

**TESTIMONY OF CRYSTAL CARTER**  
**IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING FOR THE**  
**CONNECTICUT FAIR HOUSING CENTER**

My name is Crystal Carter. I am a single mother living in Hartford with my five children and my grandchild. I want to thank you for supporting the Connecticut Fair Housing Center in the past and ask you to continue to fund their work.

For two years my family jumped between homeless shelters and staying with family and friends. I searched for affordable housing for hours every single day and submitted dozens of applications. In early 2011 I found out about an open waiting list for rental vouchers in a suburban area. But when I called the housing authority, I was told I couldn't even have an application because I didn't already live in one of the approved nearby towns. I was also told that it was someplace I wouldn't want to live anyway, even though I really did, and that I should be looking in Hartford or Bridgeport instead. I was devastated that my kids would have to stay homeless longer.

Then I contacted the Connecticut Fair Housing Center (CFHC). CFHC investigated and found that the housing authority's policy was illegally discriminating against African-American families like mine because nearly all of the people who live in the approved towns are white and they were the only ones eligible to apply. CHFC challenged this policy on my behalf to ensure it wouldn't continue to be a barrier to fair housing for others.

I still needed to find a safe, permanent place to live. CFHC provided much needed help and support along the way. CFHC helped me secure a voucher and much needed assistance with a security deposit. I had applied for the Security Deposit Guarantee (SDG) program, which is designed to help people in my situation get back on our feet. However, I was initially turned

down because I wasn't staying in a shelter at the time, even though I was still homeless and no shelters in the area had room for a family with six children. This policy meant that families like mine didn't have access to the security deposit program. CFHC intervened on my behalf and I was approved for security deposit assistance.

Now I had to find a place to rent. I contacted landlords, and CFHC helped me with my search and came to appointments with me. Some landlords and realtors didn't return my calls, some showed me apartments and then never called me, some illegally told me they didn't accept vouchers, and some said my family was too big for an apartment when it really wasn't. I was still being discriminated against based on my source of income, my family status, and my race. To me, this shows how serious a problem housing discrimination still is and how important it is that CFHC works to stop it.

Finally, I finally found a lovely home in Hartford with a landlord who treats me with respect. CFHC helped me every step of the way until I finally signed a lease and got a key to my new home.

Everything started to come together as soon as we moved into our new house. I now have a full time job I love, and I'm able to support my family. Now that we've got stable housing, my kids are thriving in school. Meanwhile, CFHC worked for more than two years on challenging the discriminatory policies of the housing authority that turned me away and finally resolved that case.

I went to CFHC for help for my family, but I soon understood that my case could help others. I never want this kind of discrimination to happen to anyone else. I hope you'll continue supporting CFHC so they can keep fighting to make sure that people can live anywhere they choose.