



September 20, 2021

GENERAL NEWS

HUD Charges Missouri Housing Providers with Familial Status Discrimination

In a [press release](#) last Friday, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) announced that it is [charging](#) the owners and property manager of duplex and triplex apartments in St. Charles, Missouri, with discrimination on the basis of familial status.

HUD's charge alleges that the housing providers violated the [Fair Housing Act](#) by allegedly refusing to rent an apartment to a prospective tenant because he has two children. 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.

The case came to HUD's attention when the father of two filed a complaint alleging that he was denied the opportunity to rent an apartment because he has young children. The father claimed that he reached out to the property manager about the unit and told the manager that his young son and daughter would be living with him. HUD's charge alleges that, after that conversation, the manager informed the father that he could not rent the unit, saying his boss "gave me a firm 'No.' She's against little kids in such a small place." As a result, the father was forced to rent a more expensive unit in the area.

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. If the matter is decided in federal court, the judge may also award punitive damages.



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