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Fair Housing Agencies Thank Healey-Driscoll Administration, Legislative Leaders for Fair Housing Fund Awards

First Round of Awards Will Take Key Action to Fight Housing Discrimination

Holyoke, MA — The Massachusetts Fair Housing Center, SouthCoast Fair Housing, the Center for Housing Justice & Policy, and Community Legal Aid, the Commonwealth's four fair housing agencies, applaud the Healey-Driscoll Administration, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), and legislative leaders for the issuance of the first awards from the Fair Housing Trust Fund, from which each organization received an approximate \$200,000 allocation. Established through the 2024 Affordable Homes Act, the Fund was first seeded through a supplemental budget in 2025, supported by allocations in both the House and Senate.

The \$1 million allocated will be critical in supporting work to combat housing discrimination through education and outreach, fair housing testing, and legal advocacy to ensure that all Massachusetts residents have fair and equal access to stable, affordable housing.

Discrimination remains an immense barrier to access housing for many residents due to race, disability, immigration status, source of income, and many more classes that are protected by Massachusetts law.

"We share deep gratitude to the Healey-Driscoll Administration - particularly our partners in the Executive Office of Housing and Liveable Communities and the Office of Fair Housing - for their leadership in issuing these awards at a critical time for our organizations," said Vineeth Hemavathi, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center. "These dollars will directly support residents in availing themselves of the rights that they are granted under state and federal law. Massachusetts has long been a leader in fair housing policy - but without enforcement, these rights are lost for too many individuals seeking stable housing in a turbulent market."

Massachusetts is home to four organizations engaged in fair housing enforcement, who are collectively the largest private enforcers of fair housing law in the state and have been working together as the Fair Housing Alliance of Massachusetts (FHAM) to combat housing voucher discrimination statewide. Amid grant instability and impending funding losses, including the end of federal passthrough dollars for housing voucher discrimination efforts beginning in 2027,

Massachusetts's four fair housing organizations are facing challenges maintaining services for residents as the demand for fair housing resources persists. These awards represent the first official statewide investment in fair housing from the Fair Housing Fund to support sustained enforcement of fair housing law and initiatives.

"Last summer, support from both the House and Senate to seed the Fair Housing Fund during a time of severe uncertainty for this work brought hope to each of our organizations and the communities we serve," Kristina da Fonseca, Executive Director of SouthCoast Fair Housing, stated. "As we continue to weather challenges that impact our ability to support our communities and ensure that fair housing law is being upheld, we are grateful to leaders in both the legislature and the Administration who will continue to fight with us to ensure the longevity of this work."

"As housing providers increasingly rely on automated systems, discrimination is taking new forms that are harder to detect," said Jamie Langowski, Executive Director of the Center for Housing Justice & Policy. "This funding from the Fair Housing Trust allows us to investigate how AI may be screening out renters with vouchers and to develop policy solutions that ensure technology does not become a new barrier to fair housing."

The four fair housing enforcement organizations received nearly 80% of the awards from the Fair Housing Fund, whose seed money was entirely spent in this round of awards. The organizations continue to call on state leaders to sustain investments in state fair housing work amid funding gaps and loss of resources to build upon current investments.

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