

Engaging the Disability Community in Fair Housing Planning - Best Practices

April 28, 2022

Sarale Sewell: Welcome to HUD's second of two webinar trainings on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing and the importance of engaging the disability community. I am Sarale Sewell, Program Analyst in HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Policy and Legislative Initiatives Division.

Daniel Davis: Daniel Davis, health policy analyst for the Administration for Community Living, Center for Policy and Evaluation, Office of Policy Analysis and Development.

Sarale Sewell: These webinars are a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development Office of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Community Living. Our goals are twofold: first to educate our audience on the federal requirement to "Affirmatively Further Fair Housing" and to spur us all to action with the best ways to engage the disability community in the fair housing planning process.

Daniel Davis: In the first webinar yesterday, we guided you through the important topic of affirmatively furthering fair housing. Today's focus is on community engagement. Since this is all about engagement, we would like your input. To start, please put in the city or state where you reside in the chat.

Sarale Sewell: So, I am seeing a lot of different areas. Pueblo, Colorado; Columbus, Ohio; Charlottesville, VA; Georgia; Glen Burnie, MD -- that is a bit local; Martinez, CA; Little Rock, AR; Houston. So, it looks like we are well represented here from all across the country, which is great. I want to thank you all for being here and logging on today to this important webinar.

We are going to do a quick overview of the first webinar, talk about community engagement, and then introduce you to three experts in the field who are doing amazing work on engaging their communities. And as a reminder, all webinar recordings, power points, and a supplementary fact sheet will be available on the HUD Exchange webpage and the Administration for Community Living's Housing and Services Resource Center webpage. Let us get started.

Daniel Davis: Work to affirmatively further fair housing has had a rich history grounded in the Fair Housing Act. HUD's focus from 1996 – 2015 offered two planning guides to complete Analyses of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. In an effort to deepen and strengthen "taking meaningful action, fostering inclusive communities, overcoming patterns of segregation, and eliminating barriers that restrict access" HUD introduced the Assessment of Fair Housing in 2015 with additional tools and guidance. HUD recently published its 2021 Interim Final Rule (or the IFR) to restore meaningful definitions and certifications to the AFFH requirement, although recipients have flexibility in how they support their certifications. This is where we are now. HUD is currently working on a new planning scheme with the aim of streamlining the fair housing analysis to both reduce burden and promote better fair housing outcomes.

Sarale Sewell: The IFR provides clarity and familiarity to funding recipients who can engage in familiar fair housing planning processes to comply with their AFFH obligations. *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice*, or AIs, were still conducted by program participants that were not yet required to

conduct and submit an Assessment of Fair Housing, or AFH, to HUD. HUD grantees and public housing authorities covered by this rule are required to certify compliance with affirmatively furthering fair housing, flexibly conduct fair housing planning in support of these certifications, with the submission of a plan for FHEO feedback being voluntary.

Daniel Davis: The key points of affirmatively further fair housing, or AFFH, are for all of us to consider the mandates of housing and integration. In regard to housing, our work is to ensure accessibility and affordability, access to community-based supportive services, and integration within housing developments. As a strong partner in this work, we all must focus on integration by ensuring access to HUD and other subsidized programs, put “meaningful” fair housing plans and actions into place, and address institutional transition and diversion. This needs to be key in our research and engagement with the communities we serve.

Sarale Sewell: HUD anticipates issuing a forthcoming notice of proposed rulemaking. HUD’s goal is to provide greater emphasis on goals and achieving material positive change, a streamlined analysis and reduced burden, integrate disability throughout the analysis, provide more comprehensive disability-related data, and listen to members of the community. This is why we are here today. To listen to all of you.

Daniel Davis: As we go through the community participation process, are there particular areas of analysis that we should be mindful of when conducting fair housing planning as it relates to disability? The value of community participation & the 2015 AFFH Rule underscores the ideal that: the views and recommendations of local stakeholders strengthen fair housing planning, and local data and reports contribute to HUD’s mapping tool and state and national information.

Sarale Sewell: Some of the benefits of community participation for individuals with disabilities are the following. Participation ensures that individuals with disabilities and their advocates have equal access to the fair housing planning process itself. Participation educates jurisdictions and other funding recipients about the true accessibility and housing needs of individuals with disabilities to promote integration, maximize housing choice, and expand residential opportunities like access to education, transportation, healthcare, and grocery stores. Community engagement encourages a local or regional approach to fair housing planning. This participation can help avoid a standardized “one size fits all” approach to accessibility and housing choice for individuals with disabilities. It also significantly improves data collection and data sharing to better understand the needs of individuals with disabilities to ensure equal access and equal housing opportunities.

Daniel Davis: Now we would like to hear from you. How can we ensure greater participation in community engagement activities relating to fair housing planning? Please put your answer in the chat. You should have a chat box towards to right of your screen.

Sarale Sewell: So, I see more education for landlords and participants. That is definitely important to educate the housing providers so that they know the issues and how to accommodate individuals with disabilities. More community awareness at the municipal level, that is certainly important. Education and meetings. Promote universal housing design, that is always a good one. The key that we are talking about today: include people with disabilities in the planning process. That is really the key and what we are here to talk about today. I am seeing a lot of really great answers. Thank you for sharing.

Sarale Sewell: All of this leads to raised awareness for all of us: for HUD Grantees and Public Housing Authorities who are putting these fair housing plans in place AND for people with disabilities who are informing the review and action plans.

Daniel Davis: Another question for those in the audience, what agencies have you worked with to increase awareness on housing issues important to the disability community? Please add your answers to the chat.

Sarale Sewell: I am seeing a lot of different agencies here from Fair Housing Council, fair housing agencies. I see Centers for Independent Living. Domestic violence, shelters, and supporting partners. Some people have created an organization to do this. VA supportive housing, local city and county officials, Statewide Independent Living Council, Mayor's Committee on Disability, churches, I see the Kelsey mentioned. That is awesome. I see a lot of great organizations listed here as well.

Sarale Sewell: So to review, here are some benefits to community participation:

Informed Decision Making: Community engagement bridges the gaps between current local needs and decisions about where and how to invest public dollars judiciously. In addition, stakeholders can ensure that local data is included in the analysis.

Ownership and support: Community members and stakeholders engaged at the beginning of the development process will take ownership of the outcomes, and this gives the fair housing planning legitimacy and longevity.

Building Trust and Relationships: The community engagement requirement will help all program participants develop a greater awareness of racial, ethnic, cultural, economic, and other disparities that limit fair housing choice in a particular jurisdiction or region and will integrate valuable local knowledge to help local officials understand why those disparities exist, and how to overcome them.

Sarale Sewell: As you prepare for community engagement, mapping and data are powerful tools and can help to set the stage for the participation of individuals with disabilities and stakeholders. Here are some considerations that some jurisdictions have used to engage constituents. Analysis of Population Profile Mapping. Are persons with disabilities geographically dispersed or concentrated in the jurisdiction, state, region, or service area? Are persons with disabilities in racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (or R/ECAPs) and other identified segregated areas? Are there patterns in dispersal based on types of disabilities and age ranges?

Daniel Davis: As you consider community engagement, it is important to think of the myriad of groups that can help with fair housing analysis and planning. Local government Fair Housing Assistance programs and nonprofit fair housing agencies are a wealth of knowledge on fair housing issues. Including representatives from the housing industry will ensure that they hear from the disability community and can incorporate ideas into their work. Local universities may have studies and programs that fit well with a deeper analysis of local fair housing issues. Resident advisory boards of public housing authorities and senior housing or service providers are an excellent source of information. Social service providers and tenant rights organizations can share important information that supports this work. Do not forget to review resources about local disability rights and service organizations who will be key to fair housing analysis. Links to these organizations can be found at the end of this presentation and in the accompanying factsheet. All can be found on the HUD Exchange website.

Sarale Sewell: And remember, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, recipients of HUD financial assistance, state and local governments, and others have the legal obligation to take appropriate steps to ensure effective communications with individuals with disabilities. Though a legal obligation, it is of crucial importance to understand the affirmative nature of an effective community obligation; that people need to take proactive steps to ensure effective communication with recipients. This means they are engaging with stakeholders as to communication needs in advance of any engagement (consultation), ensuring the accessibility of any materials, and readying any technology that will be used in any auxiliary aids and services.

Daniel Davis: This includes ensuring effective communications by providing: sign language interpreters; computer-assisted real time transcription (or CART); assistive listening devices (when requested by individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing); all written materials in accessible formats for persons who are blind or have low vision; an accessible website for individuals with disabilities, so text, images, buttons, and forms must be accessible to blind persons who use screen readers, individuals with low vision who rely on screen magnifiers, and deaf persons who require text captions to access the audible content of videos and individuals who are blind or have low vision who require video description to access the visual content of videos; and voice dictation services or software.

Sarale Sewell: Effective communication is critical to the AFFH community engagement process to ensure that individuals with disabilities, and groups that advocate on behalf of individuals with disabilities, can fully participate in the fair housing planning process.

Sarale Sewell: Though the intention of the 2015 AFFH rule was in-person participation from stakeholders, the timeline of the COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate an online format.

Daniel Davis: Remote hearings will likely continue to be used for the foreseeable future in many jurisdictions. Even so, the same obligations apply to program participants to ensure effective communication for stakeholders through the use of auxiliary aids and services.

Sarale Sewell: For remote hearings, such steps will need to ensure that any information, websites, emails, digital notifications, and platforms are accessible for persons with vision, hearing, and other disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services such as audio description, captioning, sign language and other types of interpreters, keyboard accessibility, accessible documents, screen reader support, and transcripts may also be needed to provide effective communication in a digital context.

Sarale Sewell: Remember to make room for reasonable accommodation requests that depend on the specific circumstances and needs of the individual. For example, individuals with cognitive or learning disabilities may require assistance from an advocate who may not be in the same location as that individual because of social distancing measures or other circumstances; flexibility is both encouraged and required!

Sarale Sewell: In this next part of today's presentation, we have four panelists who will talk about the mission of their organization and examples of how they have engaged the disability, and greater community, in fair housing planning.

Daniel Davis: Our first speakers are Micaela Connery and Fatimah Aure from The Kelsey, a nonprofit agency in San Francisco, California. The Kelsey has led on important work on opportunity through inclusion and amplifying the voices of individuals with disabilities.

Micaela Connery is the CEO/Co-Founder of this organization and received an Master in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School and Masters in Business Administration, as a Mitchell Scholar, at the University College Dublin. As a research fellow at the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, she published leading research on housing and disability.

Joining Micaela is Director of Field & Capacity Building, Fatimah Aure, who received a Communications degree from Northwestern University and a Public Policy Masters from UC Berkeley. Fatimah's past work includes being a policy analyst for the Oakland Housing Authority and, throughout her career, has had considerable focus on diversity, equity, and belonging.

Sarale Sewell: Our third speaker is Dara Baldwin, Director of National Policy for the Center for Disability Rights, a nonprofit, community-based advocacy and service organization for people with disabilities. Dara has done important work with the disability community and received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Masters of Public Administration from Rutgers University. She is the recipient of a 2009 and 2010 Presidential Citation Award for her work in the American Society for Public Administration, serves as an Associate Member of the National Academy of Public Administration's Standing Panel on Social Equity, and has been an Adjunct Professor at Bloomfield College, Bloomfield, New Jersey.

Sarale Sewell: Our final panelist today comes to us from the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center, a nonprofit fair housing agency that has done extensive work in fair housing planning to include the New Orleans 2016 Assessment of Fair Housing. Cashauna Hill, Executive Director, is a graduate of Spelman College and Tulane Law School, has written extensively about housing segregation and civil rights, and has testified before the United States Congress as a fair housing expert. In 2017, she was the inaugural recipient of the Tulane Law School Public Interest Law Foundation's Practitioner Service Award.

Fatimah Aure: Thank you for that great introduction. My name is Fatimah Aure and I am the director of Field Building and Capacity at the Kelsey and I just want to give you a little bit of background about us. So, like you heard earlier, we are a San Francisco based on profit and our mission is really to pioneer disability forward. How things solutions that open doors to homes and opportunities for everyone. We firmly believe at the Kelsey that when you think about and plan for people with disabilities, everyone ends up benefiting. So, our three pillars of disability forward housing are affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity in housing for all people. And it is important that I talk about a dual mission that the organization has which I am very proud of, which is to build communities and actually make housing happen. But at the same time, focusing on advocacy and systems change because we realized that the housing crisis is not going to be solved 100 units at a time or even 1000 units at the time, but this is really systems and policies at the very top. They need to change. A little bit about our work, we have over 240 homes in our pipeline, both in San Jose, CA and San Francisco. And we are very committed to this idea of field building and building the field of leaders who advocate for disability forward housing. Another thing I am proud of is that we are committed to this movement that we are launching and housing to be co-led by people both with and without disabilities. Basically, we just want everybody to be in an affordable housing situation that is accessible to them and their visitors, and, most importantly, that feels inclusive in the place where they feel like they belong, and they are acknowledged and understood. So, with that, I will pass it to my boss, Michaela Connery.

Michaela Connery: And good morning, everybody. I am really grateful to be here. Just to jump sort of right into the topic today, you know, one of the things that Fatimah and myself and our colleagues at the Kelsey really think a lot about is how to embed disability, access and inclusion into the housing development process. And, you know, one of the key things is that, you know, inclusivity and

accessibility should not be about simply compliance and regulation, but actually about a comprehensive approach to access and inclusion starting from the first phases of a project all the way through to operation so that you know if you are at the point where you are, you know not meeting somebody's physical access needs or having a fair housing complaint, you have already missed about 50 steps in in what truly inclusive and accessible community are, and I'll just start by mentioning, the Kelsey, as Fatimah said, we have two ground-up developments underway here in the Bay Area. Anybody from California or from our region knows there is an acute housing crisis everywhere in our country but quite acute in our Bay Area communities and we are really addressing that specifically focused on disability inclusion. And as we developed our first two communities in San Jose and San Francisco, we realized that we were kind of taking a process that we were having to reinvent the wheel every single time with our design team and sort of bring everyone up to speed on accessibility and inclusion. We thought there really should be a set of guidelines to anchor projects in this this strategy and that's when we published last year. In partnership with a national inclusive design council, architects from across the country and Mikiten Architecture (which is a disabled lead architecture firm here in the Bay Area). We published the housing design standards for accessibility and inclusion. Those define a set of multifamily housing design and operation strategies. Again, co-created by advocates, developers, and architects to support cross disability accessibility. And you can find those yourself to use in your own projects. They are free and open sourced at thekelsey.org/design. One of the things that the housing design standards for accessibility and inclusion does, which is relevant to broadly thinking about engaging people with disabilities in the housing development process, is that the design categories are not just about the built environment, but they actually start with design process of who is on your development team and how do you reach out to the community you aim to house in the neighborhood where you are developing within and really include their insights during the housing development process. And then actually it goes through the built environment and other design categories and that the last design category is actually operations and amenities saying that inclusivity, again, doesn't end with the built environment, but continues into how a community is operated, staffed, and run, and so I encourage you to check those out and apply them to your own projects or communities. We are really happy to partner with people who are looking for support on how to apply those. They are available at thekelsey.org/design. Some key considerations, just a few sort of points on what to think about when engaging people with disabilities in your community outreach process, is first and foremost around lived experience representation on the project team. That is so key, you know, we notice starting in our work that you know many, if not all of the housing organizations building housing actually had no disabled people on their staff as architects, as consultants and there are many ways to think about access and inclusion, but an important first step is to ensure we have disabled leadership actually moving these projects forward. The second is to think about how you approach focus groups and community outreach and being really clear about who and what you are asking for. When, during the specific times of your development process, we actually, just this week, it was well timed for this, we didn't have plan to do it that way, but just this week shared a new resource on the Kelsey's website at thekelsey.org/learn that goes through in detail the community outreach process and anchoring access and inclusion. There is really a step-by-step guide, but one of the things that we talk about there is the difference between focus groups, community outreach, a community advisory group, and community events. Those are really four different types of community outreach, but they are very different, so focus groups is actually bringing people together to get their insights on a certain part of your housing development or your design, or your operations, or what you're creating. You are giving people a scope of where you want feedback, and then you are actually, you know, having feedback that you're actually going to implement. You are taking it, you're going to use it. You are not just sort of like you know, doing lip service or ear service, but you are actually taking in insights that you then are going to embed in your project. The second thing is different community outreach, which is really about educating and sharing your project with the

community. And so, you might not be asking for feedback in those. And that is fine. Just be transparent with the community. Is this a focus group where you are actually trying to hear from people, and they can influence and change the project? Or is this just community education where you are just telling people something about the project? And that is really important to be transparent and clear with people about whether they can actually provide input and how you move your projects forward. So, there's much more in that resource around some other tips of how to think about workshops and who you're focusing for, and happy to answer more questions on that. The second to last is cross-disability accessibility and that is embedded in the design standards. It is also in this workshop guidance, but really thinking about in your process and in your development about what cross-disability accessibility looks like and also being honest around naming, competing and divergent access needs. It is the reality. If we really do think about cross disability inclusion. I will give an example that we think about using picture exchange or images for people to who do not use verbal communication or do not read who can show their preferences by having images laid in front of them and being able to share their insights around what they prefer in their housing or what designs they preference or making decisions through photos. That is completely inaccessible to somebody who has a visual impairment. And so, we need to think about when we are running processes that you know we want to support cross disability accessibility and sometimes this idea of universal is actually not a reality. Sometimes there is not a universal thing. Something is not going to be universally accessible to everybody, and so we need to figure out how to build into our community outreach process, cross-disability access, and give people different ways to engage with the material. Different ways to give feedback and noting when one access need might not meet somebody else's access needs. And that is okay. Let us just be transparent and honest about when that is and work to meet. You know that cross-access need and the same can be said for in your actual developments. There might be things that you do, you know. We talk about roll-in showers and mobility access and then that other residents of ours prefer a tub for different reasons. And so, you know, if you were to do universal and have the same bathroom and every single unit, that might actually not be what meets everybody's diverse access needs. And so, we need to be intentional about meeting cross-disability, accessibility, and transparent about when we might not be doing one size fits all and that is quite fine and actually quite appropriate. And the last thing is around that, again, accessibility and inclusion does not end with the built environment, so really asking your community and including in your outreach process, planning around operations and services and amenities so that we are not sort of pretending that people's housing experience is just defined by the four walls, and then the space. But it is also described by the living experience and the staffing there, so I will pass it on to the next speaker and encourage folks that thekelsey.org/design and thekelsey.org/learn are some different resources if you are interested in diving still further into this. Thank you so much.

Dara Baldwin: Thank you for that. Thank you for HUD and ACL for having this event. My name is Dara Baldwin. I am director of national policy for the Center for Disability Right. The Center for Disability Rights is located in Rochester, NY, but my boss wanted the DC presence, so I live and work in Washington DC, DC statehood, I have to say. Also, I am on Piscataway and Anacostia stolen land, indigenous land.

I am going to talk to you today about disabilities as we have been talking about. Michaela, you did a great job about outreach. If you take anything away from these from these presentations, specifically mine, I want you to take these three things away. Really great conversation in the chat box and really good to see some of my fellow CILs which Center for disability rights is a CIL, Center for Independent Living. One is there is nothing wrong with having a disability or with people with disabilities. The second is that all systems in this country right in this world are created and based on racism and the work that

we do at the center, and I do, is centered around BIPOC people--black, indigenous, and people of color--and we have an intentional strategy to dismantle racism and systems of oppressions.

So, when we were talking about outreach and everything and people understanding and disabilities, we also want people to know the laws right? And especially when it came to AFFH rule, it was not in my presentation, it was not in my introduction, but I have been doing housing policy for about 20 years now and I am also a proud board member of the National Low-Income Housing Coalition and I served on several steering committees around housing CHCDF, which is a Campaign for Housing and Community Development Fund. It is also important to know the laws when you are working with our issues and implementing them into programs like AFFH rule. Thank you to our sign language interpreters, why I am slowing down a little. Many people think of the ADA, the Americans with Disabilities Act, as the law that says ramps and doorways and that is not true. It is the Architectural Barrier Act of 1968 that talks about accessibility, about ramps and curbs. And then later on we have the Rehab Act, Section 504, which says that anyone who is receiving federal funds has to give a civil right to a person with a disability. Now, things happen in this country in, you know, programs. And you know, number 1, number 2, number 3, especially in civil rights laws. So even this civil rights law only covered those entities receiving federal funds. It was not until later that all entities would have to give people with disability rights civil rights. On the other bills, the Air Carrier Access Act, just in case people want to know that bill.

So then in 1990 is when you have the Americans with Disabilities Act and that gave the disabled people a civil and human right. And we want people to understand and know that yes, there is. The doors and the ramps that people think that that is part of why you have to use the ADA. But in essence, the real premise of the ADA is community integration. It is the fact that all programs that we create in this country need to include disabled people in any way, shape and form. That we all been talking about communications outreach. Programming the infrastructure of all the things that we built and that reason being is that if you look at that 1,2,3, fourth bullet, where it says the ugly laws, many people don't know about these, but the ugly law started in 1865 in San Francisco and what they basically said was that people with disabilities could not be in public spaces and it is from that foundation that this country has continued to build programs and is constantly asked "well, how many disabled people will be there?" And "why do we need this?" That is not the question to ask specifically when now they have a civil and human right. So, any program you create must come from the space of it is for all and that is the problem that we see in this country. Even today almost 32 years on July 26 will be the 32nd anniversary of this incredible civil rights law. These slides will be available to people I do not want to go through them in in detail, but there are five titles to the ADA. And housing falls in the Fair Housing Act, which will be on another slide and we'll talk about in a few minutes.

Also, these are the titles, all of them, and if you want to know about the ADA you can go to the ADA National Network website, and you could also take -- they have a training course that is free that you can start in January and finish in December. You will read and learn title I, title II, title III, Title IV and take a test. We ask our advocates who are doing this work to do this test to learn ADA. I suggest that when you are engaging with disabled, the disability community, because you cannot fight for your rights if you do not know them, and many people really do not know what the ADA says they have this emotional feeling and we want to make sure that they actually know what is happening. You also want those people you are engaging in and you want them to use the ADA to know the ADA. And these resources are free and we suggest that people use them. I, in fact, take my test every two years to make sure I am keeping up with what is going on, and also the ADA Network offers trainings. They are set up in regions just like HUD and ACL. They have region 1 and 2 and 10. The regions have their own conferences and then they have a national conference around the ADA and you will see a lot of

builders and architects and people we need to discuss and talk with about housing at those events as well. And we do strongly suggest that people who are doing housing attend these events, so they understand and know what the ADA actually says and actually is supposed to do. Because when you engage with the community about builders, it is not just them making and building accessible housing, we want them to hire disabled people. So, they need to know title I, which is employment and how to treat people with disabilities. When we say inclusive and intersectionality in our work, that is part of it. The policy work you do is not just to make the program accessible for disabled people, but it is to make sure that as Micaela was saying, that they are hiring disabled people, that they have a strategy that is a long-term strategy to include disabilities and that it is going to be forever that this is not just a one-time thing that they are doing.

So, the disability rights history is very, very interesting and you should read it and know about it because it is also about engaging with the community and knowing that there is kind of a difference in doing this work. Disability rights community is very centered on white folks and white disability issues and over the years many people have had issues and concerns about this, and we have discussed it and have not been able to change that. So about five or six years ago, a group of BIPOC, black, indigenous, people of color, queer, disabled created disability justice and I will talk about that in a few minutes. There are also avenues of disabilities in which people do this work. One is paternalistic: “woe is me and we have to take care of them.” You see that a lot in this work and we do not encourage that, and we do not follow that. The second is clinical: “oh, we have to fix them because it is something wrong with them.” Remember my first line when I said if you take anything away from this, it is that there is nothing wrong with people having a disability or disabled folks. People look at me and say, “do you really believe that?” And I say yes, because my grandfather, my mother's father, was not allowed to graduate 8th grade because he was a black man, and we were told black people cannot learn and really cannot do anything. And here we have a President of the United States be a black man. We now have a black woman who is a vice president in United States. We just confirmed a black woman to be Supreme Court Justice. So, when people tell you things like that, it is incorrect and the clinical way of doing this is incorrect too. Do not get me wrong, there are people who have issues and concerns that need medical care, and we believe in that. But the fact is saying you need to cure disabilities and we need to fix it. Fix the disability and then we will not have to do the accessibility side is what is the problem in our system. The third way is civil and human rights, and that is the way in which the CILs, the Centers for Independent Living, do our work. CILs also are federally mandated. There must be one in every state, every territory, and on the native and land, and I will put information in the chat box for you to find your local CIL. There is a US map you could click on and find it. But also know that CILs come from the space that they are run by and for disabled people. And those are the organizations you want to reach out to and work with. And we come from the space of civil and human rights for disabled people.

So, as I was saying earlier, a group of people created disability justice, and I bring this up because we want people to understand and know that when you are reaching out to your black, indigenous, people of color who are disabled, it is a different conversation. Disability justice has taken on 10 principles. Number one is intersectionality. Number 10 is collective liberation. What is interesting is that intersectionality is the concept of people living multi-marginalized lives. Meaning that you will find an African American transgender woman who is an immigrant who is formerly incarcerated and who has a disability. We have these marginalized lives, and we need to include that in our outreach and our conversations. And I see in the chat box people are talking about different types of disabilities: mental health, sensory disabilities. We also need to talk about talk about people's lives and the different ways in which they are marginalized. And that is what is missing in the disability rights part and in the disability justice area of affirmatively furthering fair housing would include this community, specifically around

formerly incarcerated folks, right? You never hear that conversation around disability rights, but we need to make sure. Almost, I say 100% of people coming out of prison and have a disability because they have a mental health diagnosis because if you ever been in a prison you will know. So, we do not include them and we need to make sure that this community is included. We need to make sure that our immigrants are included in this conversation and so that outreach that you are doing has to have, you know, a combination of civil rights and human rights groups who actually reach out who are indigenous groups who also combine and work with disabled groups. Who work with disability justice and we continue to tell people if you center black, indigenous, people of color who are disabled in your work and you resolve their issues, you will resolve all issues and so that means a lot in this work. And it also means a lot of care --it takes a lot of care to do that, and please reach out to experts on that. What you will see here is a really good article about what it is like to be black and disabled in America. I suggest you strongly read it and understand that it is a different conversation you are going to have with that community when you are doing this work.

So, when it comes to housing and disability, I will tell you for us, and for most of the CIL work, our number one goal is to get people out of institutions. Back to that ugly law. Also in the 1930s, what happened with the racist and ableist New Deal? And the racist and ableist FDR, what happened there was he codified those things and he said, instead of keeping people inside their homes, let us put them in institutions, and they created institutionalizing. And they started institutionalized, disabled people, and disabled folks to this day, remain in institutions. If you have not seen, the highest number of people who died from COVID were in institutions, and we must get our people out of institutions. As I talked about, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all types of housing. I will say this, I know because I said doing this housing work. Our number one issue and concern around that is accessible and affordable housing. Many housing advocates are now coming around. It has been about the 6-7 years to get them to say, you know, we always had our AA: accessible and affordable housing. You give all affordable housing you want. If you do not have accessible housing, the people you are trying to help will still be homeless (unhoused, excuse me) because that is the community and then you move to people getting out of institutions. We cannot get our people out of institutions mainly because of the housing stock in this country. Only 3.8% of the housing stock in this country is accessible, and that's almost 32 years after the ADA. This must change and we must all work together to do that. Again, I will put the resources on how to find your CIL. If you have any questions, I will put my email in the chat box and then I have other resources that will be on a larger PowerPoint that we posted to the HUD website where all of this will go. Please understand and know we are very happy that this work is being done and we thank HUD and ACL and all of you. If no one said it to you, thank you for your work that you do every single day.

Cashauna Hill: Hello everyone, my name is Cashauna Hill. I am very happy to be here with you all today and I serve as the executive director at the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center, based in New Orleans. I will start off with just a little bit about my organization. We are a statewide organization focused on eradicating housing discrimination and segregation across the state of Louisiana. We were founded in 1995. The work that we do really takes place across a couple of programmatic areas. We do provide direct services to community members. While we do not work exclusively with people with disabilities, of course we do serve people with disabilities in our role to ensure that the mandate of the Federal Fair Housing Act is followed across the state, and so we provide free legal representation to community members who have experienced housing discrimination or who are facing eviction. As part of that work, we do also conduct testing investigations, which means that we send community members out into the housing market to help us determine whether and how housing discrimination is occurring in our state. We also provide free foreclosure prevention counseling to community members who are having

difficulty paying their mortgages so that they can protect their status as homeowners, which we all know is really the major way to build wealth in the United States today. We provide free educational offerings for community members, meaning that we provide free know your rights trainings for instance to renters. We also work with first time home buyers so that they have an understanding of what housing discrimination in the sales market might look like. And then, lastly, we conduct policy advocacy work and so we work at the federal, state, and local levels to ensure that laws expanding access to housing are passed. So, I am here today to talk a little bit about some of the community engagement work that the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center has engaged in. We worked as the lead, really, for the Community engagement process as part of the City of New Orleans 2016 Assessment of Fair Housing Plan. We heard a little bit in the introductory comments about the assessment of fair housing plan and what that process looks like, and so I will not go into very much detail about the need for an assessment of fair housing. But I did want to speak about the community engagement work that we did as part of that process. And my hope is that in sharing some ideas from New Orleans' assessment of fair housing process, many of you may find helpful ideas or information that can further your community engagement work as it relates to people with disabilities. So New Orleans assessment of Fair housing was due in October of 2016. In the first few months of 2016, the Fair Housing Action Center worked to start by developing a list of nonprofit coalition partners, and we were also coordinating with national partners. After creating that list of local partners that did include Disability Rights Louisiana, which is one of our most longstanding partners across the state of Louisiana. They are a group, obviously, that serves people with disabilities and a variety of different contexts whether it is housing or employment. We have maintained a long-standing partnership with that organization, and so wanted to make sure, obviously, that the outreach work that we were doing would adequately address the needs of people with disabilities and would, of course, include input from people with disabilities.

So, in creating outreach materials for community members, we made sure to make sure that our outreach materials were accessible. And we heard from Dara the word accessible a lot, right? And so, when it relates to housing, obviously housing needs to be accessible to people with disabilities, but so do outreach materials. So, we had really broadly accessible outreach materials both in print and online. We also made radio appearances and really did a variety of work to ensure that our outreach materials informing people about the assessment of the fair housing process was going to be accessible to people who maybe were limited English proficiency speakers or people who did have disabilities. So, we just made sure that our outreach materials were accessible and available for a variety and a broad spectrum of community members. Once we had outreach materials, we also wanted to ensure that we were bringing to the table civil rights groups who traditionally had been left out of fair housing planning processes in our city. Once we reached out to those organizations, we held seven capacity building trainings for our nonprofit partner organizations. Those trainings included providing stipends and financial support so that those nonprofit partners could afford to send staff members to our capacity building trainings. We were able, in those trainings, to work with those organizations and help them understand how and why fair housing and a fair housing planning process would be useful and beneficial to their members and to the communities that they served and represented. We also really wanted to make sure that we were bringing voices to the table that had traditionally been left out. So, in our work, similar to what Dara was mentioning about intersectionality, we wanted to be very clear that input from low-income African American renters was critical, right? Because those are the folks who have traditionally been left out of planning processes in New Orleans, but really also make up a very large percentage of the population. We are a city where over half of the population is made up of renters and we are a majority black city. And so, in leading the community engagement work, we wanted to ensure that we were centering the voices of the people who have faced the most harm and in thinking about this in a way that was intersectional, we knew, obviously, that people with disabilities were going to be

represented if we were able to bring a truly representative cross section of the community to these conversations. So we made sure to meet communities where they were in our engagement work, and I think that that is, if I had to drill down the short presentation to the most salient point, I think meeting communities where they are is the overarching theme that groups need to follow in conducting truly representative and truly representative community engagement processes.

So we wanted to ensure that we had adequate representation and participation, for instance, from voucher holders, from people who are public housing residents. So, we did things like health community dinners and listening sessions with an emphasis on engaging those marginalized community members. We paid local organizers to go into the new mixed income developments to speak with people who might be out on their porches. We would give them flyers, make sure that they had information about the community dinners or listening sessions, as well as the city's public comment sessions. We made sure that those folks had access to the table where the conversations were going to be held. We also assisted community members and our nonprofit partner groups with preparing and submitting oral and written comments for inclusion in the assessment of fair housing plan. We made sure that there was childcare, for instance, at every meeting or dinner that we held. We offered rides for people who did not have transportation. We made sure that we went out into larger apartment complexes that house large numbers of voucher holders and we spoke with people in those communities about the importance of the assessment of fair housing planning process and provided them with information about how they could ensure that their voices were part of the process when we were working with the city to find locations for the public hearings where public comment would be taken. We made sure that those sessions were held in accessible locations. The Fair Housing Action Center has a long-standing policy of not holding any event in any space that is not accessible for people with disabilities. This does not sound like rocket science, but, you know, we were continuing to find that nonprofits and groups that were working with people with disabilities, for instance, might hold events in spaces that were not accessible. So, we just wanted to make sure that anything that we could do that that would help guarantee the participation of people with disabilities we were doing that. So, all of the public comment sessions were held in accessible locations. We had ASL interpretation at every one of these events. Made sure that the city was prepared to provide assistive listening devices. Similarly, when it came to trying to ensure the participation of low-income renters, we also made sure that the public comments --some of the public comment sessions -- were held on the site of former public housing developments that are now large mixed income developments. So again, really meeting people and communities where they were was, I think, the overarching tenet behind the work that we did around community engagement in New Orleans assessment of fair housing process. So, I am at 10 minutes with that, and I do want to respect the time limit so that we have adequate time for questions and conversations. And I will wrap things up there.

Sarale Sewell: Thank you so much to all of our speakers here today. You all provided important and incredibly informative information! I just wanted to give you a round of applause. I really appreciate you joining today.

Daniel Davis: To conclude, before entering some community engagement of our own, here are some examples of ways we can all engage in fair housing planning. Invite individuals with disabilities to AFFH stakeholder meetings and/or public forums along with disability organizations/advocates, participate in housing/neighborhood surveys to learn about accessibility and access to opportunity, conduct community outreach to the disability network, set up focus groups for individuals with disabilities living within your community.

And be sure to consult with disability stakeholders, such as Centers for Independent Living, Protection and Advocacy Agencies, Area Agencies on Aging, and Councils of Developmental Disabilities.

Daniel Davis: Now is the fun part. We are going to ask a series of questions to demonstrate community engagement in the fair housing process.

Sarale Sewell: Alright, so this first question is asking in what city do you reside? I am going to give it a few minutes for the answers to come in. As you can see here on the screen, if you are able to see the screen, the responses that are more predominant are in larger text. So, I am seeing a lot of people from Chicago. I see Cincinnati. Kansas City. Some Boston. I am also seeing some responses in the chat: New London, CT; Greensboro, NC; Space Coast, FL; Porterville, CA; Puerto Rico; Westchester, PA. So, it really looks like we have a great representation from all across the country and the territories. That is wonderful. I am really glad that everyone was able to log on today and participate in this. Maybe we can skip to the next? There we go.

So, the second question is, if representing an agency, which of the following options best describe your organization? I see that of all responses, there are 31% of all respondents that are from either “state or local government”. And that is followed by an “other” category. Maybe if you are “other”, shout out in the chat what kind of organization you are from if it does not fall into the other categories. Someone answered, “I am a disabled individual”. Non-profit, local.

Daniel Davis: I saw TA provider.

Sarale Sewell: It looks like the other categories here are 15% of us are from affordable housing providers, 4% from federal government, 14% from an association or advocacy organization, 17% from disability rights or support organization. So we really do have a great representation from a lot of different organizations. I know one of the goals for today was really to get a wide variety of stakeholders, not only disability stakeholders, but also housing stakeholders as well so that we can come together and really have the conversations on how to best create opportunities in areas of opportunity for individuals with disabilities and create accessible housing.

So, third question, what is a key word supporting your agency’s missions that relates to including people with disabilities in fair housing planning? So, a big one I am seeing is inclusion. Also inclusive, independence, equity, advocacy, accessibility, independent living, affordable (that is also important), person-centered (that is a good one), community.

Daniel Davis: independence.

Sarale Sewell: Yeah, I am seeing a lot of really great answers here. I am kind of stuck on this person-centered because I really think that this is why we do what we do. We are thinking about the individual and what will work best for their needs. It is always important when thinking about policy, getting down to those grassroots of why we are doing what we are doing, and it is about the person. It is about the individual and it is about their civil rights to housing.

So the next questions, what are the major accessibility barriers or challenges for people with disabilities in your community? So, I am seeing that the most answers – we have 108 answers or respondents who indicated a limited awareness of funding and policies related to disability access. It looks like that is followed by inaccessible buildings and public infrastructure, transportation services for people with

disabilities, followed by unengaged disability stakeholders, and then limited federal guidance on disability related matters. I am seeing a lot of answers in the chat that I assume are others that do not fall into the categories previously mentioned. I am seeing the panic of backwards funding.

Daniel Davis: The age restrictions.

Sarale Sewell: Lack of service providers or lack of housing overall. Lack of housing for seniors or over 55.

Daniel Davis: Immigration status.

Sarale Sewell: Ignorance. You know a lot of diverse answers here. Seems like there are a lot of barriers to overcome. Social stigma, that is another good one.

Let us move onto the next questions. How would you rate your localities ongoing actions to improve access to affordable, accessible, integrated housing infrastructure? As these answers come in, it looks like overwhelmingly people have answered poor. Which is not surprising. Just really highlights the fact that we have a lot of work to do and there is still a lot of work to really engage disability stakeholders and also jurisdictions who are bound by and have the obligation to AFFH to really tackle this issue. There is a lot of room for improvement. 34% of you rated this sufficient. I would say just a handful of you rated, for this question, robust. This highlights that we have a lot of work to do and a lot of room for improvement here.

So, how can HUD and other agencies ensure greater participation in community engagement activities relating to fair housing planning? So, I am seeing a variety of answers here, I will just call some of those out: more funding and oversight; more assertive advocacy; flexibility; help guide awareness of the issues and accommodations that might help; more training on fair housing practices; incentive accessibility remodeling for private property holders or add consequences for failing to meet accessibility standards; meeting notices and materials in a variety of accessible formats; outreach to school districts' Special Ed. departments to engage families; engaging in rural towns as well; providing more funding to do this work; active partnerships with local agencies; working with CILs and making meetings more advertised; HUD can finish the process for the new rule on AFFH and then enforce the rule; including disability stakeholders; providing ASL interpreters, assisted listening devices, and more effective communication. All of these are really great answers here. So, we have completed all of our MentiMeter questions.

Sarale Sewell: Just to wrap things up, we would like to thank you for participating in the second of two presentations on involving individuals with disabilities and their advocates in fair housing planning. We are grateful for your participation as we work together to abide by the direction of the Fair Housing Act to affirmatively further fair housing by taking meaningful action, overcoming patterns of segregation, fostering inclusive communities, and eliminating barriers that restrict access to opportunity.

This resource slide lists some resources that will be available to you. All of these will be listed on the HUD Exchange and ACL's Housing and Services Resource Center Page: Just to review, we have a link to HUD's AFFH website at www.hud.gov/AFFH. That webpage also houses a bunch of resources for fair housing planning, including: HUD's data and mapping tool, the AFFH rule guidebook (helps grantees develop the assessment of fair housing or the AFH), the fair housing planning guides volumes 1 and 2 (help grantees prepare an analysis of impediments to fair housing choice). We have links that give information about effective communication when we were talking about remote hearings and whatnot. This will be helpful to put on those remote hearings and make sure that we are providing effective

communication to individuals with disabilities. In addition, we have information about ACL's disability network and the ACL website, more specifically the Housing and Services Resource Center webpage. In connection with AFFH and the interim final rule, HUD will be providing training and technical assistance for HUD program participants who wish to engage voluntarily in the fair housing planning process. So, for any general inquiries about AFFH, you can email AFFH@hud.gov and we will be able to respond to you. I want to thank you so much for participating today. We have come to the conclusion of our presentation. Thank you so much, again, to our speakers. We really appreciate you participating today and sharing the wealth of knowledge. Actually, I see a hand raised. Dara, do you have something you want to lead with?

Dara Baldwin: Oh, sorry, I hit that by mistake. I did want to say it was very interesting, the chat box. Thank you all for your engagement in this. It is so good to see that. The comment has said we did not resolve the problems, we never are. But, to keep going and giving that person hope. And that is what we are here for, right? And I just think that was wonderful for someone to say on the webinar. And it was also good to see transportation in there because that is an intersection issue. You can give people housing, but if they do not have transportation to get and go where they want to go that does not help. This is the whole community development part of this. Thank you both. Thank you, Daniel and Sarale, for your work on this.

Sarale Sewell: And thank you so much, Dara. Thank you to everyone who participated today. To reiterate what Dara said, it was great to have your engagement in the chat and with the MentiMeter questions. It really gave us a better understanding of where you are coming from. I really hope that this information was useful to you and you can take this back to your local organizations and localities and use this to really boost engagement to advocate on behalf of people with disabilities to provide these housing opportunities. So, thank you so much again, we appreciate you. Have a good rest of your day.

Daniel Davis: Thanks