ACT provides input to 2016 Ohio Consolidated Plan at Fair Housing Program Advisory Committee meeting

On 9/29/2015, The Ability Center provided input at the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA), 2016 Ohio Consolidated Plan, Fair Housing Program Advisory Committee meeting.

At last year’s Fair Housing Committee meeting, Ash Lemons shared ACT’s Zoning brochure and brought forth concerns over funds being passed to jurisdictions that had no proof of an established policy or procedure for making Reasonable Accommodations, specifically with respect to Zoning. The center asked for ODSA’s assistance in increasing education on this matter and suggested that the brochure be made available in all building/zoning offices that were tied to a jurisdiction that received ODSA funding.

At this year’s meeting, held September 29th, 2015, Shelley Papenfuse made a recommendation that jurisdictions in receipt of ODSA funding be required to adopt a reasonable accommodation ordinance as part of showing compliance with their ODSA review/Housing Element. We asked ODSA to consider adopting a procedure similar to that of California’s Department of Housing and Community Development, who has made adoption of land-use reasonable accommodation ordinances part of its regular review. We then provided the group with a recently published story written by Disability Rights California titled, “Creating a Reasonable Accommodation Ordinance for People with Disabilities”. Click below to read article:

Creating a Reasonable Accommodation Ordinance for People with Disabilities

According to the 2015 State of Ohio Analysis of Impediments report, Disability represented 56.25% of all Civil Rights Cases from Entitlement communities and 68.70% of all Civil Rights Cases from Non-entitlement communities. Furthermore, page 48 of the report states, “The three most commonly identified impediments in non-entitlement grantee analyses - lack of available affordable rental housing, lack of accessible housing, and lack of education or understanding of Fair Housing laws”

Click below to see the most recent State of Ohio Analysis of Impediments report:


The Ability Center believes increased education regarding reasonable accommodations in Land Use and Zoning, coupled with an ODSA review process, to ensure funded jurisdictions are taking affirmative steps towards adopting a reasonable accommodation ordinances, will greatly reduce Disability related discrimination. If ACT’s suggestions are adopted, it is believed that Ohio will also be better positioned to affirmatively further the goals of Olmstead. Click below for the “Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development on the Role of Housing in Accomplishing the Goals of Olmstead.”


Anecdotal information:

ACT’s Zoning Brochure History: As part of a 2013 grant from the Ohio Department of Medicaid, ACT effectively created and distributed over 18,000 Zoning brochures across the state of Ohio. The brochure was also distributed electronically through a National Fair Housing Network and received positive feedback from as far away as Orange County, California. Click below to see ACT’s Zoning Brochure: