

In true Montana spirit, the Chuckwagon . . . the newsletter to fill your fair housing appetite.



Montana Fair Housing is a private, non-profit, fair housing organization providing education, outreach, and enforcement activities throughout the state of Montana. MFH does not have an attorney on staff. Information contained in this newsletter should not be construed as legal advice and does not provide a legal opinion.

Tales Roun' the Campfire

A synopsis and/or update of cases filed with the Montana Human Rights Bureau (HRB), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and/or federal or district court. This summary is not all inclusive. . .

MFH v. Crawford – In March MFH received an allegation of discrimination in housing based on the caller's marital status. The caller indicated that Respondent Crawford had denied the household's application because she and her partner were unmarried. The results of MFH's investigation supported the caller's allegations. In June MFH and two individual complainants filed an administrative complaint with HRB. In August the Respondent and all Complainants agreed to voluntary resolution of the complaint, which includes affirmative and financial relief for Complainants. The Agreement does not constitute an admission by the Respondent of any violation of law.

Harbor Village Homeowners Association & JES Management, Inc. - In August, Montana Fair Housing assisted a household in the filing of an administrative complaint of housing discrimination with HUD against the referenced Respondents. Respondents allegedly denied the Complainant a request for a reasonable modification. The Complainant owns a condominium located in the Marina Townhomes in Bigfork. Complainants' mother-in-law requires the use of a wheelchair for mobility. The townhome unit in question needs modifications completed in order to allow her to safely access the unit. The Complainant,

who indicated he would pay for the modifications, and MFH, attempted to mediate the request for several months before filing the complaint. HUD is currently investigating the allegations made by the Complainant.

Shootin' the Bull

From a press release issued August 1, 2012:

Connecticut Fair Housing Center Files Suit to End Discriminatory Practices at the Winchester Housing Authority

When Crystal Carter, an African-American single mother, moved from Florida to Connecticut in 2011 her first priority was to find decent, affordable housing for her family. Unfortunately, such housing was hard to come by in Connecticut and, in desperation, Ms. Carter and her family ended up in a homeless shelter in southeastern Connecticut. When she learned that the Winchester Housing Authority's (WHA) waiting list was open, she immediately contacted them to request an application. Ms. Carter informed the housing authority that she wanted to apply to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. In response, they told Ms. Carter that they were not sending applications to people who did not reside in the seventeen overwhelmingly white communities in northwest Connecticut served by the housing authority. Ms. Carter was also told that Winchester was not on a bus line, that there were no jobs in Winchester, and that Winchester was "in the woods." She was advised it would be better for her to apply to Section 8 programs in cities like Bridgeport, New Haven, or Torrington, Connecticut.

Ms. Carter was devastated that she and her family were denied the opportunity to apply for a WHA Section 8 voucher and after attempting to remedy the situation with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the WHA, Ms. Carter contacted the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. The Center began investigating and soon confirmed the existence of an unlawful residency requirement. On Wednesday,

Upcoming Events:

Montana Fair Housing has several training opportunities scheduled for individuals, advocates, and housing providers. The workshops are approved for continuing education credits for Property Managers and Realtors.

September 6, 2012 – Billings
September 7, 2012 - Bozeman
September 18, 2012 – Havre
September 19, 2012 – Lewistown
September 25, 2012 – Missoula
September 27, 2012 – Kalispell
September 28, 2012 - Helena

Pre-registration is required.
For more information contact our office.

Mark Your Calendars! Housing Conference 2013, will be held at the Copper King in Butte on April 23 & 24, 2013.

Discrimination in housing occurs when a housing provider makes a decision about a consumer's eligibility for services based on the consumer's protected class status. A housing provider cannot deny you services nor place different terms and conditions on you BECAUSE OF your membership in a protected class. Federal protected classes include: Race, Color, National Origin, Religion, Sex (including sexual harassment), Familial Status (presence of children under the age of 18 or pregnancy), and/or Disability (Mental or Physical, including requests for reasonable accommodations and reasonable modifications). In the state of Montana, in addition to the federally protected classes, it is a violation of the state's Human Rights Act to discriminate in housing related transactions based on marital status, age, and/or creed. In the City of Missoula, a housing provider cannot discriminate against a household because of gender identity or sexual orientation.

For More Information about Discrimination in Housing, or to File a Complaint, contact:

Montana Fair Housing
519 East Front Street * Butte, MT 59701
Voice: 406-782-2573 or 800-929-2611
FAX: 406-782-2781 * MT Relay Service: 711
E-Mail: inquiry@montanafairhousing.org
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August 1, 2012, the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, working with Relman, Dane & Colfax, PLLC, filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut. As Connecticut Fair Housing Center Staff Attorney Timothy Bennett-Smyth notes, "Unlawful residency preferences and requirements perpetuate segregation in Connecticut and, in a very direct way, prevent integration. Addressing this problem is central to the Connecticut Fair Housing Center's mission of fostering open and inclusive communities and eliminating housing discrimination throughout Connecticut."

The lawsuit alleges an unlawful "residency requirement" used by the WHA to intentionally discriminate against African-American and Hispanic persons attempting to apply for admission to its Section 8 program. The residency requirement only allows individuals from the seventeen northwest Connecticut towns to apply for its Section 8 program. Residency requirements are prohibited by the Section 8 program. Moreover, because the populations of the seventeen towns are more than 90% White, the WHA's illegal residency requirement favors White applicants and excludes most African-American and Hispanic families from any chance of participating in its Section 8 Program.

For Further Information Contact:
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“Will the apartment still be available when they meet me in person?”

Telling you that the apartment is “no longer available” may be instead a landlord’s unwillingness to accommodate disabilities, such as allowing for a guide dog.

The law protects your right to live where you want. If you feel you’ve been discriminated against because of your disability, call 1-800-669-9777.

