

One Lincoln

City of Lincoln Commission on Human Rights News

April is Fair Housing Month!



(L to R) Paula Gardner [NEOC], Tim Butz [FHAS], Barbara Albers [NEOC], Clifton Jones [HUD], Betty Bottiger [HUD], Gov. Heineman, Gretchen Eure [NEOC], Wendy Francis [NE REALTORS® Assn], Margie Nichols [LCHR], Becky Herms [NE REALTORS® Assn], Joe Garcia [FHAS/FHC], Reginald Robinson [HUD]

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On April 13th, LCHR Investigator Margie Nichols watched as Governor Dave Heineman designated April as Fair Housing Month in Nebraska. This designation was signed into a proclamation during a short ceremony at the State Capitol Building in

Lincoln. Also present for the signing were representatives from Housing and Urban Development's Omaha Field Office, Family Housing Advisory Services, Inc./Fair Housing Center of Nebraska—Iowa, Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission, and the Nebraska REALTORS® Association. The Proclamation reads, in part:

"I, Dave Heineman, Governor of the State of Nebraska, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM the month of April, 2011, as FAIR HOUSING MONTH in Nebraska, and I do hereby urge all citizens to take due note of the observance by continuing our efforts to eliminate housing discrimination in our communities."

We urge all Nebraskans to heed the Governor's request so that each of us may ensure our right to "Live Free" of discrimination and to heed the Governor's request so that each of us may ensure our right to "Live Free" of discriminatory conduct.

The 2011 Civil Rights Conference

On March 23rd, the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights hosted the 2011 Civil Rights Conference at the Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center, in Lincoln, Nebraska. The 2011 Conference included an address by US Dept of HUD Regional Administrator Derrith Watchman-Moore and Mayor Chris Beutler. Topics focused on both housing- and employment- related topics. With nearly 200 registrants, the conference was packed with exciting sessions and plenty of time for networking with other professionals.

Sessions included "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing," "Recruiting & Engaging a Diverse Workforce," as well as legal updates for each field, and "A New Decade of Access & Opportunity," an engaging and entertaining keynote address by Mr. Jim de Jong, Director of the Great Plains ADA Center. Guest speakers ranged from professors, attorneys, directors, board members, and coordinators, each engaging and presenting information that was both useful and easy to understand.



Mayor Beutler presenting HUD Regional Administrator Derrith Watchman-Moore with a token of appreciation



2011 Civil Rights Conference, Morning General Assembly

2012 Civil Rights Conference

While no date is set, the Commission is eager to accept topic suggestions to be addressed during the 2012 Civil Rights Conference. Please submit any ideas to LCHR@lincoln.ne.gov

To be included in the mailing list for the 2012 Civil Rights conference, send an e-mail, including your name and mailing address to:

LCHR@lincoln.ne.gov Or call: (402) 441-7624

2011 Fair Housing Award & Gerald Henderson Human Rights Award



Larry Williams

During the 2011 Civil Rights Conference, the annual Fair Housing and Gerald Henderson Human Rights Awards were presented to Mr. Larry Williams.

Throughout his time with the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Larry Williams worked tirelessly towards equality in Lincoln in all areas, both in and outside of his role with the Commission.

One nominator said "Larry was always concerned with making sure people of all races, genders, and abilities were given the right and opportunity to be able to live where they wanted in the City of Lincoln and did whatever he could to educate the citizens."

Another nominator said "Recognizing the value of early intervention and education in promoting mutual respect and valuing the diversity in our community, Larry helped develop and make a highly successful outreach to high school students about equity in the workplace..."

We would like to say "thank you" to Mr. Larry Williams for working to ensure equality in Nebraska.

Housing Complaints Increase in Lincoln

The number of housing discrimination claims received by the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) doubled from 2009 to 2010, but the number of employment discrimination complaints dropped 17 percent. Those are some of the figures compiled in the LCHR annual report now available online at lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: rights).

The 2010 LCHR annual report shows a total of 92 cases filed — 59 for employment discrimination, 27 for housing discrimination and six for public accommodation discrimination. That compares to 86 cases filed in the previous year — 71 for employment discrimination, 13 for housing discrimination and two for public accommodation discrimination.

"We believe the increase in housing complaints is due largely to LCHR's education and outreach efforts," said Margie Nichols, Civil Rights Investigator. "These important functions have been carried on by LCHR's AmeriCorps Member Mema Grant and Hispanic Liaison Loren Mestre Roberts. They have been our voice to the community, freeing the two investigators to focus their attention on the reason LCHR exists: to investigate allegations of discrimination in Lincoln."

LCHR's two investigators, Nichols and Angela Lemke, closed 91 cases in 2010 (not all were filed in 2010). In addition to non-monetary resolutions, LCHR negotiated settlements of about \$40,000. A service satisfaction survey sent to all complainants and respondents showed:

- 84 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the process was fair.
- 90 percent said they would refer LCHR to someone else experiencing discrimination.

In 2010, LCHR reached more than 6,000 residents in about 100 sessions covering civil rights and responsibilities. The annual Fair Housing Conference was expanded in 2010 to include both an employment and public accommodation focus.

"I commend the Commissioners and staff for a very productive year," said Mayor Chris Beutler. "With the resignation of longtime Director Larry Williams, this has been a year of transition. Through reorganization, we've provided our fine investigators with the administrative support they need and have expanded our outreach efforts. Although Larry certainly left big shoes to fill, the Commissioners and staff have ensured the City's commitment to human rights remains firm."

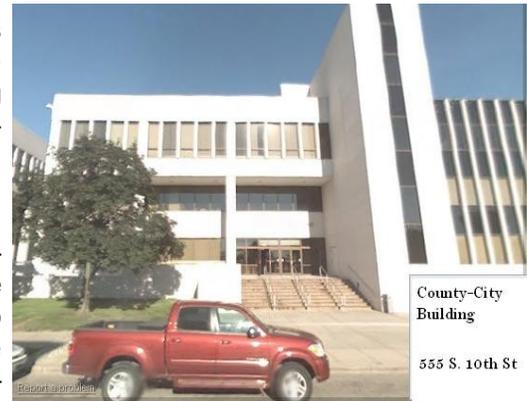
The Human Rights Division is now under the supervision of City Attorney Rod Confer, and Mayoral Aide Milo Mumgaard is serving as Interim Civil Rights Officer. LCHR will soon move to the third floor of the County-City Building, where new offices are under construction adjacent to the City Attorney's Office. An open house is being planned for late spring.

We encourage the public to obtain a copy of the 2010 Annual Report by calling our offices during normal business hours at (402) 441-7624, or e-mailing your request to LCHR@lincoln.ne.gov

The Lincoln Commission on Human Rights is Moving!

For the past 11 years, the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights has been located at the 'K' Street Complex, in a space once shared with the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission. The space was an ideal setting at the time, though needs and budget have shifted those needs. In addition to the recent restructuring, the Commission will move from the 'K' Street Complex to the County—City Building.

LCHR's relocation from the 'K' Street Complex to newly-constructed offices on the third floor of the County-City Building is a side benefit of the reorganization. LCHR will have its own entrance and office suite close to the Mayor's and City Attorney's office, which will enhance administrative support for Commission functions. A newly remodeled, freshly-decorated office and LCHR's prominent location is intended to demonstrate to clients that civil rights is an important aspect of Lincoln's government.



County-City
Building
555 S. 10th St

It is currently anticipated that the new offices will be ready for occupancy by June 2011.

FREE!

TRAINING OFFERED TO HOUSING & EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS!!

FREE!

Sessions can cover general information, address questions, or can be tailored to meet the specific needs of your organization, staff, or clientele!

Topics Include:
—FAIR HOUSING
—ADA/ADAAA
—EQUAL EMPLOYMENT

For more information, or to schedule a training session, please contact:
Angela Lemke or Margie Nichols
(402) 441-7624
LCHR@Lincoln.ne.gov

A key aspect of the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) is to raise awareness of discriminatory employment, housing, and public accommodation practices, and inform community members of LCHR's existence and function. Outreach activities include presentations to community groups, schools, companies, and individuals.

The Commission wants to extend this outreach to housing and employment professionals in the form of training sessions. These sessions may include information on the Fair Housing Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and more. Each session can be tailored to meet the needs of your specific organization, staff, or clientele.

If you are interested in designing or scheduling a training session, please contact the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights today!

Don't be left out!
 Include yourself on our mailing list
 Receive notifications for the **2012 Civil Rights Conference, Fair Housing, and Gerald Henderson Human Rights Award!**
 To be included on the mailing list, e-mail your mailing address to: **LCHR@lincoln.ne.gov** or visit:
http://www.lincoln.ne.gov keyword: **rights**

Jurisdiction:

The City of Lincoln Human Rights Commission has jurisdiction to investigate alleged discrimination complaints in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodation occurring within Lincoln's city limits. We do not have jurisdiction to investigate alleged discrimination complaints involving City, County and State Government employees, offices or facilities, or state universities (the appropriate contact information is listed below).

- Resources:**
- **Discrimination complaints outside of Lincoln City limits**—Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission—402-471-2024 or the regional Equal Opportunity Commission office in St. Louis, MO (800) 669-4000
 - **City agency complaints**—City Ombudsman/Mayor's Office (402) 441-7511
 - **University of Nebraska-Lincoln employment complaints** — UNL Affirmative Action (402) 472-3417
 - **Lincoln Police Department complaints**—Internal Affairs Division (402) 441-7204, Citizen Advisory Board (402) 441-6351, or Mayor's office (402) 441-7511
 - **Jail/Penitentiary complaints**—Ombudsman at the State office for Corrections (402) 471-2035
 - **Landlord-Tenant disputes**—Community Action Partnership; Landlord-Tenant Specialist (402) 471-4515
 - **Complaints about legal matters**—County Attorney (402) 441-7321, Legal Aid of Nebraska (877) 250-2016, Nebraska Attorney General (402) 471-2682, or Nebraska State Bar Association (402) 475-7091
 - **Advocacy Services for people with disabilities**—League of Human Dignity (402) 441-7891 or Nebraska Advocacy Services (402) 474-3183.



**Fair Housing.
 It's Not an Option.
 It's the Law!**

If you feel that you have been denied the right of purchase, rent or are otherwise discriminated against when dealing with a person regarding housing and believe this was on the basis of your race, color, gender, religion, marital or familial status, disability, or national origin; please call the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights and set up an intake interview. Our phone number is (402) 441-7624, our services are free, and all of our cases are completely confidential.