



Mayor
Lee Fiedler
City Council
Pete Elliott
Butch Hendershot
Mary Beth Pirolozzi
Brian Brim

City of Cumberland Human Relations Commission

13 Canal St., Suite 304
Western Maryland Station Center
Cumberland, Maryland 21502
Phone# 301-759-6659
Email: fairhousingspecialist@allconet.org

Human Relations Commission
Chair, Rev. Joe Darr
Vice Chair,
Secretary, Penny Copman
Courtney Thomas
Penny Webber
Russ Conway
Kim Marker

The Cumberland Human Relations Commission

Commissioners: Chairman, Joe Darr; Vice Chairman; Secretary Penny Copman; Russ Conway; Courtney Thomas; Kim Weber & Penny Webber.

City Support: Jay Oliver, Manager Department of Community Development & Darrell Lee Powell, Fair Housing Specialist/Administrator Cumberland Human Relations Commission

HRC FACT SHEET

The Mayor and City Council of Cumberland created the Community Relations Commission in the 1960's, and later amended the ordinance to encompass fair housing and providing for enforcement of the Fair Housing Ordinance with the Commission in 1980.

On August 14, 2001, the Mayor and City Council passed Ordinance No. 3380 abolishing the Community Relations Commission, and creating and substituting, in its stead the Human Relations Commission and added additional protected classes. Ordinance 3380 adds protection against discrimination based on familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, and age.

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) is a seven-member body responsible for the reduction of discrimination related to housing, education, and employment. This involves the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive educational and action plan; receiving and investigating complaints involving various forms of fair housing, education, and employment discrimination; adopt rules and regulations that allow the commission to carry out its assigned functions; and cooperate with federal and state agencies having similar functions.

Over the years, much of the commission's work has focused on investigating the rules that govern Fair Housing Law. Commissioners have traveled to other jurisdictions to learn how similar groups address Fair Housing Regulations. They have also attended conferences and workshops as well as work closely with the Mayor and City Council to educate and inform the public about Fair Housing Laws.

Cumberland's efforts to protect, residents from unlawful and discriminatory housing rental and homeownership practices were give a boost when the City hired Darrell Lee Powell to assist the



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department in administering fair housing programs. Mr. Powell began his duties as Fair Housing Specialist March 14, 2005. As Fair Housing Specialist, Powell works with City Officials and Commissioners to identify needs, develop potential solutions, and take steps to implement existing Fair Housing Laws.

Since 2005, the Commission's Education and Outreach efforts has penetrated the Cumberland Metropolitan Area and generates Fair Housing information request form citizens throughout the Cumberland, MD, Tri-State Area. The HRC has received and investigated 5 Fair Housing Discrimination Complaints. While the HRC cannot investigate complaints from non-Cumberlnad residents, it does and has forward complaints from Allegany County Residents to the Maryland Commission on Human Relations and U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To spread the word about Cumberland's Fair Housing Equal Opportunity initiatives through hosting Fair Housing Conferences and by presenting education and outreach information to tenant groups, disabled community, neighborhood association, landlord association, faith based organization, and others.

One of the HRC's missions is "to eliminate discrimination in housing due to race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability and cultural differences through advocacy, education, mediation, complaint investigation, and enforcement of fair housing laws." Enforcement based on City of Cumberland Fair Housing Code.

The **Federal Fair Housing Act**, states that it is "unlawful to discriminate against a person with regard to any housing transaction."

In the Sale and Rental of Housing: No one may take any of the following actions based on **race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or handicap (disability):**

In Mortgage Lending: No one may take any of the following actions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or handicap (disability):

This includes the sale, rental, or advertising of dwellings, in provision of brokerage services or in the availability of residential real estate transactions.

The **State of Maryland's Fair Housing Legislation** provides the same protections as those within the federal status. However, Maryland's Fair Housing Laws go one-step-further to include, sexual orientation, and marital status as protected classes.

It is the policy of the State of Maryland to provide for fair housing for all its inhabitants **regardless of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, marital status, disability or sexual orientation** "in order that the peace, health, safety, prosperity, and the general welfare of all the inhabitants of the State may be protected and insured."

Housing discrimination laws make it illegal to: Refuse to sell or rent a dwelling to any qualified buyer or renter; Use discriminatory terms and conditions in selling or renting; Setting terms and conditions of home loans in such a way as to discriminate; Use discriminatory notices or advertisements indicating any preference or discriminatory limitation; Say that a dwelling is

not available for inspection, sale, or rental, when in fact it is available; attempt to steer persons into or away from neighborhoods or apartment complexes that are racially segregated; Treat a person differently from everyone else because of race, disability, familial status (parent or legal custodian with children, pregnant) religion, sex marital status, national origin or sexual orientation; Request information about birth control practices; refuse to consider both applicants' income when seeking to buy or rent; and Commit acts of prejudice, violence, harassment, intimidation, or abuse directed against families or individuals or their residential property.

The **City of Cumberland's Fair Housing Ordinance** is similar to that of the Federal Fair Housing Laws and the State of Maryland but adds age as a protected class.

Discrimination means: direct or indirect act, policy, or practice of exclusion, distinction, restriction, segregation, limitation, refusal, denial or any other act or practice of differentiation or preference in the treatment of an individual **based on, or the perception of race, color, religion, natural origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, or physical or mental disability**, or the aiding, abetting inciting, coercing or compelling thereof.

The Cumberland Human Relation Commission holds its regular public meetings on the fourth Thursday of every month at 5 pm in its Commission Office Suite at 13 Canal St., Suite 304, Western Maryland Station Center, Cumberland, MD 21502,

For additional information contact the City of Cumberland Fair Housing Office and Human Relations Commission at 13 Canal St., Suite 304, Western Maryland Station Center, Cumberland, MD 21502, telephone: 301- 759-6659, email: fairhousingspecialist@allconet.org. Our website is www.ci.cumberland.md.us/citygovt/boards/humanrel/humanrel.html