

# Fair Housing Newsletter

November 2009



The Bowling Green Human Rights Commission is a non-profit organization committed to serving the community through advocating for the rights of the protected classes which include: race, color, religion, national origin, age (over 40), sex and disability. Created by city ordinance in 1966, the commission also investigates allegations of discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations. Overall its efforts focus on education, assistance, and promoting positive human relations within the community.

Examples of Housing Discrimination	Violates Fair Housing Law Because
<i>A landlord puts families with children in a separate building so as not to disturb other tenants.</i>	<i>If the owner rents to persons of all age groups (i.e. does not specialize in seniors, etc.), then this would be discrimination based on familial status.</i>
<i>A landlord charges Hispanic tenants a higher deposit because he/she believes they cause more damage than non-Hispanics.</i>	<i>This is discrimination based on national origin.</i>
<i>A property owner advertises an open rental property with the phrase "Christians preferred."</i>	<i>This is unlawful under the state and federal Fair Housing Laws based on religion.</i>

## HUD Charges Kentucky Landlord and Management Company with Housing Discrimination

The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has charged the managers and owners of a Kentucky apartment complex with housing discrimination, alleging that the owners of the apartment complex in Paducah Kentucky violated the Fair Housing Act when they evicted an African American family following a home invasion. The Fair Housing Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in housing because of race and/or color and sex.

According to HUD's Charge of Discrimination, a series of break-ins occurred in apartments rented by white individuals as well, but only a notice to vacate the premises was sent out to the African American family. None of the white families whose homes were burglarized received a notice-to-vacate. The Charge asserts that respondents sent complainants the notice because of their race, or color, as well as their sex.

The HUD Charge will be heard by a United States Administrative Law Judge. If discrimination is found, the Judge may award damages to the family for their losses as a result of the discrimination. The Judge may also order injunctive relief and other equitable relief, as well as civil penalties to vindicate the public interest.

***The BGHRC offers Fair Housing Workshops to provide information on fair housing issues to help eliminate possible discriminatory practices. Kentucky's Fair Housing Law forbids discrimination in housing because of a person's, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or familial status. It also forbids retaliation. If you would like to file a housing complaint, call us at 270-782-7900, or contact the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights at 800-292-5566***

## Combating Homelessness

HUD's homeless programs took place this past spring with the passage of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. This Act was first introduced in the House of Representatives in 2007, was incorporated by amendment into the Helping Families Save Their Homeless Act, approved by Congress on May 19, 2009 and signed by President Obama the next day.

The legislation significantly increases aid to homeless Americans, appropriating \$2.2 billion dollars to help solve the crisis of homelessness, and address the enormous cost homelessness can impose on individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities. In addition, the legislation consolidates homelessness programs to improve effectiveness and streamline administration, and target assistance to families with children, the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.

HEARTH furthers the goal of housing people who are chronically homeless, adding families with children to this initiative. The Act also expands the definition of homeless to include those who will lose their housing within 14 days and those who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence or other life threatening situations.

The lack of affordable housing and limited housing assistance programs are the primary causes of homelessness in the nation. To learn more about the HEARTH Act, readers can refer to the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009 at [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_cong\\_bills&docid=f:s896enr.txt.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:s896enr.txt.pdf).

For additional information! Please contact us at, 491 Double Springs Road, Bowling Green, KY 42101, 270.782.7900