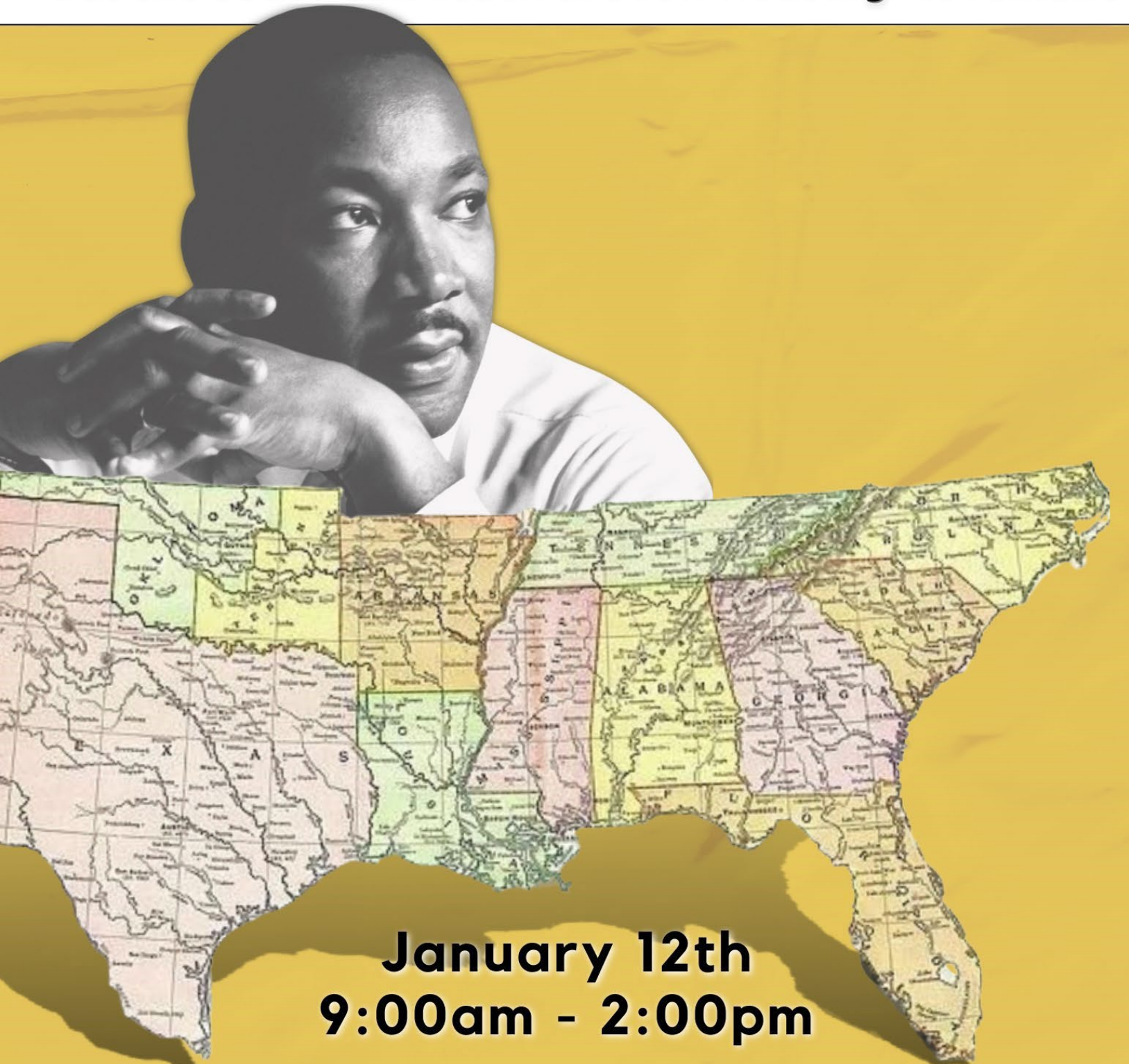


# **FIT** for a **KING** **2024**

**"As the South Goes, so Goes the Nation":  
What the South Can Teach the Fair Housing Movement**



**January 12th  
9:00am - 2:00pm**

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# WELCOME TO FIT FOR A KING 2024

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Fit for a King Housing Summit. We chose this year's theme, *As the South Goes, So Goes the Nation*, to recognize the challenges we face in Louisiana and across the Southern United States. Like many neighboring states, Louisiana has seen a rapid shift in the political landscape towards the extreme right. That has resulted in targeted attacks on efforts to eliminate racial discrimination and to expand opportunities for the most marginalized members of our community. As elected leaders enact policies that tear away the social safety net, Black renters in New Orleans, many of them families with children, are at the highest risk of being evicted. Those with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ community, and renters with criminal records continue to experience discrimination disproportionately. Black communities across the state bear the brunt of environmental racism, from pollution to the impacts of climate change.



This theme also honors the legacy of advocacy and organizing historically and present-day in the South. We have worked with partners to accomplish some incredible things over the years. After a decade-long push with the Healthy Homes Coalition of 57 community partners and organizations, renters now have protections when they report health and safety violations on their rental units. With community efforts to advocate for investing more local dollars in housing, the city earmarked a historic 22 million dollars towards housing, doubling what New Orleans spends annually. This includes a 17 million dollar investment in the newly created Housing Trust Fund dedicated to affordable housing development.

Along with budget advocacy, we are working hard to ensure people stay in their homes, a crucial step in preventing families from becoming unhoused. The Right to Counsel program ensures representation in court for community members facing

eviction, and last year, we prevented nearly 200 evictions in Orleans Parish. The Housing Counseling Department resolved 54% of foreclosure intervention cases received. Our efforts to identify and root out housing discrimination continued this year with much success.

2024 marks LaFHAC's 18th annual Fit for a King summit, which honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s central role in the struggle against segregation and the historic passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. With this event, we hope to lift up the critical role that movements across the South play in creating transformative change. We are inspired by the brilliance of organizers and advocates who continue to find new ways to push forward in their efforts in the face of many obstacles. It is proof that when we fight, we can win. We're honored to highlight their work throughout the summit this year. We appreciate your support of housing justice, and we hope you continue to be involved in LaFHAC's efforts to eradicate discriminatory policies and practices while offering new and equitable models.

We remain grateful for your support and partnership.

*Ameca A. Reali*



# A STATEWIDE FAIR HOUSING AGENCY

The Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center (LaFHAC) is a nonprofit civil rights organization established in 1995 to eradicate housing discrimination. LaFHAC's work throughout Louisiana includes educational offerings, free legal services for victims of housing discrimination and for those facing eviction, policy advocacy, and foreclosure prevention counseling. LaFHAC is dedicated to fighting discrimination because it is an illegal and divisive force that perpetuates poverty and segregation, and limits access to opportunity.

## **The Center works strategically in four program areas:**

### **Outreach & Education**

LaFHAC teaches housing authorities, landlords, and management companies about their fair housing obligations and responsibilities to proactively address discrimination. The Center also educates consumers, including youth, families, and first-time homebuyers, about their fair housing rights, and what to do if they suspect housing discrimination, and offers fair housing trainings for professionals in industries such as architecture, real estate, and supportive housing.

### **Foreclosure Prevention and Housing Counseling**

The Center's HUD-certified counselor assists homeowners facing foreclosure and other issues that stem from possible fair housing violations. Fair housing violations related to homeownership include the targeting of racial minorities for subprime loans and the targeting of elderly persons for mortgage rescue scam

### **Policy Advocacy**

Center staff analyze and disseminate housing data and work closely with local, state, and national policymakers, government entities, and stakeholders to promote equitable housing policies on the local, state, and federal levels.

### **Enforcement**

LaFHAC investigates possible fair housing violations and, when necessary, helps victims file administrative complaints with HUD and the Louisiana Department of Justice and/or file lawsuits in state or federal court. The Center responds to complaints from the public and conducts "testing," or mystery shopping, to measure and address housing discrimination. LaFHAC's attorneys also offer free legal services to people facing eviction, regardless of income or documentation status, in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes.

**For more information about LaFHAC's programs and services, call (877) 445-2100 or email us at [info@lafairhousing.org](mailto:info@lafairhousing.org)**

# FIT FOR A KING 2024

## SUMMIT AGENDA

TIME	EVENT	PRESENTER(S)
9:00 AM	<p><b>Welcome to Fit for a King 2024</b> Welcome remarks</p>	<p><b>SARAH OMOJOLA</b> LaFHAC Board Chair; Associate Director, Vera Institute of Justice</p>
9:20 AM	<p><b>Panel</b> <b>Youth Justice is a Fair Housing Issue</b> Southern Futures: Youth Justice is Housing Justice.</p>	<p><b>Monique Blossom (MODERATOR)</b> Director of Policy &amp; Communications, LaFHAC</p> <p><b>Ashley Hill Hamilton</b> Policy Director, Louisiana Center for Children's Rights</p> <p><b>Shirani Jayasuriya</b> Communications Manager, Ride New Orleans</p> <p><b>Christina M. Illarmo</b> Community Health Center Director, Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies</p>
10:05 AM	<p><b>Mondale-Brooke Award</b> Presented by Monique Blossom, LaFHAC's Director of Policy &amp; Communications</p>	<p><b>Rep. Matthew Willard</b></p>

10:15 AM	Break	
10:30 AM	<p><b>Panel</b></p> <p><b>Fair Housing Protections for People with Criminal Records</b></p> <p>Opening doors for Louisianans with criminal records.</p>	<p><b>Sarah CarthenWatson (MODERATOR)</b> Legal Director, LaFHAC</p> <p><b>Kiana Calloway</b> Project Detour</p> <p><b>Troy Glover</b> Executive Director, First 72+</p> <p><b>Tasha Williams</b> New Orleans and Jefferson Parish Economic Justice Organizer, Step Up Louisiana</p> <p><b>Kisha Edwards</b> Step Up Louisiana</p>
11:15 AM	<p><b>Fair Housing Hero Award</b></p> <p>Presented by Sarah Carthen-Watson, LaFHAC's Legal Director</p>	<p><b>Terry Rivero</b></p>
11:30 AM	Lunch	

11:45 AM	<p><b>Keynote Address</b></p>	<p><b>Doctor Robert D. Bullard</b>          Activist and Author of          The Wrong          Complexion for          Protection: How the          Government          Response to Disaster          Endangers African          American          Communities</p>
12:35 PM	<p><b>Break</b></p>	
12:50 PM	<p><b>Environmental Racism</b></p> <p>How civil rights advocates can support people power for Environmental Justice.</p>	<p><b>Ameca Reali (MODERATOR)</b>          Executive Director,          LaFHAC</p> <p><b>Maryum Jordan</b>          Director, New Orleans          Department of Health</p> <p><b>Jo Banner</b>          Co-Founder &amp; Co-          Director,          The Descendants          Project</p>
1:35 PM	<p><b>Wrap up &amp; Thank You's</b></p>	



# FIT FOR A KING 2024 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

## Dr. Robert D. Bullard



Robert D. Bullard is often described as the father of environmental justice. He is the former Dean of the Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs at Texas Southern University 2011-2016. Professor Bullard currently is Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy and Director of the Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice. Prior to coming to TSU he was founding Director of the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University. He received his Ph.D. degree from Iowa State University. He is an award-winning author of eighteen books that address sustainable development, environmental racism, urban land use, industrial facility siting, community reinvestment, housing, transportation, climate justice, disasters, emergency response, and community

resilience, smart growth, and regional equity. He is co-founder of the HBCU Climate Change Consortium.

Dr. Bullard is a proud U.S. Marine Corps veteran. He was featured in the July 2007 CNN People You Should Know, Bullard: Green Issue is Black and White. In 2008, Newsweek named him one of 13 Environmental Leaders of the Century. And that same year, Co-op America honored him with its Building Economic Alternatives Award (BEA). In 2010, The Griot named him one of the “100 Black History Makers in the Making” and Planet Harmony named him one of Ten African American Green Heroes.”

His latest books include *Race, Place and Environmental Justice After Hurricane Katrina* (Westview Press, 2009), *Environmental Health and Racial Equity in the United States* (American Public Health Association Press, 2011), and *The Wrong Complexion for Protection* (New York University Press, 2012). In 2013, he was honored with the Sierra Club John Muir Award, the first African American to win the award. In 2014, the Sierra Club named its new Environmental Justice Award after Dr. Bullard. In 2015, the Iowa State University Alumni Association named him its Alumni Merit Award recipient—an award also given to George Washington Carver (1894 ISU alum) in 1937.

In 2017, the Children Environmental Health Network presented him with the Child Health Advocate Award.

## FIT FOR A KING 2024 PANELISTS

**Ashley Hill Hamilton** serves as Louisiana Center for Children's Rights' Policy Director and has served on NOLA Momnibus, Maternal Child Health Coalition, Racial Equity Board of Lift Louisiana and is an ASCEND Parent Advisor with The Aspen Institute.

**Shirani Jayasuriya** serves as RIDE New Orlean's Communications Manager. Shirani received her BA. in Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature and Post-Colonial Theory from the University of Minnesota. She also acquired many years of experience in advocating for racial and economic equality for the Minneapolis Parks System and uses her experience to continue her in diversity and inclusion in the New Orleans area.

**Christina M. Illarmo** serves as the Institute of Women & Ethnic Studies'(IWES) Community Health Center (CHC) Director. She received her MSW from Wheelock College in Boston, MA and has worked in local substance abuse residential programs as a Child Development Specialist, Family Therapist, and Admission Counselor in the New Orleans area. Illarmo continues her advocacy, while focusing on other special interests including decolonization, indigenous sovereignty, and demilitarization of Oceania.

**Kiana Calloway** is the founder of Project Detour. After serving 17 years in prison, he made it his mission to advocate for the marginalized by joining Roots of Renewal NOLA in 2017 serving as Program Director. He also received his AAS in Criminology from SUNO and AAS in Criminal Justice and Sociology from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. He currently serves as a fellow in both the Movement of Black Lives' Electoral Justice League and 2023 W.K. Kellogg Foundation Center for Creative Leadership.

**Troy Glover** serves as case manager at the First 72+. He received his B.A. in Christian Ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and M.A. in Social Work at Southern University at New Orleans. Delone has six years of experience as a Reentry Social Mentor and he helps men rehabilitate themselves through teaching life skill classes.

**Tasha Williams** serves as Step Up Louisiana's New Orleans and Jefferson Parish Economic Justice. She alongside Step-Up Louisiana analyze racial justice in order to advocate for education justice and economic justice in Louisiana areas.

**Kisha Edwards** serves as Step Up Louisiana's Operations and Organizing Coordinator. She alongside Step-Up Louisiana analyze racial justice in order to advocate for education justice and economic justice in Louisiana areas.

**Maryum Jordan** serves as EarthRights International's Climate Justice Attorney. She received her BA in Anthropology and J.D. from Harvard University. She developed international legal and advocacy strategies with indigenous organizations in Peru and Ecuador and has served as counsel for the Special Litigation and Advocacy Project at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in 2022. Dr. Jordan is currently involved in both the International Human Rights Clinic and the Law and International Development Society at Harvard Law School.

**Jo Banner** is the Co-founder and Co-Director of the Descendants Project. She received both her BA and MA in Communications in an effort to protect Louisiana's people and its environment. Banner's recent work focuses on environmental justice and actively develops strategies to create green spaces where communities like Louisiana's Cancer Alley can thrive.

**Monique Harden** serves as Deep South Center for Environmental Justice's Director of Law and Policy and the Community Engagement Program Manager. She has 20 years of experience in practicing law that has aided her in helping African American communities and their environmental justice victories in the Gulf Coast Region. Harden has led local, regional, and international coalitions for communities advocating for human rights and healthy environments. She currently works to democratize policymaking on environmental matters in order to engage policymakers on reducing pollution.

# FIT FOR A KING 2024 MODERATORS



**SARAH CARTHEN WATSON** is the Legal Director at the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center (LaFHAC), where she supervises the organization's ever-growing range of enforcement efforts to ensure fair access to housing for protected classes across the state of Louisiana. In addition to managing LaFHAC's litigation and administrative representation portfolio, Sarah also supervises the organization's Eviction Defense and fair housing testing programs. Prior to joining LaFHAC, Sarah was Associate Counsel in the Fair Housing and Community Development Project of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under

Law, where she litigated challenges to discriminatory housing practices, drafted several Analyses of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, and engaged in policy advocacy at the federal and state level. Originally from Minnesota, Sarah received her JD and Certificate in Public Interest Law from Washington University in St. Louis School of Law and her B.S. in Education and Social Policy from Northwestern University.



**MONIQUE BLOSSOM** began her work in local and state political and social justice issues canvassing for the Unanimous Jury Coalition, then moved on to candidate campaigns, legislative staff for Representative Aimee Freeman, and community organizing. After two years as the Policy Analyst for Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center, Monique is now their Director of Policy and Communications. Her policy work locally in New Orleans has focused on Right to Counsel, the Healthy Homes Program, stopping the proliferation of short-term rentals, and advocating for city budget investments in affordable housing and other housing-related needs. At the state level, Monique worked on successful passage of policy to

create protections for renters after natural disasters.



**GIAZZLYN DUNCAN** is the Director of Housing Counseling for the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center, where she provides programmatic oversight of LAFHAC's housing counseling department. Prior to returning to LAFHAC, she was responsible for designing, facilitating and implementing in-person and virtual financial education workshops and programming for various nonprofit organizations. She holds a Master's

Degree in Behavioral Economics from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology and an undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of New Orleans.



**AMECA REALI** has more than 10 years of experience creating sustainable, safe and thriving communities in Louisiana. A graduate of Loyola University College of Law and a dedicated, entrepreneurial advocate, Ms. Reali co-founded and led the Justice and Accountability Center, which developed a mobile expungement clinic model that helped thousands of Louisianans to address the collateral consequences of arrest and conviction and won lower fees and greater access for people filing their own applications. She also served as the New Orleans Programs Officer and then Director of Economic Justice Programs at the

Foundation for Louisiana where she oversaw the creation of a funding strategy for making statewide grants and supporting programs and coalitions with a focus on housing, public health, criminal justice, arts and culture. Most recently, Ms. Reali served as the Membership Director at Law for Black Lives, where she spearheaded the development and programs and support network for more than 7,000 lawyers and legal workers committed to using the law and power of organizing to defend, protect, and advance Black liberation across the globe. Ms. Reali is exactly the well-rounded leader needed to sustain and build LaFHAC's deep impact in Louisiana.



# FAIR HOUSING AWARD FOR COURAGE

For Bravery and Tenacity in the Face of Adversity



Image By Bernie Kleina

The Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center

## 2024 Award for Courage

Presented to

Rep. Matthew Willard



# FAIR HOUSING HERO AWARD

For Fair Housing Leadership and Civic Participation



Image By Bernie Kleina

Each year, the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center honors individuals who have distinguished themselves through their leadership as champions of civil rights and equity.

The *Mondale-Brooke Award for Fair Housing Leadership and Civic Participation* honors the legacy of Senators Walter Mondale (D-MN) and Edward Brooke (R-MA), who championed the Fair Housing Act as part of comprehensive civil rights legislation.

On April 11<sup>th</sup> of 1968, just seven days after the assassination of Dr. King and in the midst of the country's grief, Congress enacted the 1968 Civil Rights Act. Title VIII of the law is commonly known as the *Fair Housing Act*.

**This year, LaFHAC honors the outstanding leadership of:**

## Terry Rivero



## Thank you for being part of the Fair Housing Movement

Your generosity was a bright spot during 2023. Your partnership supported homeowner counseling and referrals for those experiencing natural disasters, our rental eviction work, and our fight for a just and inclusive economy. Please continue to amplify our impact by sharing our mission with your family, friends, and networks and encourage them to support us at [lafairhousing.org/donate](https://lafairhousing.org/donate). We are asking LaFHAC'S supporters to commit to a recurring monthly donation of \$10 or more. The fight continues.

Everyone deserves access to safe housing and access to opportunity. Your support has helped to make the following LaFHAC initiatives possible:

- Successfully advocated for and shared a 2022 state law that penalizes landlords for illegally evicting residents and provides additional protections during disaster declarations with the congressional delegation.
- Advocated for the creation of a Housing Trust Fund addressing our urgent housing needs.
- Successfully advocated to fully fund Orleans Parish's Right to Counsel program.
- LaFHAC's Eviction Defense Staff Attorneys directly prevented 172 evictions in Orleans Parish.

Fair housing is at the heart of every racial, political, and social justice issue. We are excited about the opportunities to advance the movement for fair and equitable housing in 2024 and beyond. LaFHAC merchandise is perfect for showing your support for fair housing. Help spread our mission by purchasing a LaFHAC shirt or tote bag: visit



[screensforgood.com/collections/the-shirts/products/everyone-is-welcome-in-our-neighborhood](https://screensforgood.com/collections/the-shirts/products/everyone-is-welcome-in-our-neighborhood) or [click here to shop!](#)

# FAIR HOUSING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

## For Professionals, Government Agencies, and Nonprofits



**Schedule a Fair Housing training for your organization, company, agency or school.** LaFHAC offers a variety of trainings and presentations, including:

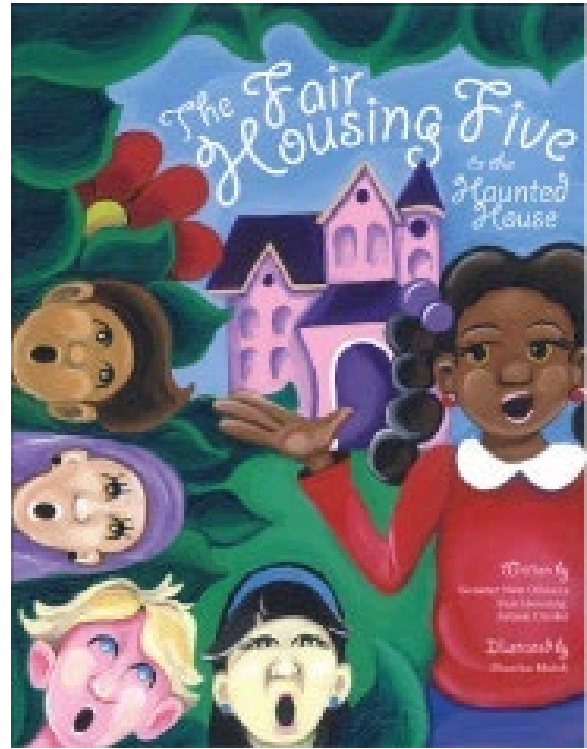
- Know Your Housing Rights
- Fair Housing 101 for Homebuyers
- Fair Housing 101 for Landlords, Property Managers & other Housing Providers
- Fair Housing Act Design Requirements
- Fair Housing for Service Providers
- Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

***For more information, please contact  
Moe Moore, Education Coordinator, at  
(504) 708-2109 or [mmoore@lafairhousing.org](mailto:mmoore@lafairhousing.org).***

# FAIR HOUSING EDUCATION FOR YOUTH!

***The Fair Housing Five & the Haunted House*** is an original, full-color children's book developed in partnership with local educators and parents. The book is used in classrooms and youth programs across the country to engage kids in conversations about civil rights and equity. Purchase the book, or learn more, at [www.fairhousingfive.org](http://www.fairhousingfive.org).

A Spanish translation of *the Fair Housing Five*, ***Los Cinco de Vivienda Justa y La Casa Embrujada*** is now available as well!



## LaFHAC Also Offers

### Fair Housing Youth Workshops:



***Welcome to My Neighborhood***  
(grades 1-4)

***The Equal Opportunity Game***  
(grades 4-9)

For more information, or to bring our youth programs to your school or organization, visit [www.fairhousingfive.org](http://www.fairhousingfive.org) or call (504) 708-2109.