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GENERAL NEWS

DOJ Files Racial Discrimination Suit against Housing Authority and Property Owners in AL

In a [press release](#) last week, the Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)) announced that it has filed a [lawsuit](#) against a housing authority in Alabama, which manages seven federally funded low-income housing complexes, alleging that it violated the federal [Fair Housing Act](#) by intentionally discriminating on the basis of race or color against housing applicants. The lawsuit also names as defendants the private owners and managing agent of one of those housing complexes.

The Department’s complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, alleges that since at least 2012, the housing authority denied African-American applicants the opportunity to live in overwhelmingly white housing complexes, while steering white applicants away from properties whose residents were predominantly African-American.

The lawsuit seeks damages to compensate victims, civil penalties to the government to vindicate the public interest, and a court order barring future discrimination and requiring action to correct the effects of the defendants’ discrimination.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, and disability.

DOJ Settles Familial Status Discrimination Suit against Hawaii Landlords

In another [press release](#) last week, DOJ announced that it has reached a settlement with housing providers in Hawaii to resolve a lawsuit filed last year alleging that the defendants refused to rent to families with children at properties they owned and managed, in violation of the [Fair Housing Act](#).

The agreement, which is in the form a consent decree and still must be approved by the court, resolves a lawsuit alleging that the owners and managers of rental housing violated the federal Fair Housing Act by refusing to rent to families with children, steering prospective renters with children to a different property management company, and making discriminatory and discouraging statements to potential renters with children who inquired about the housing, including stating that the housing was not “suitable” or the “right fit” for families with children. Under the consent decree, the defendants must:

- Pay a total monetary settlement of \$80,000, consisting of a \$70,000 settlement fund that will be used to compensate families that were harmed by defendants’ practices, as well as \$10,000 to the United States as a civil penalty
- Adopt non-discriminatory policies and practices that ensure compliance with the Fair Housing Act
- Conduct employee training to ensure compliance with the Fair Housing Act
- Submit to record keeping and monitoring requirements for the three-year period of the consent decree.

Under the Fair Housing Act, it is unlawful to deny or limit housing to families that have children under the age of 18 and to make statements that discriminate against families with children.



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