

NIMBYism & Fair Housing

FAIR HOUSING HIGHLIGHT #12

What is NIMBYism?

NIMBYism is derived from the acronym NIMBY which stands for “Not In My Back Yard”. NIMBY has become the symbol for community opposition to inclusive and diverse neighborhoods.

When does NIMBYism most often occur?

NIMBYism often arises when projects such as affordable housing, housing for the elderly, housing for abused children, group homes for people with disabilities, or addiction treatment centers are being developed in a neighborhood. Community opposition is often tied to concerns about decreasing property values. While some arguments may be rational concerns, many are often derived from stereotypes and misinformation about the kinds of people who will reside in the housing.

What are common concerns raised by community opposition to affordable housing?

- Lower property values
- More difficult to sell property
- Increase crime rates and lower security
- Change the character of the neighborhood
- Contribute to the overcrowding of public schools and increase taxes
- Change the aesthetic appearance of the neighborhood

Are these legitimate concerns when addressing affordable housing?

For over 25 years, extensive research has been done about the social and economic impacts of subsidized housing on nearby communities. Most studies have shown that it has little effect on the property values and character of the surrounding community. In fact, when assisted housing is sited in stable “good” neighborhoods, this type of housing can have a **positive** impact on property values as long as there is not already an over-concentration of subsidized sites, especially for large scale projects. (“Review of Existing Research on Effects of Federally-Assisted Housing Programs on Neighboring Residential Property Values”: George Galster, PhD: [Report to the National Association of Realtors](#): 2002)

What are some benefits to affordable housing?

The need to affordable housing is a national crisis. More and more of the working poor and middle class are unable to afford to live in their own communities. Affordable housing is for people we know — our parents, grandparents, and your family. Affordable housing can be built to support mixed incomes and to be designed to fit the character of your neighborhood.

What can I do to help decrease NIMBYism in my community?

The following steps are helpful in ensuring a community free of NIMBYism

- Familiarize yourself with the Fair Housing Act and check your local zoning ordinances to make sure they are not discriminatory
- Read about the effects of affordable housing, group homes, health treatment center etc.
- Work with housing providers to conduct community education programs addressing local needs to affordable housing in your community
- Don't jump on the bandwagon before you have done your homework
- Learn about the positive effects of inclusive communities

**Questions? Call the Fair Housing Rights Center in Southeastern Pennsylvania at 215 576-7711
or visit us online at www.fairhousingrights.org.**