

Dominic Strezo
Community Development Administrator



500 West Winchester Road, Unit 101
Libertyville, IL 60048-1371
Phone 847.377.2132
dstrezo@lakecountyil.gov

Annual State of Fair Housing Report 2026

Introduction

Lake County reaffirms its commitment to eliminating housing discrimination as the nation recognizes the 58th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. The Fair Housing Act remains a cornerstone of national housing policy and continues to play a critical role in promoting equal housing opportunity and preventing discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability.

In addition to federal protections, the Illinois Human Rights Act expands fair housing protections to include several additional protected classes. These include pregnancy, ancestry, age (40 and over), marital status, sexual orientation (including gender identity), military status, unfavorable military discharge, order of protection status, source of income, immigration status, and—effective January 1, 2026—reproductive health decisions. These expanded protections reinforce Illinois’ commitment to ensuring that all residents have equal access to safe and affordable housing.

Across the nation, there is growing recognition of the need to address both historic and systemic barriers to housing equity. Challenges such as discriminatory zoning practices, a shortage of affordable housing, inequitable lending patterns, and the lingering impacts of historic redlining continue to affect communities. Lake County remains committed to addressing these issues locally by promoting inclusive housing policies, expanding access to affordable housing, and removing barriers that limit housing choice.

Promoting fair housing is not only a legal obligation but also a critical component of community stability and economic vitality. Ensuring equal access to housing strengthens neighborhoods, supports workforce stability, and contributes to the overall well-being of residents and businesses throughout Lake County.

Lake County’s commitment to fair housing extends across all housing and community development programs administered or funded by the County, including those supported by federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, and other housing initiatives. By embedding fair housing principles into these programs,

the County continues to advance policies and practices that promote equity, transparency, and accountability.

In Lake County, these efforts help foster communities where all residents—regardless of background, income level, or ability—have access to safe and quality housing. Within the County’s Strategic Plan, increasing the supply of affordable housing is a stated strategy to support the County’s priority of having a healthy and inclusive community.

Lake County Demographics

The demographic trends below reflect ongoing changes in the population of Lake County and underscore the importance of maintaining compliance with federal and state fair housing laws to ensure equal access to housing opportunities for all residents.

The 2020-2024 Census data, charted below represent the most recent available data related to Fair Housing protected classes.

#	Federal Protected Class	2020 Data	ACS 5-year estimates 2020-2024 Data
1.	Race	White Non-Hispanic 61% African-American 6.9% Asian (8.3%) Hispanic (24.1%) ethnicity	White Non-Hispanic 56.9% African-American 6.7% Asian (8.6%) Hispanic (24.9%) ethnicity
2.	Color	Black Non-Hispanic 6.6%	Black Non-Hispanic 6.7%
3.	Religion	No quantifiable change	
4.	National Origin	19%	20%
5.	Sex (Gender)	Male 49% Female 51%	No quantifiable change
6.	Familial Status	Female-headed householder, no spouse present, with children under 18	Roughly 7-9% of households remain single-parent households.
7.	Disability	9.32% with a disability	9.8% with a disability

The demographic information presented in the chart above was derived from data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). The data was extrapolated from ACS tables DP05 (Demographic and Housing Estimates), DP02 (Selected Social Characteristics), S0101 (Age and Sex), S1101 (Households and Families), and S1810 (Disability Characteristics)

The chart below summarizes fair housing complaints filed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) related to Lake County.

State and Federal Fair Housing Complaints Filed in Lake County

2014 through February 2026

Year	HUD	IDHR
2014	26	11
2015	14	26

2016	2	9
2017	7	4
2018	9	8
2019	12	9
2020	*	5
2021	7	34
2022	*	24
2023	*	8
2024	*	28
2025	*	21

* Indicates data not available from HUD reporting at the time of publication.

Analysis of these complaints indicates that allegations involving disability discrimination—particularly those related to requests for reasonable accommodations or modifications—and source of income discrimination continue to represent a significant share of fair housing complaints filed in Lake County. Disability-related complaints highlight the ongoing need to ensure compliance with accessibility requirements and reasonable accommodation obligations under federal and state fair housing laws. Complaints involving source of income discrimination, particularly those associated with Housing Choice Voucher and other rental assistance programs, also remain a leading concern and underscore the importance of continued education, outreach, and enforcement efforts to ensure that housing providers understand and comply with applicable fair housing protections.

Understanding these trends helps policymakers, housing providers, and community organizations better target resources, develop appropriate policies, and strengthen enforcement efforts aimed at ensuring equal housing opportunity.

Fair Housing Enforcement and Outreach

Lake County continues its partnership with Prairie State Legal Services (PSLS) to promote fair housing awareness and address housing discrimination. This partnership provides critical legal services, enforcement activities, and educational outreach to residents and housing providers throughout the County.

During the most recent grant period:

- Approximately 39 requests for legal representation related to fair housing complaints were received.
- Cases involved allegations related to disability discrimination, race discrimination, and source of income discrimination.

As part of its fair housing enforcement program, PSLS conducted 5 rental housing tests designed to identify potential discriminatory practices related to race and source of income.

Testing results included:

- 2 tests supporting allegations of discrimination
- 3 tests with no evidence of discrimination

In addition to enforcement activities, PSLS provides education and outreach programs for housing providers, tenants, and community organizations.

During this grant period, PSLS delivered fair housing training and presentations at:

- North Chicago Housing Authority
- Waukegan Housing Authority
- Erie Health Center
- Mano a Mano
- Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization
- Community Partners for Affordable Housing
- Zion Coalition for Healthy Communities
- Zion Community HUB
- Lake County Gun Violence Initiative Task Force

A total of approximately 1,574 individuals attended these trainings, briefing sessions, presentations and community collaborations demonstrating strong community engagement and the importance of ongoing education in preventing housing discrimination.

Progress and Current Strategies

Lake County continues to address barriers to fair housing identified in the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI), originally completed in 2014 and updated in 2020.

County staff actively work to:

- Evaluate barriers to fair housing choice
- Develop strategies to address identified impediments
- Coordinate efforts between public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private sector partners
- Implement policies that expand housing access and promote inclusive communities

Key priorities include:

- Combating housing discrimination through education, outreach, and enforcement
- Expanding affordable housing opportunities

- Reducing patterns of residential segregation
- Promoting accessible housing for individuals with disabilities
- Supporting fair housing protections for voucher holders and other vulnerable populations

In 2025, in partnership with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and supported by Schreiber Philanthropy Lake County launched Housing Lake, a collaborative county-led initiative focused on addressing the region’s growing housing affordability and supply challenges.

Housing Lake is a comprehensive effort to

take on the barriers identified the AI. Housing Lake brings together a broad coalition of stakeholders—including municipal leaders, developers, employers, nonprofit organizations, and community advocates—to develop a shared vision and actionable strategies for increasing attainable housing throughout Lake County. Through a series of workshops, stakeholder meetings, and a regional housing summit held in February 2026, more than 175 participants representing over 50 municipalities and organizations worked together to analyze housing trends, identify barriers to housing production, and develop a comprehensive Housing Lake “Call to Action.” This roadmap outlines strategies to expand housing opportunities across all income levels and life stages. The Call to Action outlines four foundation pillars that represent the Housing Lake Coalition’s values and priorities.

1. Policy & Regulatory Reform
2. Funding & Financing Tools
3. Partnerships & Development Capacity
4. Communications & Education

These pillars form an integrated system where progress in one area enables and accelerates advancement in others. The pillar framework recognizes that housing challenges are multifaceted and demand equally multidimensional responses.

Lake County remains committed to advancing the goals outlined in its fair housing action plan and Call to Action. The County will continue efforts to create equitable, inclusive communities where all residents have the opportunity to access safe, affordable housing.