



PRESS RELEASE
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Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report Examining Fair Housing and Equal Access to Housing Opportunities

The Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report, [*Examining Fair Housing and Equal Access to Housing Opportunities in Minnesota*](#), following a series of web hearings held in the fall of 2023 to winter of 2024. During this study, the Committee heard testimony and received written statements from individuals responding to the Committee's inquiry concerning housing affordability and equitable access to housing.

The Committee's examination led to five key findings:

- 1) the concentration of affordable housing can impact long term outcomes for individuals and families by restricting availability of housing choice
- 2) the housing system is disparate and creates concerns for equity in access among vulnerable populations
- 3) source of income discrimination is a barrier for certain protected groups
- 4) reliance on tenant screening tools may discriminate against protected groups and violate the Fair Housing Act
- 5) the lack of funding dedicated to maintenance of affordable housing creates a challenge for nonprofit housing providers and puts tenants in vulnerable circumstances.

The report puts forward 18 recommendations directed to the Commission and asks for corrective actions from stakeholders including the U.S. Congress, the Federal Trade Commission, The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Minnesota Governor, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Minnesota Legislature, and Minnesota Attorney General's Office. Among the 18 recommendations include: strengthening the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing provision within the Fair Housing Act, enacting legislation to fund universal rental assistance, and ensuring the availability of affordable housing units across all areas of Minnesota to maximize housing choices for residents.

Chair Beth Commers said "We began this project with an interest in learning more about how the State is meeting its own goals and, in that pursuit, major themes around the overarching issue of affordable housing bubbled to the surface and became our focus. We heard, again and again, about issues that are at the heart of our State's affordable housing challenges: the lack funding affordable housing providers have for repairs and maintenance which will negatively impact our State's supply, and the need for state zoning legislation to push cities outside of the core and first ring suburbs to diversify their housing stock beyond single family zoning. Our hope is that the recommendations we have outlined in the report are seriously considered by Federal, state, and local agencies

charged with creating and funding the infrastructure to keep and diversify our housing stock which will help create a more integrated Minnesota.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. For information about the Commission, please visit www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).