



Spring 2006

Fair Housing News

Fair Housing: It's Not an Option, It's the Law!



In this issue:

- HUD Celebrates Fair Housing Month in 200 Events Nationwide
- City of St. Louis Joins the Fair Housing Assistance Program
- HUD Events Highlight Fair Housing
- HUD Partners Celebrate Fair Housing Month
- HUD Charges Three Landlords With Violating Fair Housing Act
- HUD Accessibility Training Targets Rebuilding Efforts in Florida
- Judge Orders Housing Authority of San Antonio to Pay \$125,000 to Resolve a HUD- Investigated Case

Our Mission

To create equal housing opportunities for all persons in America by administering laws that prohibit discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, and familial status.

HUD Celebrates Fair Housing Month in 200 Events Nationwide

April 2006 marked the 38th anniversary of the federal Fair Housing Act. HUD designates each April as Fair Housing Month and conducts activities throughout the month to raise awareness of fair housing.

The 2006 Fair Housing Month theme, "Fair Housing: It's Not an Option, It's the Law," sends a clear message to those who are intent on discriminating that their actions are in violation of the law. HUD and private fair housing groups shared this message in approximately 200 events in 43 states. Several of these events are described on page two.

HUD kicked off Fair Housing Month on April 4, 2006, at HUD headquarters in Washington, D.C. The program featured Shirley Carper as its keynote speaker.

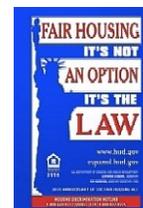
Carper was the complainant in a housing discrimination case that was resolved in 2005. Carper shared her experience of being denied a reasonable accommodation for her disability and the harassment that she endured as a result of her request. Carper

sought help from the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (a HUD partner under the Fair Housing Assistance Program) and ultimately received a \$1 million settlement for her case.

At the event, HUD also announced the release of its FY 2005 Annual Report on Fair Housing. The report describes HUD's fair housing enforcement, education, and outreach efforts during the fiscal year. The report is available at <http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing>.

Assistant Secretary Kim Kendrick Would Like to Thank the Following People for Planning HUD's Fair Housing Month Opening Program:

- Kathy Bowie
- Deborah Dickens
- David Valdez
- Shaye Hardy
- James McAllister
- Kent Washburn



City of St. Louis Joins the Fair Housing Assistance Program

On April 27, 2006, Assistant Secretary Kim Kendrick and St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay signed an agreement that makes the City of St. Louis part of HUD's Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP).

The agreement is contingent upon the City enacting an ordinance that would prohibit housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or familial status and give the City the authority to investigate housing discrimination complaints. The Board of Alderman expects to pass such an ordinance in mid-June 2006.

FHAP reimburses states or localities for investigating housing discrimination complaints under laws that are substantially equivalent to the federal Fair Housing Act.



One of Four Billboards That Were Posted in St. Joseph, Missouri to Inform Residents on Fair Housing

St. Louis residents may file a complaint with the City's Civil Rights Enforcement Agency if they suspect they have experienced housing discrimination. For more information on how a state or locality can participate in the FHAP go to <http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing>.

HUD Activities Highlight Fair Housing

Los Angeles, California

The Southern California Housing Advertising Task Force and HUD's representative to the task force—David Acevedo of HUD's Los Angeles office—obtained a total of over \$115,000 in donated media for Fair Housing Month advertisements from the *Los Angeles Times*, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, and the *Orange County Register*.

Washington, D.C.

On April 26, 2006, Deputy Assistant Secretary Karen Newton greeted 30 students of Jefferson Junior High School when they visited HUD for a Fair Housing Month program. Newton discussed unlawful housing discrimination. The students were then led through HUD's Fair Housing Month exhibit and were met by Secretary Alphonso Jackson who expressed pleasure at their field trip and visit.



HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson and students from Jefferson Junior High School in Washington, D.C.

Boston, Massachusetts

On April 10, 2006, the Boston FHEO office hosted a one-half day public forum on the topic of reasonable accommodations for persons with physical or mental disabilities. The forum attracted over 200 housing providers, advocates, and community-based organizations. Assistant Secretary Kim Kendrick was the keynote speaker for the event.

Anchorage, Alaska

From April 23-25, 2006, the Anchorage HUD Field Office held the Alaska Fair Housing Conference. Regional fair housing director Judith Keeler conducted training on the responsibilities of recipients of federal financial assistance under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Beverly Watts, director of the National Fair Housing Training Academy, provided other fair housing training. Assistant Secretary Kendrick delivered the keynote address.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

HUD fair housing regional director Wanda Nieves arranged for the PECO skyscraper in downtown Philadelphia to display the Fair Housing Month theme and HUD's housing discrimination hotline. The message was displayed for three days during April at no cost to HUD.

HUD Partners Celebrate Fair Housing Month

Cincinnati, Ohio

On April 21, 2006, Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) of Greater Cincinnati held a public forum on "Building Stable, Integrated Communities." A panel of neighborhood representatives discussed the challenges in Cincinnati for overcoming historic living patterns. HOME's 38th Annual Meeting followed the forum. The meeting brought together over 200 representatives from the real estate industry and community groups. The speaker was Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory.



Neighborhood representatives Kay Clifton of Price Hill; Ray Hodges, City Manager of Forest Park; Gerry Kraus of North Avondale speak at HOME's public forum.

of Buffalo held their 43rd Annual Meeting and Dinner. The keynote speaker was U.S. Representative Louise Slaughter who addressed the theme of this event, "The New Face of Civil Rights." Deputy Assistant

Buffalo, New York

On April 11, 2006, Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME)

Secretary for Enforcement and Programs Bryan Greene offered HUD's Fair Housing Month message to the over 300 people in attendance.

Biloxi, Mississippi

On April 19, 2006, Assistant Secretary Kim Kendrick delivered the keynote address at a conference sponsored by the Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center. Assistant Secretary Kendrick highlighted Fair Housing Month and HUD's efforts to assist hurricane evacuees in need of accessible housing. The conference attracted industry professionals -- architects, builders, developers, real estate agents, and others -- in need of information and assistance in helping to supply accessible housing.

Fair Housing News

HUD Charges Three Landlords With Violating Fair Housing Act

Between January and March 2006 HUD charged two landlords with racial discrimination in violation of the Fair Housing Act. In addition, HUD charged one apartment complex for discriminating and retaliating against a disabled tenant.

On January 25, 2006, HUD charged Daniel, Helene, and Ava Waisbord, owners of over 150 rental properties, with violating the Fair Housing Act for refusing to rent a house in a white neighborhood to a black applicant.

When Karla Baker, a black woman, tried to rent a house in a predominantly white neighborhood, the landlord told her that the neighbors "don't like me and I am a White man, and they are Germans... I can't rent this place to you. The neighbors aren't going to like it." He insisted on showing her another property, which turned out to be in a minority neighborhood. When Baker, who had already put down a deposit, insisted that she wanted to rent the first property, the landlord refused, and instead refunded her deposit. Two days later, the landlord rented

the house to a white woman, for less than what Baker was willing to pay. On February 15, 2006, the landlord elected to have the claims heard in federal district court.

On March 28, 2006, HUD charged the owners and managers of the Cannon Valley Apartment complex in Cannon Falls, Minnesota, with violating the Fair Housing Act by similarly steering a black applicant toward a minority neighborhood.

When Jo Lynn Rainer inquired about vacancies at the Cannon Valley Apartment complex the manager asked about her children and then told her about problems with a previous female tenant who had five black children. The manager also told Rainer that she was unsure how minorities would be tolerated in the town and made a point of telling Rainer that more minorities worked and lived in Pine Island, Minnesota, than in Cannon Falls. A hearing before HUD's Office of Administrative Law Judges is scheduled for June 27, 2006, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Additionally, on March 20, 2006, HUD charged the owners and managers of Fairway Trails Apartments in Ypsilanti, Michigan for denying Harry Tyus a reasonable accommodation for his disability and evicting him after a judge ruled in favor of his request.

Tyus requested a reasonable accommodation to pay his rent on the third Wednesday of each month instead of the first day of each month so as to coincide with his Social Security payments. The corporate office instructed the manager turned down the request under instructions from the corporate office. Fairway later began the process to evict Tyus for failing to pay rent on time.

The Michigan court that heard the eviction case agreed that Tyus should have received the rent reset as a reasonable accommodation and that Fairway was not entitled to a late fee for the previous months. After losing the eviction action, Fairway informed Tyus that they would not renew his lease. On April 7, 2006, Tyus elected to have the matter heard in federal district court.

HUD Accessibility Training Targets Rebuilding Efforts in Florida

On April 21 and 22, 2006, in Tampa, Florida, HUD provided training on federal accessibility requirements for architects, builders, and others involved in the design and construction of multifamily housing and public and commercial facilities. The training was conducted to help ensure that homes and businesses that were destroyed by last year's hurricanes are rebuilt in a manner that is accessible.

Assistant Secretary Kim Kendrick provided the opening remarks, highlighting the 38th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act and urging participants to take a proactive role in constructing housing that is fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST is a HUD-funded initiative administered

by BearingPoint, Inc. The FIRST training occurred on day one and covered the accessibility requirements that apply to all multifamily housing built after March 13, 1991. The response to this training was overwhelmingly positive, with comments such as: "This was an excellent training that benefited all who work in the housing field."

The second day of training was sponsored by HUD and the Department of Justice. The training was aimed at increasing awareness of the accessibility requirements for non-residential places of public accommodations and commercial facilities. It also addressed the obligation under federal law to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed in emergency preparedness.

"We were delighted with the turnout and the level of interaction that occurred during both sessions," said sponsor Leon Russell, Director, Pinellas County Office of Human Rights. "The concentration on disability issues and post-disaster rebuilding was unique. We feel very fortunate that we were able to provide this training in our area of the country, which needs to be prepared for hurricanes."

HUD also made both days of training available via Webcast so that persons throughout the country could view the training and telephone questions to the speakers. This was the first time that HUD-sponsored accessibility training sessions have been broadcast on the Web. HUD plans to make this Webcast available at <http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing>.

HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

**451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410**

Individuals may contact HUD if they believe they have experienced housing discrimination.

**Voice: 1-800-669-9777
TTY: 1-800-927-9275**

Housing discrimination complaint forms are at www.hud.gov/fairhousing

Remember!

HUD Fair Housing Policy Conference

**June 27-29, 2006
Anaheim, California**

For more information visit www.hud.gov/fairhousing

Judge Orders Housing Authority of San Antonio to Pay \$125,000 to Resolve a HUD-Investigated Case

In late March 2006, a Federal Judge ordered the owners and managers of a San Antonio apartment complex, including the Housing Authority of the City of San Antonio, to pay \$125,000 in settlement of a disability discrimination lawsuit.

The settlement resolves a complaint filed with HUD on April 19, 2004, alleging that the Westminster Square Apartments discriminated against Antonio and Josefina Maldonado.

Antonio Maldonado is a double-leg amputee and his wife, Josefina, has osteoporosis and other medical conditions that substantially limit her ability to walk. Over the years, Josefina Maldonado has experienced increasing fatigue due to her disabilities.

On February 23, 2004, the Maldonados asked the complex to make a reasonable accommodation by allowing them to move to a first-floor unit because of their deteriorating health. A few weeks later, the

Maldonados provided the building manager with letters from their doctors substantiating their need for a first-floor apartment.

The defendants denied the Maldonados' requests, stating that the elevators in the building made a first-floor apartment unnecessary. The defendants later leased two units on the first floor to other tenants.

However, the couple pointed out that they have been trapped in the elevators on previous occasions. They also argued that the elevators were frequently not working and that the elevators were not near their unit.

The couple contacted the Fair Housing Council of Greater San Antonio, a HUD grantee, who assisted the Maldonados with filing a complaint with HUD. HUD investigated the Maldonados' complaint and charged the owners and managers with violating the Fair Housing Act. The Maldonados decided to file a civil suit, which resulted in the \$125,000 settlement.

HUD OFFICE OF FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

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