



2023

HOUSING EQUALITY CONFERENCE

Putting the ACT in Fair Housing

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023

CONFERENCE RECAP



THANK YOU



At PHRC, we are so grateful for everyone who made this conference possible. It was an incredible day of conversation and inspiration to continue the act of working for housing justice.

We owe special thanks to our ASL interpreters and captioners for making this event accessible, and to our hosts at the Weitzman National Jewish American Museum.

We'd like to share some thoughts, reflections and feedback that arose from the conference and to invite you to continue this conversation in support of housing opportunities for all Pennsylvanians.

GENTRIFICATION

Balancing Neighborhood Improvements with Neighbor Preservation

Angela McIver, CEO of Fair Housing Rights Center of Southeast Pennsylvania moderated an engaging discussion on the timely topic of gentrification. Realtor Arlene Waynes, Philadelphia Councilman Curtis Jones, and PHRC Executive Director Chad Dion Lassiter shared their perspectives on how to address investing in communities without displacing community members.

"This panel could have gone on longer...it seemed we only touched the surface of what actions we can take to working to preserve communities."

If you missed this session, you can view the recording [here](#).

Click [here](#) to learn more about the work of the Fair Housing Rights Center.





This session, offered by PHRC Pittsburgh Regional Director Lyle Wood, examined investigating fair housing complaints of neighbor-to-neighbor harassment. You can learn more about how the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act addresses unlawful harassment [here](#).

Missed the session? You can view the recording [here](#) and access the slides [here](#).

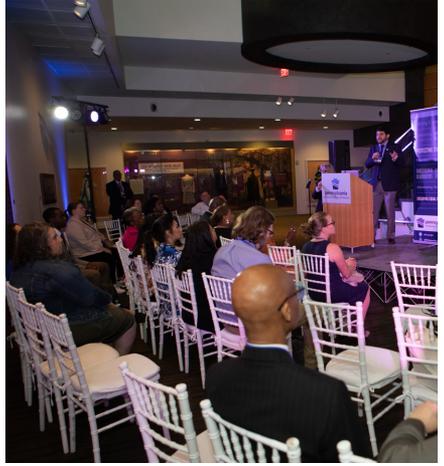
“This is such an important topic - everyone has the right to feel safe in their home free from harassment.”

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR HARRSSMENT

HOUSING HUDDLE

Lightning Sessions



The Housing Huddle featured six speakers who shared insights on current fair housing issues. Missed this session? You can view the recording [here](#) and access the slides [here](#).

Chad Frey, the CEO of the Neighboring Group, shared insights on how inclusive neighborhoods are achieved through actions - at the individual level, as small groups, and as communities. Learn more about the Neighboring Challenge [here](#).

Abraham Pardo Reyes, Director of Housing at the Urban League of Philadelphia, shared about their initiative to combat racial inequalities in homeownership and increase homeownership opportunities for households of color. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Urban League's housing initiatives.



PHRC Executive Director Chad Dion Lassiter discussed the importance of understanding the context and challenges that those who experience discrimination face. Click [here](#) to learn about PHRC's initiatives.

“What really hit it home for me was the redlining map. It amazes me how the housing system is set up to keep those with lower incomes, which majority are people of color, where rent is lower, and houses are less maintained in the city.”



PHRC Director of Fair Housing, Adrian Garcia gave a crash course in structural inequality in housing, providing a brief history of restrictive zoning and redlining and how they impact housing issues today.

To learn more about these issues and tangible steps that can address housing inequality, click [here](#).

Interim Chief Counsel Martin Cunningham shared about the urgency of housing cases, and the power of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) to prevent immediate and irreparable harm in cases that have been filed. He provided an overview of how the PHRC legal division assesses whether a preliminary injunction is warranted. Click [here](#) to learn more about the PHRA.



Rachel Wentworth from the Housing Equality Center shared about her agency’s work in addressing disparate impact housing discrimination, highlighting some recent settlements that addressed policies of housing providers that restricted housing opportunities based on national origin, race, familial status, and source of income. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Housing Equality Center’s work.

HOUSING HUDDLE

Lightning Sessions

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Fred Bañuelos, Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh

Fred took conference attendees on a deeply personal journey through how housing impacted his family's history and his work at the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh. He shared about how domestic violence, immigration, housing conditions, financing, and education impact housing opportunities and health. He also highlighted his professional journey from home construction and real estate to work at a public housing authority and affordable housing development, to the opportunities to work towards housing equity through Special Purpose Credit Programs.

Missed this session? You can view the recording [here](#).

Click [here](#) to learn more about programs at the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh.

“Mr. Bañuelos’s speech made me feel represented, inspired, and grateful to my ancestors for paving the way for me.”





“This session was powerful. The content on domestic violence and the challenges abusees face when experiencing eviction as a result of the abuser was eye-opening.”

Tara Ulrich and Maria Williams, from the PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) shared about the importance of housing for survivors of domestic violence. They shared about the need for increased housing protections at the state level, the importance of safety planning, and the importance of ensuring domestic violence survivors can access housing options.

If you missed this session, you can view it [here](#) and access the slides [here](#). You can learn more about PCADV’s work [here](#).



Supporting Survivors of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ray Michalowski, Senior Prosecutor at the Pennsylvania Department of State shared key information about appraiser/appraisal bias, highlighting how historic decisions, systemic issues, and actions by appraisers can impact fair appraisers.

He presented efforts to address appraisal bias through education and partnership.

If you missed this session, you can view it [here](#) and you can access the slides [here](#).

An article was also featured on the PA Association of Realtors [blog](#), written by Kim Shindle, summarizing Mr. Michalowski's presentation.



ADDRESSING APPRAISAL BIAS

A PA State Appraisal Certification Board Perspective

NEXT STEPS FOR PHRC

"The PHRC plays a key role in ensuring housing justice and opportunities for all citizens of the commonwealth. Having a place to live is a basic human necessity and right for everyone. Access to housing should come without artificial impediments and unwarranted bias based on race, religion, national origin, sex, handicap, or family status."

**PHRC Executive Director,
Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW**



SUPPORTING EFFORTS THAT SUPPORT NEIGHBORS WHILE IMPROVING NEIGHBORHOODS

- Develop a fair housing guide on gentrification
- Partner with local agencies that support neighborhood residents and elevate those perspectives to a state-wide level
- Take enforcement actions when members of protected classes are being displaced due to development
- Actively engage in local issues to prevent situations that displace local residents



FOSTERING HOUSING JUSTICE FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

- Offer ongoing training to PHRC staff to ensure skilled investigations into fair housing cases with a disparate impact on survivors of domestic violence
- Foster advocacy efforts to advance state protections for survivors of domestic violence



PREVENTING APPRAISAL BIAS

- Partner with PA Appraisal Board staff to investigate cases of appraisal bias.
- Provide fair housing training & resources to Appraisal Board staff



WHAT ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS TO ADVANCE FAIR HOUSING IN PENNSYLVANIA?



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HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION



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