

Housing-Discrimination Complaint Unit To Open

To Advise In Filing Of Grievances, Aid In Landlord-Tenant Disputes

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The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Toledo, under contract with the city to investigate complaints of housing discrimination, will open Monday in offices at 2019 Jefferson Ave.

Two full-time housing specialists will handle complaints, Shanna L. Smith, center executive director, said.

The center was established by the Toledo Community Housing Resources Board, a nonprofit agency which assists the city in relocation of displaced families.

It has received a grant of \$34,000 from the city community development department which runs out in October, Mrs. Smith said, adding that a request to renew funding will be made later.

Board Inquiry

The board of community relations in the past has investigated discrimination complaints from persons wanting to purchase or rent housing, a spokesman for the city's community development department said. For the most part, complainants have had to rely on their own resources for making discriminatory housing practices known to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, he said.

Mrs. Smith said that her office will be oriented toward advising persons on how to file a complaint with the commission or with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In addition, the center will attempt to settle differences between landlords and tenants, she said.

Hiring, Training Staff

Mrs. Smith was appointed to her post June 23 and since then has been hiring and training a staff. Since her appointment about three complaints weekly have been referred to the center, she said.

The center also will provide information workshops and programs on fair housing rights and obligations, Mrs. Smith added.

She emphasized that suspected discriminatory practices should be reported immediately, so that, a rental or purchase agreement with another party cannot be made before a complaint is resolved.

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