



**Office of Mayor Ted Wheeler
City of Portland**

March 8, 2023

As Mayor and Commissioner of Finance & Administration, I request Council confirmation of the following appointments to the **Fair Housing Advocacy Committee (FHAC)**:

Appointment	Term
Christina Dirks	04/01/2023 – 04/01/2025
Jesse Neilson	04/01/2023 – 04/01/2025
Olia Gorelkina	04/01/2023 – 04/01/2025
Stephanie Grayce	04/01/2023 – 04/01/2025
Caroline Jackson	04/01/2023 – 04/01/2025
Irina Alonso	04/01/2023 – 04/01/2025

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Wheeler
Mayor

Christina Dirks

Christina Dirks (she/her) has spent her career advocating for vulnerable renters. After graduating law school, Christina worked at Oregon Law Center and then Legal Aid Services of Oregon as a Staff Attorney and then a Supervising Attorney. Through her 18-year practice, Christina focused on represented low-income tenants in all types of housing related legal matters, including fair housing matters. In addition to direct client representation, Christina conducted extensive training on fair housing and landlord/tenant law and served in various housing policy forums. Christina currently serves as the Interim Director of Policy and Planning at Home Forward where she centers the voices and experiences of Home Forward's residents and participants and brings a race equity lens to internal and external policy change work.

Statement of Interest: Christina is committed to supporting and developing a system that provides victims of housing discrimination with meaningful recourse as well as educational support to landlords and tenants around fair housing rights and responsibilities.

Jesse Neilson

Having experienced housing insecurity at a young age, Jesse Neilson (he/him) has long appreciated that housing is essential in order to thrive. Jesse is an attorney with experience both in fair housing and renters' rights and currently works as a policy analyst in the Civil Rights Division at the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries. He previously served as a legal aid attorney serving those experiencing poverty, focusing on the intersection of poverty and immigration status and advocating for disabled seniors in affordable housing. Residing with his family in North Portland's Kenton neighborhood, Jesse also serves on the PBOT North Portland in Motion Community Advisory Group. With his experience, Jesse is grounded not only in fair housing law, but in the realities that people face when their housing experience lacks basic dignity.

Statement of Interest: Jesse is interested in serving on the Fair Housing Advocacy Committee to contribute to a housing landscape that prioritizes fairness and dignity, redresses a history of inequality in housing, and that embraces accountability.

Olia Gorelkina

Olia Gorelkina (she/her) is currently a Housing Coordinator at Slavic Oregon Social Services with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. She is working with immigrant survivors of domestic and sexual violence, helping them overcome the barriers to housing. In addition, she brings her own experience as a renter and a person who experienced housing instability as a young adult refugee. Her knowledge of the growing community of Slavic-speaking refugees and their housing needs will be beneficial for the work of RSC.

Statement of Interest: Olia is interested in serving on FHAC to understand more of the legal obstacles new immigrants are facing in their housing search, and what issues connected to DV can be improved by educating landlords and management companies.

Stephanie Grayce

Stephanie Grayce (she/her) will graduate with her J.D. from Lewis & Clark Law School in May 2023. While at Lewis & Clark, she has been a board member of the Public Interest Law Project and is a member of the Criminal Justice Reform Clinic. In addition, she has received special honors for both her pro bono and community service work. She has dedicated the past three years to advocacy for housing and employment barrier reduction, particularly those from marginalized communities and also participates in advocacy work for veterans. Additionally, she serves as a board member for Brain Injury Connections NW.

Statement of Interest: Stephanie is interested in serving on the FHAC to serve individuals and families who experience housing challenges and instability due to their past. She hopes to use her lived experience and the stories many share with her to bring a voice to the voiceless.

Caroline Jackson

Though originally from the East Coast, Caroline Jackson (she/her) has been a resident of Portland for over 12 years as well as a rental tenant in several different Portland neighborhoods. She currently works as the Volunteer Manager at Outside In, a local nonprofit that supports youth experiencing houselessness and other vulnerable community members as they move toward improved health and self-sufficiency; additionally, she frequently coordinates community resource events and supports Outside In's COVID-19 outreach efforts. Caroline recently completed a Master's degree in Public Policy from Portland State University with a focus on social services and affordable housing policy analysis. In her free time, she is involved in Portland's vibrant music community, often performing at local venues, and she enjoys spending time outdoors with her partner and her rescue dog.

Statement of Interest: I believe that access to stable, affordable housing is a foundational step toward improving the health and well-being of community members in need of support. In my workplace and as a graduate student, I have observed the many barriers to housing access that often compound health or employment challenges, especially for BIPOC, immigrant, and LGBTQIA+ communities. I am passionate about ensuring that everyone has fair and equitable access to safe, permanent shelter.

Irina Alonso

Irina Alonso is currently the Bilingual Bridges to Housing Case Manager at Clackamas County Social Services serving chronically homeless families and providing intensive case management and rent assistance support. Irina also works with the Housing Stabilization Program in collaboration with DHS to provide short term rent assistance and stabilization of households receiving TANF & SNAP.

Statement of Interest: I am interested in serving on FHAC as I am deeply committed to serving our chronically and literally homeless individuals and families. It is a passion of mine to ensure that all have access to housing and wrap around services so they can find hope and safety.