

Racial Justice Working Group

(Powered by Jewish Community Relations)

WNY Community Fair Housing Organizations (Nov 2020)

Researching, Planning and Advocacy:

- [Home Opportunities Made Equal \(HOME\)](#)
 - **Mission:** A civil rights organization with a mission to promote the value of diversity and ensure all people an equal opportunity to live in housing and communities of their choice.
 - **History:** Founded in 1963 by clergy and laity from the Buffalo Area Council of Churches concerned about the persuasive discrimination in the Buffalo-Niagara Housing Market.
 - **Key Accomplishments:**
 - HOME has published five editions of “A Guide to Landlord’s Rights,” conducted analyses which prompted reform of the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, and in 1991 was named to a special HUD advisory panel on housing authority.
 - The City of Buffalo passed its Fair Housing Act in 2006, which bans discrimination based on marital status, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and source of income in addition to the federally protected classes.
 - **Fair Housing Testing** is used to uncover evidence of racial discrimination in rental housing. After a potentially discriminatory incident is reported, a staff member visits/calls the housing provider/site posing as a similar person to test if they have the same practice. People can report directly to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), NYS Division of Human Rights, or Neighborhood Legal Services.
- [Voice Buffalo](#)
 - **Mission:** To faithfully bring forth social justice and equity in our region through organized, collective action.
 - **History:** Founded in 1996 by a diverse group of faith, labor, business, and community leaders
 - **More Information:** Voice Buffalo uses relationship building, collective action, and leadership development to achieve positive change, democracy, inclusion, equity, and justice.
- [Buffalo Branch NAACP](#)
 - **Mission:** To ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination.
 - **History:** Founded January 15, 1915, organized by W.E.B. Dubois, and played a major role in the formation of the NAACP.
 - **More Information:** The Buffalo NAACP has many committees, one of which is the Legal Redress Committee. This committee works to investigate all cases reported, supervise all litigation in which the unity is interested, and keep the national office and the branch informed on the progress of every case.

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- [Partnership for the Public Good \(PPG\)](#)
 - **Mission:** A community-based think tank that builds a more just, sustainable, and culturally vibrant Buffalo Niagara, together with our 305 community partners.
 - **History:** Founded in 2007 by Sam Magavern. Buffalo JCRC is a partner.
 - PPG and Cornell University host the Buffalo Commons, which includes a digital library of research about WNY and tools for community groups and researchers to work together.
 - **More Information:** PPG is a part of innovative collaborations such as Open Buffalo and the Crossroads Collective, and we provide staffing and support for the Greater Buffalo Recycling Alliance and the City of Buffalo Living Wage Commission. They also host a weekly radio show, the Public Good, and offer workshops, forums, and other events throughout the year.
- [UB Center for Urban Studies](#)
 - **Mission:** A research, neighborhood planning and community development institute which focuses on the transformation of vulnerable, underdeveloped and distressed neighborhoods into communities of opportunity.
 - **History:** Founded in 1987 by Dr. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr.
 - Popularized public service at UB and led a major effort to revitalize the neighborhood surrounding the UB South Campus.
 - **More information:** UB center currently focuses on the role of institutions in mitigating urban problems in its planning and community development efforts.

Grassroots and Neighborhood Organizations:

- [Clean Air Coalition of WNY](#)
 - **Mission:** A working class, queer and women- led organization that is dedicated to developing grassroots leaders who organize their communities to run and win environmental justice and public health campaigns in Western New York.
 - **History:** Founded by WNY residents concerned about environmental health in their neighborhoods and by executive director Rebecca Newberry.
 - **More Information:** While supporting various environmental justice campaigns, Clean Air bases its organizing in neighborhoods and works to expand upon the natural environment to encompass political, social, and economic factors and structures that impact people's lives and well-being, including fair housing.
- [PUSH Buffalo](#)
 - **Mission:** Works to mobilize residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing, expand local hiring opportunities, and advance economic justice in Buffalo.
 - **History:** Founded in 2005 by Aaron Bartley and Eric Walker and is currently led by executive director Rahwa Ghirmatzion.
 - **Key Accomplishments:**
 - In 2007, PUSH established its first rental property.

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- In 2012, PUSH completed its first state and Federally-funded affordable housing project, adding eleven units on Massachusetts Avenue to our growing number of rental properties.
- PUSH continues to purchase and seek funding to develop properties within the Green Development Zone in order to grow affordable housing for low-income families and individuals who choose to live there.
- PUSH makes sure that all of our rental properties have energy-efficient features to help lower renters' utility bills. These features include dense-pack cellulose insulation, on-demand hot water heaters, radiant floor heating, and solar panels.
- PUSH'S fundraising arm - Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Company (BNSC)
 - **Mission:** A non-profit housing corporation dedicated to creating affordable housing units on the *Massachusetts Avenue Corridor* of Buffalo's West Side.
 - **History:** Founded in 2009.
 - **Key Accomplishments:**
 - BNSC currently owns 50 lots, which have been developed as clean and green spaces, community gardens and rain garden demonstration projects.
- Fruit Belt Community Land Trust
 - **Mission:** An organization whose goal is to create permanently affordable housing and generate community wealth through the collective ownership of land.
 - **History:** Incorporated in 2017.
 - **More Information:** Currently planning to build 50 low-income housing units on 27 vacant lots in the City of Buffalo.
- BestSelf Behavioral Health
 - **Mission:** An organization whose goal is to provide innovative, evidence-based, accessible, and family-focused behavioral health services to promote health, hope, recovery, and an enhanced quality of life.
 - **History:** Formed through the merger of Child & Adolescent Treatment Services and Lake Shore Behavioral Health in June 2017.
 - **More Information:** Offers a wide range of programs and services to meet the community's needs including homeless outreach and housing.
- Belmont Housing Resources for WNY
 - **Mission:** An organization whose goal is to help families and individuals find and maintain affordable homes, make homes healthy and safe, expand and construct new rental opportunities for those in need, and empower others through education and counseling.
 - **History:** Founded in 1977 and is currently led by President Michael Riegel.
 - **Key Accomplishments:**
 - Rehabbed over 165 vacant properties in the City of Buffalo in the past year.

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- Their homebuyer workshop education series has helped to educate and prepare first time homebuyers in the process of purchasing and closing on their first homes.
- They provide services to over 15,000 low-income households annually, generate over \$25 million in rental assistance payments to property owners annually, leverage an average of \$10 million in affordable housing development funds per year, administer \$10.2 million of community development programs, and manage \$73.1 million of assets.

Note: There are several other state, city, and town housing providers.