

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Program Office Salaries and Expenses Office Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

(Dollars in Thousands)

	2023*	2024			2025**		
	Actuals	Carry Over	Annualized CR	Total	Carry Over	President's Budget	Total
Personnel Services	\$86,173	\$13,088	\$84,393	\$97,481	\$3,752	\$102,868	\$106,620
Non-Personnel Services							
Travel	1,110		685	685	-	884	884
Transportation of Things	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rent and Utilities	-	-	2	2	-	2	2
Printing	2	-	5	5	-	6	6
Other services/Contracts	796	-	5,204	5,204	-	3,502	3,502
Training	270	-	450	450	-	500	500
Supplies	15	-	77	77	-	83	83
Furniture and Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Claims and Indemnities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Non-Personnel Services	\$2,193	-	\$6,423	\$6,423	-	\$4,977	\$4,977
Working Capital Fund	3,927		2,432	2,432	-	3,905	3,905
Carryover	13,088	-	3,752	3,752	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$105,381	\$13,088	\$97,000	\$110,088	\$3,752	\$111,750	\$115,502
FTEs	556	80	518	598	22	614	636

*Includes 2022 carryover

**Includes amount for 2026 WCF forward funding

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity's (FHEO) mission is "to eliminate housing discrimination, promote economic opportunity, and achieve diverse, inclusive communities by leading the nation in the enforcement, administration, development, and public understanding of Federal fair housing policies and laws." FHEO's fundamental duty, therefore, is to help create equal housing and credit opportunities for all persons living in America, which it does by administering and enforcing laws that prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), age, disability, and familial status.

The Administration has made fair housing a central pillar in its civil rights agenda, requiring a revitalized FHEO to play a key role. FHEO is tasked with simultaneously addressing both day-to-day discrimination claims and longstanding systemic issues that are the legacy of a long history of racial and other injustices. This investment in FHEO's salaries and expenses will ensure that work is done efficiently and effectively.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The 2025 President's Budget requests \$111.8 million for FHEO, which is \$14.8 million more than the 2024 Annualized CR level. The Budget reflects total funding (carryover and new authority) of \$115.5 million, \$5.4 million above the 2024 total funding level.

The goal of this funding is to sustain and bolster FHEO's staffing and ability to carry out its mission.

Personnel Services (PS)

The Budget assumes total funding of \$106.6 million for PS to support 636 full-time-equivalents (FTEs), which is 38 FTEs and \$9.1 million more than the total 2024 PS funding level. The requested 2025 PS funding level supports a two percent pay raise.

FHEO will continue to prioritize the hiring of additional FTEs in field offices to support Compliance Enforcement activities. The goal for 2025 is to continue with 75 percent of FHEO's staff located in the field and 25 percent at Headquarters.

The additional FTEs will support:

1. Administrative Complaint Intake and Investigation: With the addition of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) enforcement to FHEO's mission, each FHEO region in the field needs more staff to address intake and investigation of complaints under all FHEO enforcement authorities. Each of the ten HUD regions needs one additional staff member for investigations, with the largest five regions also requiring more staff for VAWA complaint intake.
2. Modernize and Implement New Federal Accessibility Standards under Section 504 and the Fair Housing Act: Reform the 40-year-old Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards under Section 504, applicable across the platform of federally-funded residential settings, as well as the establishment of a National Accessible Building Standard under the Fair Housing Act to replace and simplify the HUD practice of adopting "Safe Harbors" (now numbering 15 model building codes). Rulemaking activities will require extensive coordination with HUD's Public Housing and Multifamily Housing portfolios, Federal coordination with DOJ and US Access Board, and subsequent guidance and training for housing providers.
3. Continue to Address Discrimination and Civil Rights Non-Compliance in HUD Programs: Implement improvements to FHEO's front-end compliance activities, including: 1) broader review protocols to ensure Site and Neighborhood Standards are followed in the siting of new HUD-funded housing; and 2) improved processes for HUD-funded program participants to develop and submit accurate and meaningful Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plans to reduce segregation in affordable housing. These FTEs will also provide technical guidance for investigations of complex, sophisticated forms of discrimination in HUD funded communities, such as discriminatory zoning and nuisance ordinances, and disproportionate siting of environmental burdens in communities of color.
4. Investigate Rising Numbers of Lending and Appraisal Discrimination Complaints: Enforce the Fair Housing Act and other civil rights laws to combat systemic discrimination in the mortgage lending, appraisal, and homebuying processes. The work stemming from the Interagency Task Force on Property Appraisal and Valuation Equity (PAVE) has substantially increased the Office of Systemic Investigations' (OSI) and FHEO's regional fair lending, appraisal investigations, and interagency referrals pertaining to enforcement actions. These resources will be placed both at Headquarters and in the field.

5. NFHTA: Support creating technical assistance for HUD-funded fair housing partners (FHIPs/FHAPs). Increased NFHTA staff/FTEs will increase the knowledge, skill, and capacity of our partners to achieve meaningful fair housing outcomes. Future staff/FTEs will support in advancing administrative requirements of technical assistance (e.g., ensuring alignment between HUD policies and TA provider assignments), liaising between program offices and counsel to ensure effective on-time development of curricula, innovative deployment of courses and other NFHTA products (e.g., National Fair Housing Forums), coordination of regional and national fair housing conferences to amplify Departmental initiatives and policy, engagement of the field in the deployment of direct TA, advancement of cutting-edge technologies (e.g., piloting a new Learning Management System to establish communities of practice where fair housing partners discuss their work), and more. Investment in NFHTA staff/FTEs will allow HUD to build upon NFHTA's established success. The current staffing, which relies on staff assigned to multiple high priority matters, is not sustainable and will eventually be ineffective.
6. Communications & Outreach: Provide high-level communications and coordination with HUD internal/external stakeholders and build capacity of FHEO field staff to execute traditional/non-traditional outreach to meet departmental objectives.
7. Limited English Proficiency Initiative (LEPI): Provide subject matter expertise for coordinating and implementing all aspects (programmatic and outsourced activities) of HUD's language services to individuals with LEP. Currently, limited staff are assigned this priority while activities, as directed by the executive order requirements, are expected to grow.
8. Support for Fair Housing Planning: Provide responsive technical assistance to grantees, jurisdictions, and public housing agencies that engage in the fair housing planning process. Activity requires staff expertise in providing guidance and technical solutions to support local decision-making.
9. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Implementation: Provide implementation and Agency-wide review and oversight of the final AFFH Rule.
10. FHEO Technical Assistance: Provide oversight of TA providers and direct technical assistance to HUD-funded recipients.

Non-Personnel Services (NPS)

The Budget assumes total funding of \$5 million for NPS, which is \$1.4 million less than the total 2024 NPS funding level. Increases/decreases across NPS categories are as follows:

- Travel: FHEO will allocate \$884 thousand in travel, which is an increase of \$199 thousand above the total 2024 level, for on-site fair housing and VAWA complaint investigations, on-site accessibility surveys to ensure greater accessibility in HUD-funded housing, in-person staff collaborations, in-person training largely for FHEO's new staff, conducting compliance reviews, in-person technical assistance to HUD-funded housing programs and activities, and education and outreach efforts to the general public.
- Training: FHEO will allocate \$500 thousand in training, which is a slight increase of \$50 thousand above the total 2024 funding level. Funding will be used to train Headquarters and field staff on escalating workstreams such as VAWA enforcement, AFFH, and Fair Lending. Additionally, training funds will support FHEO staff whose intake and enforcement work requires engagement with people victimized by domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and social injustices. This complex and sensitive workload requires trauma-informed skill building and resources for FHEO staff.

These in-person workshops will be critically important in helping FHEO to maintain a focus on quality, triaging, and efficiency in serving the public.

- **Contracts:** FHEO Budget will allocate \$3.5 million to contracts, which is a decrease of \$1.7 million below total 2024 funding, primarily due to the timing of contract funding actions in 2024 and 2025.
- The Budget also provides for minimal increases to support printing and supplies in the amount of \$7 thousand.

Working Capital Fund (WCF)

The Budget assumes \$3.9 million for WCF, which includes \$2.9 million for 2025 WCF expenses (in addition to \$2 million forward funded in 2024) and \$1 million for forward funding of 2026 WCF expenses. Please see the WCF Congressional Justification for details on current and proposed WCF business lines.

KEY OPERATIONAL INITIATIVES

This Budget supports the President's agenda by supporting all Americans, and the many communities who have been underserved, discriminated against, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. These levels: support continued efforts to advance equitable outcomes and build the capacity and expertise needed to coordinate and implement civil rights work; strengthen the collection, management, and use of data; enhance staff research and evaluation capabilities; and bolster support for civil rights, including language access needs. FHEO will continue to promote meaningful public participation and community engagement to ensure that the voices of underserved communities inform and shape the design and delivery of our programs, and services.

FHEO is statutorily obligated to investigate, conciliate, and when appropriate, administratively enforce several Federal civil rights statutes, including, *inter alia*, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Fair Housing Act (FHA), VAWA, and Section 504. In addition to FHEO processing over 1,200 complaints per year, the Office also oversees 5,900 complaint investigations conducted annually by FHAP agencies. The FHAP agencies investigate approximately 80 percent of the administrative fair housing complaints filed in the country. FHEO also administers and oversees FHIP, through which it funds more than 145 private fair housing groups and non-profits nationally that provide direct assistance to individuals who feel they have been discriminated against while attempting to purchase, rent or finance housing. By funding entities through FHAP and FHIP, the Department not only ensures enforcement of several Federal statutes, but also promotes state and local control in concerns relating to their communities.

Technical Assistance (TA)

AFFH requires significant allocation of TA funding for HUD funding recipients. This includes, but is not limited to, hands-on training to establish meaningful and actionable goals to eradicate systemic patterns of segregation. FHEO will lead in-person and regional training as well as create an interactive catalog of web-based training and resources that will be accessible to the public.

Communications and Guidance

Communicating a clear and effective message around what AFFH is and is not, is critical for the successful implementation. Setting a clear communications strategy requires a Trust and Safety Taskforce to aggregate and review social media data, create incident reports, and establish mitigation workflows. In addition, we are interested in creating technical partnerships with

universities to create a civil society outreach program to assist the Department in clearly communicating the benefits of implementing AFFH. The data collected from the Trust and Safety Taskforce will inform HUD AFFH efforts including but not limited to guidance documents, comprehensive technical assistance, and digital media content. Contractor support will be utilized to enhance these efforts.

Data and Mapping

A robust and agile data and mapping tool is an integral part of FHEO's book of business including AFFH. Data that comes from a myriad of internal resources and of HUD funding recipients can further in the collective understanding on ways to improve outcomes for all. However, FHEO currently lacks access to many systems and could use contractor support to determine sources. This tool would help visualize in real time historical patterns, ecological, racial, socio-economic, and resources in communities. This tool encompasses input from the Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Office of Policy Development and Research, and other program offices. A portion of the funding would be used to begin preliminary data mining as HUD explores a permanent long-term solution.

Program Office Priorities

FHEO's priorities are in support of the President's Management Agenda (PMA):

- Resources (funding and staffing): Significant investment in staffing, a data and mapping tool, and overall infrastructure to manage the work.
- Employee Development: Increasing training opportunities through the Professional Development Institute and strengthening HUD's internal capacity and efficiency, while also focusing on ways to support HUD grantees, States, counties, cities, and Tribes to ensure delivery of HUD's mission on the ground.

Operational Improvements

VAWA technology expansion will:

- Make necessary technical expansion to include VAWA intakes, investigations, and related Title VI compliance reviews in the HUD Enforcement Management System (HEMS) or develop a new system if integration is untenable.
- Provide other technological updates necessary for enforcement of VAWA issues, such as studying demographics impacted by nuisance and crime free ordinances, facilitating research of municipality ordinances, and other unique features.
- VAWA enforcement may have higher confidentiality requirements than traditional enforcement, and new systems may need to be developed to address these concerns and adequately protect survivors.