board of Supervisors proclamation.
- B. The County will further promote fair housing and available housing assistance resources through the Warren County Planning Department Website and other social media as may be appropriate. Efforts will be undertaken to promote Fair Housing through public awareness posters to be located within all County buildings to bring attention to the County's efforts furthering Fair Housing and available assistance provided by the County's Fair Housing Officer.
- C. The County will actively pursue federal and state housing funding resources that primarily assist persons that are low and moderate income. The County will implement programs to increase the supply of affordable housing consistent with planning initiatives such as the County's Housing Needs Study and Market Demand Analysis (2023) and the Warren County Comprehensive plan (2023). The County will enlist the support of other county departments and local housing agencies to provide information on housing availability and related issues that impact fair housing choice within local communities.
 - a) Warren County will promote the standards of the County Fair Housing Plan to be reference in contracts for projects that include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding as well as the promotion of equal employment opportunities consistent with the Section 3 guidelines of the CDBG program.
 - b) Take affirmative steps to ensure that all residents, regardless of economic, racial, or ethnic status, are informed of housing assistance and other services.
 - c) Demonstrate that there is equal access and fair treatment to all persons concerning housing assistance program availability.
 - d) Take affirmative steps to promote fair and equal housing within all Warren County communities.
 - e) Affirmatively further fair housing accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- D. All CDBG funded projects for which the County is the recipient, whether it is for housing, infrastructure, or economic development, attention to the civil rights, fair housing, and equal opportunity for the CDBG project must be all inclusive, from the initial program design to project closeout.
- E. The County shall incorporate and promote fair housing opportunities in the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- F. The County shall notify local banks and realtors of fair housing activities and enlist their support and active participation.

4. Discrimination Complaints and Notification Process:

The County will assist individuals who provide credible information that they have been a victim of discrimination with regards to housing.

- A. **Discriminatory Housing Practices:** For the purpose of this Plan, a discriminatory housing practice means an act that is unlawful under sections 804, 805 806 or 818 of the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended). Such discriminatory housing practices include discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, discrimination in the provision of brokerage services or interference, coercion, or intimidation, as defined under the Act, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity and sexual orientation, disability or familial status.
- B. **Receiving Complaints:** The Fair Housing Officer will record information on a standard form to ensure that a complete file is established. Following this, the Fair Housing Officer will contact the appropriate office within the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and/or the New York State Division of Human Rights to review the details of the complaint and request guidance in the formal filing of the complaint. This will only be undertaken with an official signed request by the individual(s) filing the formal complaint.
- C. Copies of all complaint document forms will also be forwarded to the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Division of the HUD Office in Buffalo, New York. If the complaint decides to take his/her case directly to Federal Court, the County will refer the complainant to the Lawyer Referral and Information Service Hotline, sponsored by the New York State Bar Association for securing affordable legal services, if required.

5. Attachments:

Documents related to the fair housing and evidence of actions taken by the County are attached and incorporated into the Warren County Fair Housing Plan.