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**FAIR HOUSING CENTER OF CENTRAL INDIANA
HONORS REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY**

INDIANAPOLIS, IN – The Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI) today honors the legacy of one of the fair housing movement's greatest leaders, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In a speech to the graduating class at Stanford in 1967, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. famously described two Americas. He said, "... there are literally two Americas. One America... is the habitat of millions of people who have food and material necessities for their bodies; and culture and education for their minds; and freedom and human dignity for their spirits. In this America, millions of people experience every day the opportunity of having life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in all of their dimensions... But tragically, and unfortunately, there is another America... In this America, millions of people find themselves living in rat-infested, vermin-filled slums. In this America, people are poor by the millions. They find themselves perishing on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity."

The federal Fair Housing Act (FHA) of 1968 was passed exactly one week after the assassination of Dr. King. Unfortunately, little progress has been made towards creating an equitable housing market, free from discrimination and segregation. Marion County is far below state and national averages in homeownership rates across race and ethnicities with the [overall homeownership rate](#) for Marion County at 54% which is substantially lower than statewide (69%) and national (64%) homeownership rates. For Blacks in Marion County, the homeownership rate is only 34% vs. the white homeownership rate of 65%. Sadly, our County's Black homeownership rate is today lower than it was around the time of the FHA's passage.

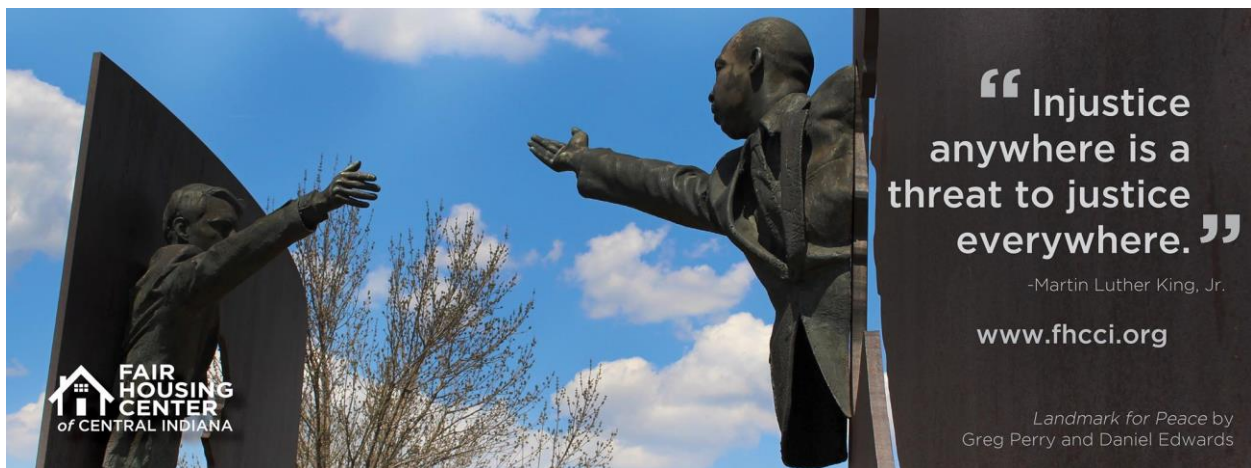
Because families of color have been unable to make substantial progress toward homeownership, Marion County Black residents are more likely to be renters and lose out on the opportunity, if so desired, to build equity and generational wealth. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Marion County renters have paid, on average, [\\$200 to \\$300 more per month](#), with rents having increased by more than 20%. Some areas of the County have seen rent increases upwards of 30%. As rental costs have risen, wages have not kept pace. Household income in Marion County has increased on average just 4-5% annually over the past few years. Half of renters in Marion County earn \$35k or less annually, but only an estimated 35% of the County's multifamily rental units are affordable to them. This disproportionately affects households of color. While households of color represent 36% of all households, roughly half of the households earning less than \$35k in income are Black.

In a state like Indiana with limited tenant protections as compared to other states, this puts families at color at greater risk of exploitation by bad acting landlords. Each week, there are stories documenting low-income persons and people of color experiencing atrocious living conditions at the hands of inattentive landlords. Last

week, the Indiana General Assembly began this year's session. Already, [legislation has been introduced](#) to provide more balance in the landlord-tenant relationship, add funds for homeowner repair programs to combat displacement, address bias in housing appraisals, and protect long-term residents in gentrifying neighborhoods.

In Dr. King's honor and with your help, we can change housing policy and ensure that every Hoosier has access to safe, affordable, accessible housing free from discrimination. Here's how you can partner with the FHCCI in working to achieve Dr. King's vision:

- Find out who [your state senator and representative is](#) and request they support legislation to assist housing consumers.
- Stay up-to-date on emerging issues by following the FHCCI on [facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and/or [YouTube](#).
- Visit the [FHCCI's Public Policy page](#) for legislative updates.
- Sign up for [Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition updates!](#) The FHCCI is on the steering committee of this statewide coalition working to address housing barriers.



The Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI) is a private, nonprofit fair housing organization founded in 2011 and based in Indianapolis, IN. Its mission is to ensure equal housing opportunities by eliminating housing discrimination through advocacy, enforcement, education, and outreach. For more information, visit: www.fhcci.org