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**HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION**

Fair Housing Workshop Project Report

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## Executive Summary

This project was conducted under contract with the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission (JHRC). JHRC received funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for fair housing activities; their partner in this project is Jacksonville Area Legal Aid.

The project involved an update of research conducted during the preparation of the City of Jacksonville's *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice* with regard to issues facing persons with disabilities in the local housing market. Results indicate that:

- There continues to be a strong need for the expansion of housing opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Housing for persons with disabilities must include opportunities not only for physical disabilities (including physical mobility, sight, and hearing impairments), but also for persons with intellectual disabilities and those with chronic mental illness.
- Opportunities for productive collaboration to meet these needs continue to exist. In a time of continuing resource constraints, it is likely more important than ever to find more ways to build community organizations' capacity to collaborate in serving the public.

A workshop titled "Expanding Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities" was conducted on June 28, 2013 for the purpose of building collaborative capacity that will facilitate such an expansion. Organizations with representatives attending the workshop were offered up to one hour of follow-up technical assistance without charge.

Feedback from workshop participants was very positive. Their overall rating of the workshop was 4.74 on a scale where 4 = above average and 5 = excellent.

Follow-up technical assistance was offered to workshop participants at no charge. Four organizations represented at the workshop requested this service.

## Introduction

The Jacksonville Human Rights Commission (JHRC) serves the City of Jacksonville with education and enforcement activities aimed at promoting and encouraging fair treatment and equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital or familial status, pregnancy, or ancestry. This report focuses on efforts undertaken as part of fair housing activities conducted by the JHRC. These efforts are intended to expand housing opportunities for persons with disabilities in Jacksonville and the surrounding area. This project is funded by a fair housing grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded to JHRC and Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA).

JHRC engaged the services of Dr. Anne R. Williamson of Policy & Planning Insights, LLC, in May 2013 to conduct research and present a workshop on expanding housing opportunities for persons with disabilities in the Jacksonville area. Research focuses on updating information about the status of housing for persons with disabilities in Jacksonville. This work is a direct follow-up to Dr. Williamson's preparation of the City of Jacksonville's *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice* in 2010-2011.

The workshop was titled "Expanding Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities" and was designed to increase collaborative capacity between service provider and housing organizations in order to better address the housing needs of persons with disabilities in the Jacksonville area. The workshop was held on June 28, 2013.

Follow-up technical assistance was offered at no charge to organizations participating in this workshop. Technical assistance was targeted towards helping organizations expand collaborative capacity for the purpose of increasing housing opportunities for persons with disabilities.

This report is organized in five sections:

- Introduction
- Research Update
- Workshop
- Technical Assistance
- Author Biographical Sketch

## Research Update

### Background

The fair housing planning process culminating in the City of Jacksonville's updated *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice* (August 10, 2011) included both data analysis and the results of focus groups and interviews conducted for the purpose of receiving input from community stakeholder organizations, as well as individual members of the public.

The results of this analysis indicated a shortage of housing opportunities for persons with disabilities. This included persons requiring physical accessibility, accessibility for hearing or sight impairment, and persons with intellectual disabilities. There was little input regarding overt discrimination against persons with disabilities; the primary challenge was consistently reported as a shortage of units. In the view of community stakeholders, this shortage extended to homes for rent and for sale. Stakeholders also noted that accessible rental units were often in older, poorly maintained subsidized housing, often in neighborhoods with high crime rates.

Comments obtained at focus group sessions, for instance, indicated that the purchase of an accessible home by persons with disabilities of moderate means would be preferable to renting. This is because the purchase of a home with appropriate features would mean that the individual could stay in place indefinitely without the need to search for accessible housing in the future.

Jacksonville's *Analysis of Impediments* included an action item for overcoming barriers to fair housing choice among persons with disabilities based on bringing together service providers and community housing organizations to increase collaborative capacity within the Jacksonville area. The "Expanding Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Workshop" held on June 28, 2013 was the result of this segment of the fair housing planning process.

### Update

Information on the number of persons with disabilities by age group was presented in Jacksonville's 2011 *Analysis of Impediments* based on figures published by the United States Census Bureau. These figures were the 3-year estimates for numbers of persons with disabilities in Duval County for the period 2006-2008.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1 (below) shows both the 2006-2008 American Community Survey estimates for persons with disabilities in Duval County, as well as the 2009-2011 estimates. While the percentage of persons with disabilities as compared with the entire population has declined somewhat in that brief period, the absolute number of persons with disabilities has risen by 456 persons.

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<sup>1</sup> Disability data were collected on the Census "long form" through Census 2000. After that date, the "long form" was abandoned; detailed information related to households—including disability status—is now collected through the American Community Survey, administered annually to a statistical sample of the population.

**Table 1: Persons with Disabilities in Duval County by Age Group**

Age Group	American Community Survey 2006-2008 Estimates		American Community Survey 2009-2011 Estimates	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	803	1.3%	341	0.6%
5 through 17 years	9,215	6.2%	8,470	5.9%
18 through 64 years	56,998	11.4%	56,750	10.3%
65 years and above	33,024	39.5%	34,935	37.1%
Total Non-institutionalized Population	100,040	12.6%	100,496	11.9%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-year estimates, 2006-2008 and 2009-2011

Age groups below 65 years showed slight decreases in the number of persons with disabilities, while the number of persons age 65 and older with a disability grew by 1,011. The trend toward larger numbers of persons age 65 and above will continue as the Baby Boomer generation ages. Jacksonville and the state will see more growth in persons age 65 and above in the coming years than most other states due to its continuing attraction as a retirement destination. As the population age 65 and above rises, so will the number of persons with some type of disability.

The current project involved outreach to community stakeholder organizations to obtain updated feedback regarding the status of housing opportunities for persons with disabilities. Discussions indicate that the situation is much as it was in 2011: There is a profound need for an expansion of housing for persons with disabilities in the Jacksonville area.

Further, there is a need for attention to housing persons with mental illness. Chronically mentally ill persons (such as persons with schizophrenia, for instance) may spend limited amounts of time in mental health facilities; they are then released to live in the community. Persons with disability due to mental illness are in need of permanent supportive housing options. Thus, persons with mental illness should be added to the list of disabilities requiring expanded housing opportunities in Jacksonville and the surrounding area.

## Workshop

Research conducted during the preparation of the City of Jacksonville's *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice* indicated that there was strong need for an expanded set of housing opportunities for persons with disabilities of all types in the Jacksonville area. Moreover, it was clear that service-provider organizations had potential solutions for creating this expansion, but often lacked housing expertise. At the same time, the global economic crisis that resulted in widespread foreclosures in many of Florida's housing markets changed the face of housing need in Jacksonville.

Prior to the burst of the housing bubble, Jacksonville's nonprofit Community Development Corporations (CDCs) served the public primarily through the construction of single-family homes affordable to low- to moderate-income households. They also provided housing counseling and access to down payment programs funded by federal, state, and local government and administered by the City of Jacksonville. These services were critical in an environment where ownership of even modest housing was increasingly out of reach for many area residents.

Once the foreclosure crisis hit, however, this model of service to the public was far less effective in serving community needs. The housing expertise acquired by the CDCs and other nonprofit groups became a slack resource. In other words, they had the expertise, but there was little, if any, need for new construction for the foreseeable future.

Based on the need for expanded housing opportunities for persons with disabilities and the need for a changed business model among Jacksonville community nonprofits, it became clear that there were opportunities for productive collaboration if service providers and housing organizations were brought together. Thus, the Expanding Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Workshop was born.

Invitations to the free workshop were extended to a wide array of community-oriented organizations, including public, nonprofit, and for-profit groups. A total of 17 representatives of eight different organizations participated in the June 28, 2013 workshop held in the Jacksonville Public Library's facilities at 303 N. Laura Street from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

### Focus on Building Collaborative Capacity

The workshop focused on ways in which local organizations could build on existing strengths to build their ability to collaborate in efforts to expand housing opportunities for persons with disabilities. The workshop began by emphasizing that most Jacksonville community groups already worked in partnership with others in a number of ways in their day-to-day business. From there, it went on to identify essential aspects of collaboration and specific instances of how collaboration could be used to compete for resources provided by federal, state, local, and private foundations for expanding housing opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Especially important components of the workshop were visioning exercises. The first was a warm-up exercise near the beginning of the workshop where participants were asked to envision a community where all persons with disabilities of various types had ample access to housing opportunities. Individuals were then asked to share their visions with the group.

A more in-depth visioning exercise provided the capstone for the workshop. This exercise involved participation in groups of four or five. Each group was asked to begin with a specific idea for a project that could be pursued in Jacksonville that would expand housing opportunities for persons with disabilities using a collaborative approach. Each group then worked through issues such as who they would ask to be involved, what resources they would seek, how such a project would be implemented, and how they would measure success. Groups then reported out their results to the entire workshop.

## **Visioning Results**

Break-out group visioning results resulted in a diverse array of project ideas aimed at increasing housing opportunities for persons with disabilities in Jacksonville. Envisioned projects include:

### **Continuing Care Community**

The Continuing Care Community project is designed to serve adults age 60 and older in a mixed-income, mixed-use environment. The project would involve local government, developers, social service providers, private investors and/or foundations, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), health care providers, and the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce.

The project would result in a community-oriented development for aging adults that provides supportive services, health care, and other services and amenities in a compact environment. This is intended as a viable housing option for seniors and a means to revitalize distressed neighborhoods.

### **Welcome Home!**

The Welcome Home! program would link persons in need of housing (including persons with disabilities) with homeowners who have space available. The project would involve collaboration among a number of local social service agencies.

Successful projects in other states have linked homeless persons and/or persons with disabilities with homeowners, often elders who benefit from both the companionship and financial assistance provided by housing a person in need. The project is intended to increase the social integration of elders and others while also decreasing dependence on “the system.”

Expected results include decreased homelessness, a more thoroughly engaged community, and efficient use of available housing resources.



## **Aging Alternatives for People with Intellectual Disabilities**

This project is intended to serve seniors with an intellectual disability and the families of persons with intellectual disabilities. The project would rely on collaboration among a number of groups, including both government and nonprofit organizations. Collaboration would also be sought from JTA and medical care providers.

Housing with supportive services, transportation, and health care access coordinated through this program would increase the safety of seniors with intellectual disabilities, expand life expectancies, enrich lives, and expand social integration of persons served. Further, it would decrease the cost of care and community services for persons with intellectual disabilities. Finally, it would better prepare persons with intellectual disabilities for life after their parents or other family caregivers have passed away.

This program would better serve the citizens of Jacksonville while educating the community about seniors with intellectual disabilities. It would decrease the cost of community care, decrease the cost of emergency services, and lower the costs borne by hospitals. It would also decrease the use of expensive nursing home care.

## **Resource Connections Clearinghouse (RCC)**

The Resource Connections Clearinghouse (RCC) would serve all persons with disabilities in the Jacksonville area. This collaborative effort would involve government, social service providers, nonprofit organizations, foundations, the private sector, and faith-based organizations.

A needs assessment would be conducted in order to determine the types of material that should be provided via the RCC. This web-based tool would make it much easier for local groups to collaborate in providing information and services to persons with disabilities. It would also identify service gaps that could be addressed through future grant-writing efforts.

Project results would include better coordination of services for persons with disabilities, healthier and happier lives, and a better quality of life. Just as importantly, the project would contribute to fairness and equality for persons with disabilities in Jacksonville and the surrounding area.

## **Workshop Evaluation Results**

Participants were asked to evaluate the workshop at the close of the session. Workshop participants were asked to respond to each question with a rating scale ranging from 1 to 5. A rating of 1 = poor; 2 = fair; 3 = satisfactory; 4 = above average; and 5 = excellent.

Evaluation results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Workshop Evaluation Results

Evaluation Question	Average Response
How would you rate the usefulness of the workshop's content?	4.53
How would you rate the hands-on visioning activities?	4.71
How would you rate the presenter's knowledge about the topic?	5.00
How would you rate the presenter's workshop facilitation style?	4.82
Overall, how would you rate this workshop?	4.74

The evaluation instrument also had an open-ended question asking what they liked most or found most useful about the workshop. Responses most often indicated the visioning exercises and/or the opportunity to network with representatives of other community-oriented organizations. Other responses indicated the general theme of the program, the opportunity for follow-up technical assistance, and an atmosphere that encouraged discussion among participants.

The evaluation instrument concluded with an open-ended question asking participants for suggestions regarding future community workshops. Suggestions included a follow-up workshop where progress towards fulfillment of projects identified through visioning exercises would be shared; another workshop bringing together medical service providers with disability service providers and housing organizations; and a session where for-profit builders are given an opportunity to comment on projects identified in the workshop visioning sessions.

## **Technical Assistance**

Follow-up technical assistance was requested by four organizations represented at the workshop. Each organization was provided up to one hour of technical assistance without charge.

Technical assistance was aimed at helping organizations increase their capacity to collaborate with others in efforts to expand housing opportunities for persons with disabilities. Each organization's session has been kept confidential in order to facilitate an open discourse on issues facing the organization.

## Author Biographical Sketch

Dr. Anne Williamson is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alabama. She is a primary faculty member for the Master of Public Administration and Public Policy programs. Prior to joining the University of Alabama, Dr. Williamson served as the co-director of the Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning program at the University of Texas at San Antonio, as well as faculty in the Master of Public Administration program. She also consults with government and nonprofit organizations on housing and community development issues through her firm, Policy & Planning Insights, LLC.

Dr. Williamson is the former associate director of the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies at the University of Florida, where she led the center's housing policy research agenda and worked directly with public officials at the federal, state, and local level, as well as nonprofit organizations and others, in support of excellence in housing and community throughout the state of Florida and the nation. Further, she served as the director of the Office of Research & Analysis for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), as well as serving as Development Manager for Affordable Housing Rental Programs with DCA. She also has experience in private-sector housing development and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit gained in Central Georgia.

Her expertise covers a wide range of issues, including HOPE VI, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and other multifamily housing programs, Housing Choice Vouchers, neighborhood revitalization, Fair Housing choice, collaborative networks, strategic planning in public and nonprofit organizations, and other topics associated with housing and community development. Her involvement in these activities spans more than 25 years.

Dr. Williamson regularly presents at national conferences such as the Urban Affairs Association, the Association for Budgeting and Financial Management, the American Society for Public Administration and the American Political Science Association. She has authored articles on housing and community in publications such as *Urban Affairs Review*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, *Housing and Society*, *The Social Science Journal*, *Journal of Poverty*, and *Journal of Community Practice*. In addition, she is author of more than 20 monographs and reports dealing with housing and community issues. She has also provided expert testimony in U. S. Federal Court on Fair Housing issues and is an expert in the preparation of the federal Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice.

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