

# marcc “...to forgo the luxury of separate ways when a common path can be found...”

## Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati

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Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Association of Unity Churches

Baptist Ministers Conference  
of Cincinnati and Vicinity

Cincinnati Conference  
(Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

Cincinnati Islamic Center

Disciples of Christ – SW Ohio

Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio

Greek Orthodox Church of  
Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas

Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance

JCRC of The Jewish Federation

Miami Association (American Baptists)

Ohio River Valley District  
(United Methodist Church)

Presbytery of Cincinnati

Religious Society of Friends

Southwest Ohio-Northeast Kentucky Division  
(The Salvation Army)

Unitarian Universalist Council  
of Greater Cincinnati

United Church of Christ

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Executive Director  
Lisa Huneke  
Administrative Assistant

June 9, 2010

Mr. Shaun Donovan, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street S.W., Washington, DC 20410

RE: Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

Dear Secretary Donovan:

The Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati (“MARCC”) requests that HUD immediately initiate the process to place the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (“CMHA”) into administrative receivership. MARCC is an interfaith coalition of seventeen denominations of Muslims, Christians, Jews, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox and Unitarian-Universalists. Affordable housing has been a priority of our coalition for a number of years, and MARCC has engaged the CMHA Board and its staff on numerous occasions in the hope of improving policies that impact housing choice vouchers and support services to families in need of affordable rental units.

Regretfully, MARCC has come to believe that, despite the hard-working and committed staff of CMHA, the CMHA Board has acted and spoken in an increasing number of instances in a way that prevents CMHA from fulfilling its mission as a public housing authority. The CMHA Board’s most recent action, removing its interim director without notice at its May 25, 2010 meeting and replacing him with a new interim director lacking any public housing experience, was the final straw convincing MARCC that CMHA and the public that depends upon it to fulfill its mission would be best served by HUD placing it into receivership.

The following list enumerates many of MARCC’s concerns with the CMHA Board’s management since 2007:

- Rather than promoting affordable housing in the community, some members of the CMHA Board have sought to disparage eligible tenants, landlords, and communities undermining the mission of CMHA.
- The CMHA Board fails to provide clarity and consistency to its staff as to the policies and procedures applicable to tenants and landlords, especially in the areas of tenant applications, landlord approvals, unit inspections, and site locations; many CMHA Board policy decisions seem to reduce, rather than promote, the use of CMHA’s resources for affordable housing.

- Addresses of tenants with housing choice vouchers were published on the CMHA website as if to “warn” others of their presence in neighborhoods.
- The CHMA waiting list has been closed since 2007 while applications have risen above 10,000.
- Several alleged Fair Housing Act violations against CMHA are under judicial review.
- The CMHA Board has disregarded repeated calls from many sectors of the community, including MARCC, to appoint a citizens advisory committee to provide input on policies, including the search for a new executive director.
- The former CMHA executive director resigned in 2007 because he was unable to work with the CMHA Board.
- Since the executive director’s resignation, the CMHA Board has failed to establish an open search process to hire a new executive director; instead it has appointed interim directors with diminished authority to promote affordable housing. If there is an established search process for a new executive director at this time, it is not transparent or known to the community.

While the staff has served CMHA clients well, they have been limited by Board policies and prevented from serving many more applicants with a swifter response to their requests for affordable rental units. For all of the above reasons, MARCC requests that HUD place the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority into an administrative receivership.

Sincerely,

Margaret A. Fox  
Executive Director

CC Ron Sims, HUD Deputy Secretary  
Sandra B. Henriquez, Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing  
Tom Marshall, Ohio Public Housing HUD Director  
James Cunningham, Director, Cincinnati Field Office