

HUD Announces Settlement in Fair Housing Cases

Since the last edition of MHI's Fair Housing Update, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced the settlement of two cases and new charges in a third one, all involving Fair Housing Act violations. The settlement agreements and complaint in the three cases are attached to the email delivering this update.

Support Animals - Nevada

The first case settles allegations of housing discrimination against prospective tenants in Reno, Nevada regarding their need for reasonable accommodations with assistance animals.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits housing providers from denying housing to people with disabilities or imposing different rental terms and conditions. This includes refusing to make reasonable accommodations in policies or practices for people with disabilities. The Reno case came to HUD's attention when the local housing council filed complaints against the owner and manager of several apartment complexes that required tenants needing assistance animals to pay a pet deposit fee.

Pursuant to the settlement, the landlord will pay a fine of \$20,500, adopt a written policy on assistance animals

consistent with the Fair Housing Act and provide fair housing training for all employees who interact with tenants or applicants.

Last month's edition of MHI's Fair Housing Update advised land lease communities to adopt written policies on support animals and warned against the charging of pet fees to tenants who prove the need for reasonable accommodations.

National Origin and Familial Status - California

In California, HUD settled a case with the owner and manager of an apartment complex involving national origin and familial status.

The complaints filed with HUD in this case alleged that the manager of the apartment complex made discriminatory statements about Latino residents and prohibited their children from playing outside.

The complaint alleged that the manager repeatedly made statements indicating that he did not like having Latino tenants at the property because they did not speak English, accusing them of bringing pests, including bed bugs and rats, to the property.

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New Fair Housing Cases (continued from page one)

Additionally, the manager allegedly prohibited children from playing at the property, enforcing rules that singled out children. One Latino family alleged their lease was terminated after their two-year-old daughter cried loudly when the manager walked by their door.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in rental, sales or home lending transactions based on a person's national origin or familial status. This includes discrimination based on a person's ancestry or country of birth, and discrimination against families with children under the age of 18.

In this settlement, the owner of the apartments will pay a total of \$20,000 and revise their rules to comply with the Fair Housing Act. In addition, the property's manager will be required to complete fair housing training.

Past issues of MHI's Fair Housing Update have stressed the importance of training employees on the community's commitment to fair housing and the need for enforcing all policies equally.

Familial Status - New Hampshire

In New Hampshire, HUD has filed a complaint alleging that a single mother was denied the opportunity to rent a two-bedroom unit at an apartment complex. The manager told the woman she could only rent a first-floor units and none were available. The charge further asserts that a local housing agency conducted testing revealed similar treatment of people posing as prospective renters with children.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits housing providers from denying or limiting housing to families with children under age 18.

For written Fair Housing policies that can be adapted for most land-lease communities, contact Rick Robinson, MHI's General Counsel at rrobinson@mfghome.org



For more information, questions, or to get copies of past Updates, contact MHI's General Counsel, Rick Robinson, at rrobinson@mfghome.org.

