

Miami Valley Fair Housing Center Newsletter

Winter 2026

TOP NEWS

- 2025 NFHA Trends Report
- Waddell elected Dayton REALTORS president
- 2026 Fair Housing Month Commemoration



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505 Riverside Drive
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AI & Fair Housing: Access, Equity and Affordability

Eighty-two percent of Americans now report using AI tools for housing-market insights. AI is now nearly as influential as experienced real estate professionals in shaping how consumers research, evaluate and navigate buying a home.

The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) will host the 2026 Responsible AI Symposium: Zero Gap—Aligning AI with Civil and Human Rights. Our third annual Symposium will explore the latest developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and dispel the myth that there is an inherent trade-off between advancing civil rights and spurring technological innovation. In fact, these two goals are mutually reinforcing. They foster public trust and advance innovations that better serve society. Additional information and registration available by clicking this link —[NFHA-AI26](#).

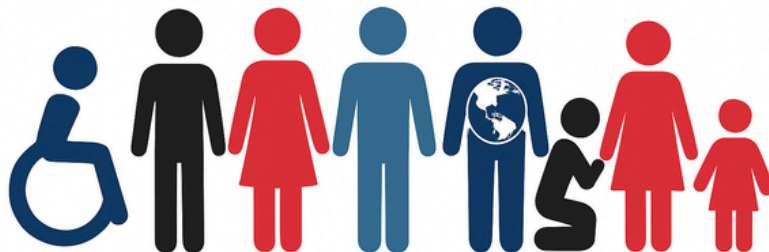
OPEN HOUSING, Still a Promise: *The door to choice must stay open*

April 2, 2026—Save the Date!

Every April for more than 30 years, the Fair Housing Center has partnered with Dayton REALTORS® to commemorate Fair Housing Month. This year's theme invokes Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work on housing in the 1960s, when he traveled north to Chicago and the Midwest to advocate for what was then known as "Open Housing", but eventually grew into the modern Fair Housing Movement.

Additional Information and how to purchase tickets, on inside.

Fair Housing Laws Protect Consumers Seeking to Rent or Buy a Home.



OPEN HOUSING, STILL A PROMISE

The door to choice must stay open

2026 Commemoration of Fair Housing Month

April 2, 2026

Sinclair Conference Center—Dayton, OH

\$50 per person—Luncheon, Keynote & Awards
Tables of 8 for \$400

\$75 per person—Workshop + Luncheon, Keynote & Awards
\$45 per person—Workshop only

Register at: <http://www.mvfairhousing.com/fhmonth2026/> or



Breakfast Workshop #1
8 AM - 11:30 AM
FH and Disability Awareness

This 3-hour class focuses on the experiences of people with motor, speech, vision, and dexterity disabilities.

Breakfast Workshop #2
10 AM - 11:30 AM
FH and present day Redlining

This class focuses on how historical injustices create a legacy of systemic inequality that continues to manifest as ongoing, present-day civil rights challenges.

Luncheon keynote by Michel Carter

Senior Advisor to the President and Chief Diversity Officer of Sinclair Community College



Dayton REALTORS elects Barbara Waddell as president, marking a historic milestone

A local institution that has shaped the Miami Valley housing market for more than a century is entering a new chapter. Barbara Waddell has been named President of Dayton REALTORS® for 2026, the region's major professional association for real estate practitioners.

Waddell's election is significant for the organization and the broader community because it marks a milestone in visibility and representation: a Black woman has reached the association's top elected office, an organization founded in the early 20th century. Sham Reddy, who immigrated to the United States from India, made history as the first non-Caucasian President of Dayton REALTORS® in 2020, a significant milestone for diversity in the organization, paving the way for future leaders like Barbara Waddell.

Dayton REALTORS traces its origins to 1909, when it was formed as the Dayton Real Estate Board, and it joined the National Association of REALTORS® in 1913. In a region where neighborhoods, wealth-building opportunities, and access to housing have long been shaped by historic patterns of segregation and inequality, representation in real estate leadership is not merely symbolic. It can influence which priorities are elevated, which voices are heard, and how the profession builds public trust.

A legacy of institutional influence

Few organizations have the everyday reach of a real estate association. Dayton REALTORS has served as a consistent hub for the region's real estate professionals, setting standards of practice and supporting the operational back-

bone of the housing market through training, governance, and advocacy.

A notable moment in the organization's history occurred in 1976, when Dayton REALTORS became the first local board in the nation to sign a Voluntary Affirmative Marketing Agreement with the National Association of REALTORS® and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The agreement positioned the organization as an early supporter of fair housing goals at a time when compliance and enforcement nationwide were uneven. Dayton REALTORS has been a strong, supportive partner of the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center since its founding in 1993.

Over the decades, Dayton REALTORS also expanded its community investment through the Dayton REALTORS Foundation, established in 1995 to support nonprofit organizations and community initiatives. The Foundation provides grants to improve quality of life and expand opportunities in housing and homeownership.

A slow arc of leadership change

While Dayton REALTORS has a long history, leadership milestones did not come quickly for everyone. A documented example of women's leadership at the top level appeared in 1996, when Darlene Breen served as President of the organization, making her the first woman to hold the association's top elected role. That was 87 years after the association's 1909 founding—an indicator of how slowly many traditional professional organizations have expanded access to leadership pathways.

See Waddell continued on page 4

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Nationally, the real estate industry reached a milestone earlier: the National Association of REALTORS® recorded its first woman president in 1992. Dayton's first woman president followed just four years later.

Waddell's rise and the meaning of 117 years

Waddell's election follows several years in senior roles at Dayton REALTORS, including serving as Treasurer in 2024, President-Elect in 2025.

Her selection also invites reflection. From 1909 to 2026 is 117 years—the span between the founding and the election of the first Black woman to the presidency.

The significance of Waddell's presidency is twofold: it is a personal achievement built on years of service—and it is a moment that invites the community to consider how leadership pathways develop over time.

A century-plus timeline before a Black woman reaches the presidency does not, by itself, prove deliberate exclusion in any single year. But it does raise questions about how professional networks develop, how candidates are encouraged to step forward, and whether informal barriers—visible or invisible, often described as unconscious bias—shape who is seen as “ready” to lead and may delay opportunities for people of color.

In a field connected to homeownership, neighborhood stability, and generational wealth, the significance of inclusive leadership extends beyond the REALTOR association itself. Waddell's election is both a celebration and a reminder: the most meaningful institutional change is measured not only by the milestone but also by what follows.

NFHA 2025 Trends Report

The National Fair Housing Alliance's (NFHA) 2025 Trends Report reveals that housing discrimination remains pervasive and persistent, with 32,000+ complaints filed in calendar year 2024. The data in the report are drawn from fair housing complaints filed in 2024. Most complaints arose in the rental market, though significant numbers were reported in home sales and mortgage lending.

Disability-related discrimination accounted for the largest share of complaints at 54.6%, followed by race, national origin, sex, familial status, and religion. Complaints based on national origin rose 8.45% from the previous year, marking the highest number since 2018. Retaliation complaints more than doubled from the previous year to the highest level on record.

HUD's Region V includes six states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana. Region V recorded 6,734 total complaints, with Ohio accounting for 80% of them, or 2,572 complaints.

Ohio's complaints closely tracked national percentages, with disability discrimination at 55.8%, followed by race at 16.9%, sex at 10.3%, and familial status at 6.8% of Ohio's total complaints.

President Trump's reelection in November 2024 was a harbinger of profound challenges to the promotion and enforcement of fair housing—challenges that have since materialized.

Download and read the entire 2025 Trends Report here – bit.ly/43MtsA7

Tribute to Matti Seege, Former Chair of the Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff, we honor the life and legacy of Matti Seege, whose service spanned 13 years in roles as Board Member, Vice Chair, and ultimately Chair.

From her earliest days as a board member, Matti brought insight, dedication, and a steady voice. As Vice Chair, she enhanced collaboration and paved the way for her tenure as Chair, during which her leadership was characterized by vision, integrity, and compassion.

Over her 13 years of service, Matti led the Center in ways that broadened our reach and deepened our impact. Her dedication was grounded in a straightforward, strong commitment to community. She was plain-spoken, courageous, and resilient.

She encouraged colleagues, celebrated successes, and offered guidance during challenging moments. Many of us will remember her carefree laugh and infectious joy

as she led us in line dancing at the Waikiki Party fundraisers.

Even after stepping down from the board, Matti remained a source of encouragement and guidance. The standards she set and the example she lived by will continue to guide us, reminding us that service is both a responsibility and a privilege.



As we grieve her passing, we also honor her extra-ordinary life and the enduring impact she made during her years of distinguished service.

