

Tennessee Human Rights Commission
EAST TENNESSEE FAIR HOUSING SUMMIT



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023
UT-Knoxville Conference Center
KNOXVILLE, TN



The State of Housing in Tennessee

On April 11, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which was meant as a follow-up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The 1968 Act expanded on previous acts and prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, (and as amended) disability and family status. Title VIII of the Act is also known as the Fair Housing Act (of 1968).

The enactment of the federal Fair Housing Act on April 11, 1968 came only after a long and difficult journey. From 1966 to 1967, Congress regularly considered the fair housing bill, but failed to garner a strong enough majority for its passage. However, when the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson utilized this national tragedy to urge for the bill's speedy Congressional approval. Since the 1966 open housing marches in Chicago, Dr. King's name had been closely associated with the fair housing legislation. President Johnson viewed the Act as a fitting memorial to the man's life work, and wished to have the Act passed prior to Dr. King's funeral in Atlanta.

Specialized organizations like the NAACP, the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB), the GI Forum, and the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing lobbied hard for the Senate to pass the Fair Housing Act and remedy this inequity. Senators Edward Brooke and Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts argued deeply for the passage of this legislation. In particular, Senator Brooke, the first African-American ever to be elected to the Senate by popular vote, spoke personally of his return from World War II and inability to provide a home of his choice for his new family because of his race.

With the cities rioting after Dr. King's assassination, and destruction mounting in every part of the United States, the words of President Johnson and Congressional leaders rang the Bell of Reason for the House of Representatives, who subsequently passed the Fair Housing Act. Without debate, the Senate followed the House in its passage of the Act, which President Johnson then signed into law.

The power to appoint the first officials administering the Act fell upon President Johnson's successor, Richard Nixon. President Nixon tapped then Governor of Michigan, George Romney, for the post of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. While serving as Governor, Secretary Romney had successfully campaigned for ratification of a state constitutional provision that prohibited discrimination in housing. President Nixon also appointed Samuel Simmons as the first Assistant Secretary for Equal Housing Opportunity.

In subsequent years, the tradition of celebrating Fair Housing Month grew larger and larger. Governors began to issue proclamations that designated April as "Fair Housing Month."

In 2023, we have joined with our partners and allies in commemoration of the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

Program Agenda

8:30 A.M. Registration/Continental Breakfast

8:45 A.M. Opening Remarks and Welcome

Muriel Nolen, Executive Director, Tennessee Human Rights Commission
Vanessa Bullock, Fair Housing Director, West Tennessee Legal Services
Walter Perry, Tennessee Field Office Director, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Erin Gill, Deputy Mayor, City of Knoxville

9:00 A.M. Landlord - Tenant Fair Housing Panel

Vanessa Bullock, Fair Housing Director, West Tennessee Legal Services
Michael Davis, Housing Attorney, Legal Aid of East TN
Dean Howell, Attorney, Woolf-McClane, PLLC

10:30 A.M. Fair Lending

Josh McKinney, Real Estate Industry Advisor, Tennessee Housing Development Agency

11:30 A.M. Workers Pocket Guide

Kamaria E. Taylor, Region IV Deputy Director of the Office of Davis Bacon & Labor Standards, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

11:45 A.M. Lunch and Networking

12:45 P.M. Fair Housing & Accessibility

Christina Magráns-Tillery, Staff Attorney, City of Knoxville
James Tente, Chief Building Inspector, City of Knoxville

2:00 P.M. A.I. in Housing

Dr. Philip A. Seagraves, Associate Professor, Middle Tennessee State University

3:00 P.M. Closing Remarks & Adjournment

Veronica McGraw, Deputy Director, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Presenters



Vanessa Bullock is the managing attorney and fair housing director at West Tennessee Legal Services. She is licensed in TN and MS and has experience in housing law at WTLS and the University of Mississippi Housing Clinic. Vanessa has with experience in fair housing complaint processing, and testing; knowledgeable in federal housing regulations; recipient of training from the John Marshall Fair Housing Center, National Institute of Trial Advocacy, and the I-STEP program. She has presented at seminars with TN Fair Housing Council, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Department of Health/Aids Support Services, HOPWA, Southwest Development District, Ft. Campbell Military Base and for regional Legal Services agencies and regional Housing Authorities. Ms. Bullock has served as test coordinator/project attorney on two statewide and regional FHIP-PEI Grant and has trained testers and trainers in TN, MS, OK, and AK.

Michael Davis has been practicing landlord tenant law with Legal Aid of East Tennessee (LAET) since 2020. Throughout the pandemic and following times, he has handled numerous detainer warrant defense cases and fair housing complaint cases involving various disabled clients. Previously, Michael has worked as a mental health case manager/social worker for adults and children. Mr. Davis also works in the Mental Health Legal Partnership between the McNabb Center and LAET. He graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 2015. Michael believes that everyone should have access to good legal advice and representation.



Josh McKinney serves the Tennessee Housing Development Agency as a Real Estate Industry Advisor for East Tennessee. In his role, he engages communities and vital stakeholders in addressing issues surrounding housing and financial stability, helping thousands of individuals achieve, sustain, and succeed at safe, sound, and affordable housing. Josh started his career at Eastern Eight Community Development Corporation as a Program Coordinator where he developed Tennessee's first post-purchase housing education program. He went on to manage all housing education services and helping scores of homebuyers achieve homeownership, eventually serving as a foreclosure intervention counselor and being recognized by USDA Rural Development as a Valued Partner in 2012. When Josh came to THDA in 2017

to serve as a HUD Housing Counseling Coordinator for East TN, he launched the Good Tenant Training program focused on helping ex-offenders become successful renters. In 2019 this program was selected as a finalist for the National Council of State Housing Agencies awards. He is an inaugural graduate of the State of Tennessee's Criminal Justice Leadership Academy and in 2020 Josh graduated from LEAD TN. In his current role, the Knoxville Area Association of Realtors chose Mr. McKinney as their 2021 Affiliate of the Year.

Presenters

Christina Magráns-Tillery is a Cuban staff attorney with the City of Knoxville Law Department. Her work focuses on litigation and municipal legislation relating to zoning and land use including issues related to the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. She also serves as the advising attorney for the City's Plans Review, Building Inspections Department, and Economic and Community Development. Christina assists the Knoxville Board of Zoning Appeals, the Historic Zoning Commission, the Design Review Board, the Construction Appeals Board, the African American Equity and Restoration Task Force, and the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission. Ms. Magráns-Tillery serves as the Knoxville Latino Bar Association's inaugural president. She is also the Compliance Chair for the East Tennessee Lawyer's Association for Women (ETLAW), a board member of the Equality Coalition for Housing Opportunities (ECHO), and co-chair of the Knoxville Bar Association Diversity and Inclusion in the Profession Committee. Ms. Magráns-Tillery received her J.D. from the University of Tennessee College of Law.



James M. Tente is the Chief Building Inspector for the City of Knoxville. A native of Chicago, James brings 24 years of leadership in the civil service sector as a code official, building inspector, plans examiner and educator. James' focus on the application and study of model building codes has led to his 34 International Code Council Certifications, including Certified Building Official and Certified Fire Marshal credentials. Mr. Tente has dedicated his career to the application, interpretation and understanding of the ICC family of I-codes which has led him to attain Master Code Professional status, joining the 900 other dedicated industry experts around the globe and thereby building a better world.

Dr. Philip A. Seagraves is an Associate Professor at Middle Tennessee State University's College of Business. He is a luminary in the academic and professional field of Real Estate and Finance. He boasts a distinguished professional trajectory marked by leadership roles at multinational corporations such as Intuit and Automatic Data Processing. In teaching, Dr. Seagraves covers a wide spectrum, including Real Estate, Finance, Investment, Development, and Market Analysis. Dr. Seagraves has also emerged as a pioneering figure in integrating artificial intelligence into real estate research. Philip is an avid user and proponent of AI tools, notably ChatGPT, in real estate analysis and forecasting. Recognizing his expertise in this cutting-edge field, the American Real Estate Society invited him as a panelist in their annual meeting, where he delivered insights on the role of AI in real estate. Moreover, his innovative research is set to feature in an upcoming article in the renowned Journal of Property Investment and Finance, further attesting to his prominence in AI-driven real estate studies. Beyond his research and teaching pursuits, Dr. Seagraves is an active participant in university committees and initiatives.



East Tennessee Fair Housing Summit

Planning Committee

Jacob Aparicio - Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Vanessa Bullock - West Tennessee Legal Services

Carita Cole - West Tennessee Legal Services

Christina Magráns-Tillery - City of Knoxville

Veronica McGraw - Tennessee Human Rights Commission

James Tente - City of Knoxville

Vee Weatus - Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Special Thanks

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And our program partners...



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Thank you for attending the THRC
East Tennessee Fair Housing Summit
in partnership with
West Tennessee Legal Services and
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

*Please complete the evaluation form
and return to the registration table.*

We hope to see you in 2024!



Scan the QR code above to join the THRC mailing list!

Under the Fair Housing Act and Tennessee Human Rights Act it is illegal to discriminate in the sale, rental, or financing of housing on the basis of one of the following protected classes:

**Race
Color
National Origin
Religion
Sex
Disability
Familial Status**



Tennessee Human Rights Commission

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The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.