



November 16, 2020

## GENERAL NEWS

### HUD Publishes New Material to the COVID-19 Resources Webpage

Last week on the [Public and Indian Housing COVID-19 Resources](#) webpage, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) posted new resources related to a partnership between HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing ([PIH](#)) and the Federal Transportation Administration ([FTA](#)).

According to the webpage, on November 12, 2020, PIH and FTA partnered to educate stakeholders on how PHAs can coordinate with transit agencies, local municipalities, and school districts to provide essential services in their communities, including access to transportation, education support services (such as WiFi), food, medical appointments, and other essential services. The resources posted are as follows:

- [DOT-FTA HUD-PIH Partnership Letter](#)
- [DOT-FTA HUD-PIH Partnership for COVID-19 Recovery Fact Sheet](#)
- [List of State Departments of Transportation for Community Partnerships \(MS-Excel\)](#)
- [List of Transit Agencies for Community Partnerships \(MS-Excel\)](#)

You can find the links to the new material and other COVID-19 resources on [this page](#) at HUD's website. Click [here](#) to access the presentation of a webinar and listening session held by FTA and HUD on Friday, November 13, 2020, titled "COVID-19 Recovery."

### DOJ Files Racial Discrimination Lawsuit against MS Housing Providers

In a [press release](#) last week, the Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)) announced that it has filed a [lawsuit](#) against the owners, operators, and rental agent of several apartment complexes in Mississippi, alleging that they violated the federal [Fair Housing Act](#) by discriminating on the basis of race against African-Americans housing applicants.

The lawsuit is based on the results of testing conducted by a local civil rights organization and a charge of discrimination issued by HUD. According to the press release, the rental agent, who acted on behalf of the other defendants, discriminated against prospective renters on the basis of race by treating African Americans who inquired about available apartments differently and less favorably than similarly situated white persons.

According to the department's complaint, the rental agent encouraged white testers to rent at the apartments but discouraged African-American testers from renting there, telling one African-American tester that if he rented to her at this complex, the residents would think he had "let the zoo out." In addition, the agent told African-American testers about fewer rental units than white testers, allowed white testers to view certain apartments while not offering or allowing African-American testers the same opportunity, and imposed more stringent financial and employment criteria and inquiries on African-American testers than on white testers.

The complaint alleges that the owners are legally responsible for the alleged discrimination by the rental agent because he worked on their behalf. The lawsuit seeks monetary damages to compensate victims, civil penalties against the defendants to vindicate the public interest, and a court order barring future discrimination.



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