

City of Sweetwater, Minnesota Fair Housing Policy

1. Purpose/Vision

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act establishes federal policy for providing fair housing throughout the United States. The intent of Title VIII is to assure equal housing opportunities for all citizens. Furthermore, the City of Sweetwater, as a recipient of federal community development funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, is obligated to certify that it will affirmatively further fair housing.

The City of Sweetwater is committed to meeting this obligation, and has developed this Fair Housing Policy to further that goal.

2. Fair Housing Policy Statement

It is the policy and commitment of the City of Sweetwater to ensure that fair and equal housing opportunities are granted to all persons in all housing opportunities and development activities funded by the city regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistances, familial status, national origin, or disability. This shall be done through strong external policies that provide meaningful access to all constituents and fair housing informational and referral services; and internal practices and procedures do not discriminate and that affirmatively further fair housing.

3. External Practices

a. Fair Housing Officer

The City of Sweetwater has designated the following person as the Fair Housing Officer for the City.

Created through funding from the Metropolitan Council

Name
Contact Information

The Fair Housing Officer will be responsible for the intake, processing, and referral of all fair housing complaints. While not expected to be an “expert” in fair housing laws, at a minimum the Officer will be familiar with state and federal fair housing laws, the complaint process for filing discrimination complaints, and the state and federal agencies that handle complaints.

Records showing the date, time and nature of the fair housing complaint, as well as the decisions made regarding the complaint process (referrals, information given, etc.) and any follow up action will be fully documented.

The Fair Housing Officer will also monitor city activities affecting fair housing and raise issues and concerns where appropriate.

b. Meaningful Access

- i. Online Information. The City of Sweetwater will have information about fair housing and its fair housing officer prominently displayed on its website. The website will also have links to various fair housing resources, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Minnesota Department of Human Rights, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, and others. The website will also link to state and federal fair housing complaint forms. In addition, the City will post the following policies:
 - ii. Reasonable Accommodation Policy
 - iii. LEP Policy
 - iv. ADA Policy regarding access to city services
 - v. The State of Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan

c. In-Person Information. The City of Sweetwater will provide fair housing information to anyone requesting such information at the city offices.

Information provided will include:

- i. A list of fair housing enforcement agencies
- ii. A FAQ of Fair Housing Law
- iii. Fair Housing Complaint Forms

d. Languages. The City of Sweetwater is committed to providing information in the native language of its residents. Therefore, the City of Sweetwater will have the information listed in 4b above in the top four languages most frequently encountered in the city, other than English. Material in other languages can be requested and handled on an individual basis.

4. Internal Practices

The City of Sweetwater commits to the following steps to promote awareness and sensitivity to fair housing issues in all of its government functions.

- a. Staff Training** - the city will regularly train its staff and elected officials on fair housing considerations, including working with people with disabilities and limited English proficiency constituents. The following departments will receive annual training:
- b. Housing Analysis** - the City will review its housing inventory every three years to examine the affordability of both rental and owner-occupied housing and whether all reasonable actions have been taken to remove barriers to ensure adequate housing choice for all city residents.
- c. Code Analysis** - the City will review its municipal code every three years, with specific focus on ordinances related to zoning, building and occupancy standards, to identify any potential for disparate impact or disparate treatment.

- d. Project Planning and Analysis** - the City will make determinations in project planning with an eye to fair housing issues, including whether potential projects may perpetuate segregation or lead to displacement of protected classes.
- e. Community Engagement** - The City commits to ongoing community engagement. Specifically, the City commits to robust conversations with community regarding potential housing projects, zoning changes, and other land use planning decisions.
- f. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing** - As a recipient of federal funds, the City agrees to participate in the Regional Analysis of Impediments, as organized by the regional Fair Housing Implementation Council. The City will integrate the recommendations and action plan into city planning documents, including the Consolidated Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, and other applicable documents.
- g. Additional Policies** - The City adopts the following policies to inform its work:
 - 1. LEP Policy (attached)
 - 2. ADA Policy (attached)

The City of Sweetwater will review, revise if necessary, and adopt annually the Fair Housing Statement and the Fair Housing Plan.