

Jessica Aviva, Ph.D. 2025 Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship Project Summary

There are significant fair housing needs throughout Pennsylvania, particularly in rural communities where people who are members of protected class groups are moving in search of affordable housing, work opportunities, and a better quality of life. Several indicators drove the design of this research project: an average of 161 fair housing complaints are filed in Pennsylvania each year; nationally, fair housing complaints exceeded historical records in 2022; the number of hate crimes increased 421% in Pennsylvania from 2021 to 2022, and Pennsylvania had more white supremacist propaganda than any other state in 2021. Increasing populations of protected class members in rural communities also increase the risk of housing discrimination, while many communities experiencing these increases are unequipped to prevent, identify, and address fair housing violations.

Two resources were created to assist municipalities and community organizations with addressing fair housing needs in their communities:

- A **migration data report** that pinpoints rural communities experiencing the largest percentage increases in residents who are members of protected classes, identifying areas where fair housing education, outreach, and enforcement are especially critical. It includes a detailed spreadsheet with data for every county as well as municipal-level data for the 20 counties with the most significant demographic shifts.
- A **fair housing toolkit** that describes actionable strategies and resources for municipalities, housing providers, and social service agencies to protect residents' fair housing rights. It features examples from communities across Pennsylvania to illustrate effective, real-world approaches.

These resources were developed in consultation with local fair housing officers and other municipal employees, fair housing and legal advocacy organizations, and community-based organizations through two focus groups and 10 interviews.

Information about the project and these resources were shared with the public at the following conferences: the PHFA Multi-Family Affordable Housing Conference (June; presentation on PHFA website), the Inglis/Self-Determination Housing of Pennsylvania Opening Doors Together Conference (August), and the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania's Homes Within Reach Conference (November). The migration data report and toolkit were distributed to 88 representatives from state government, municipalities, associations, and community organizations.

Copies of the migration data report and toolkit can be obtained by completing a brief form at [this link](#).