



February 23, 2021

GENERAL NEWS

HUD Charges Rhode Island Housing Provider with Familial Status Discrimination

In a [press release](#) yesterday, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) announced that it is [charging](#) the owner and manager of several rental properties in Providence, Rhode Island, with discrimination on the basis of familial status. HUD's charge alleges that they violated the federal [Fair Housing Act](#) by refusing to rent to families with children.

The case came to HUD's attention when a HUD fair housing initiatives program agency operating in Massachusetts and Rhode Island filed a complaint based on fair housing tests it conducted after seeing an ad on Facebook for remodeled student apartments. The charge alleges that when testers contacted the housing provider to inquire about available units and mentioned that they had children, the owner told them: "Unfortunately, we can't allow children." In addition, the housing provider allegedly cancelled meetings to show units after learning that a tester had a child. Meanwhile, testing evidence showed that testers without children who applied for housing were shown available units and offered the opportunity to rent.

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. This includes publishing advertisements that indicate a preference or otherwise discriminate against families with children. Housing may exclude children only if it meets the Fair Housing Act's exemption for housing for older persons.

HUD's charge will be heard by a United States administrative law judge unless any party elects to have the case heard in federal court. If the judge finds after a hearing that discrimination has occurred, the judge may award damages to the complainant for losses caused by the discrimination. The judge may also order injunctive relief and other equitable relief, as well as payment of attorney fees. In addition, the judge may impose civil penalties to vindicate the public interest.

HUD Announces Disaster Assistance for Texas Severe Winter Storm Victims

In another [press release](#) yesterday, HUD announced the implementation of federal disaster assistance for the State of Texas to provide support to homeowners and homebuyers in areas affected by the severe winter storm. A presidential [major disaster declaration](#) issued on February 19, 2021, allows HUD to offer foreclosure relief and other assistance to affected families living in impacted counties. According to the press release, effective immediately, the disaster assistance will:

- Grant a [90-day moratorium](#) on foreclosures of FHA-insured homes
- Make mortgage insurance available under [HUD's Section 203\(h\)](#) program
- Make insurance available for both mortgages and home rehabilitation under [HUD's Section 203\(k\) program](#)
- Ensure [HUD-approved housing counseling agencies](#) are ready to assist
- Make [information on housing providers](#) and HUD programs available

Click [here](#) for more information about disaster resources, and [here](#) to see the notice for PHAs on disaster waivers and administrative flexibilities.



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