

Collaboration makes UW – Milwaukee dorm more accessible

The Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council (MMFHC) has successfully collaborated with the City of Milwaukee to improve housing accessibility for persons with disabilities.

During the course of an investigation into the accessibility of newly-constructed housing, MMFHC discovered that there was no curb cut directly in front of a new University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (UWM) dormitory called Riverview. Instead of being able to enter the building directly from the street or an adjacent parking lot, dormitory residents or visitors with mobility impairments could access the sidewalk that leads to the dorm's entrance only at the ends of the block, considerable distances away from the dorm. The distance posed a problem at any time of year, but would do so even more during snowy Wisconsin winters.

Riverview dormitory is owned by UWM, but the sidewalk, curb area and parking lot are City of Milwaukee property, so MMFHC worked with City staff to remedy the problem. MMFHC staff and MMFHC General Counsel Katherine Charlton met with Milwaukee's Chief Planning and Developments Engineer, Michael Loughran, at Riverview in October 2010. MMFHC staff and Charlton pointed out how difficult it could be for a person with a mobility impairment to enter the building, and described what kind of curb cut would be optimal for creating access to the dormitory. Loughran agreed, and the City of Milwaukee created a curb cut directly in front of Riverview within 6 weeks of meeting with MMFHC.

"This shows how private agencies like MMFHC and public entities can work together to further the common good in our communities," notes MMFHC President and CEO William R. Tisdale. "We're glad that the City of Milwaukee took its responsibility to residents with disabilities so seriously."