

FAIR HOUSING

Rental, Sales, Lending Testing Report



Fairfax County Human Rights Commission
Fair Housing Program

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Until Dec. 31, 2023

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Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission, created by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, consists of 12 county residents. Each member serves a three-year term. Annually, the Commissioners select a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary as officers of the Commission.

The Commission not only receives and investigates complaints alleging a violation of the Fairfax County Fair Housing Act, but also cooperates and interacts with the employers, the housing industry, and other businesses in the County to make sure we all understand our duty to ensure equal opportunity and equal access. The Commission consists of the following members:

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Acknowledgements

The Fairfax County Human Rights Commission would like to thank the following for their assistance in completing the Fair Housing Testing Project.

The Equal Rights Center, Fair Housing Consultant

The Equal Rights Center (ERC) was selected as the consulting organization to assist with the development of the Fairfax County Fair Housing Testing Project. The organization has a long history and extensive knowledge of and experience in conducting fair housing testing and investigations. ERC staff was involved in the selection of test sites; provided materials, recruitment, training, and debriefing of the testers; scheduled the tests and submitted a report thereon to Commission staff. Throughout the project, ERC staff reported to and provided regular status reports to Commission staff members who maintained oversight, provided input, and administered the project.

Fair Housing Testers

The Fairfax County Office of Human Rights, in partnership with The Equal Rights Center, could not have conducted such an effective testing program without the testers, whose interest, professionalism, and dedication to the mission of Fair Housing are greatly appreciated.

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Executive Summary

In 2019, Fairfax County entered into a contract with the Equal Rights Center (ERC) to provide email, phone, and in-person testing services in the rental, lending, and sales housing markets. Throughout the course of the contract, from June 2019 to March 2021, ERC conducted and analyzed 122 tests in the county. ERC conducted 93 rental tests: 25 were race tests; 55 were national origin tests; 13 were disability tests. ERC conducted 15 lending tests and 14 sales tests, all of which were race tests. All tests were matched pair, meaning the ERC analyzed each test for both discriminatory policies and for differences in treatment by the agent between testers.

Results by Protected Class

Race Tests

Rental Tests

ERC analyzed 25 rental tests on the basis of race, all of which compared treatment between a Black tester and a White tester. Six tests were conducted in-person before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the remaining tests were conducted remotely. ERC **observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of White and Black testers in eight tests.**

Lending

ERC analyzed 15 lending tests on the basis of race, all of which compared treatment between a Black tester and a White tester. Five tests were conducted in-person before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the remaining tests were conducted remotely. ERC **observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of White and Black testers in eight tests.**

Sales

ERC analyzed 14 sales tests on the basis of race, all of which compared treatment between a Black tester and a White tester. All tests were conducted remotely. ERC **observed discernable differences between real estate agents' treatment of White and Black testers in six tests.**

National Origin Tests

Rental Tests

ERC analyzed 55 rental tests on the basis of national origin, all of which compared treatment between a White American tester and a Latinx tester or an Asian tester. In 41 of those tests, the treatment tester profile was Latinx. In 14 of those tests, the treatment tester profile was Asian.

Latinx treatment tester

ERC conducted 29 *email* tests with a Latinx treatment tester. **The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of the White American and Latinx tester in 13 tests.**

ERC conducted 12 *remote* tests with a Latinx treatment tester. **The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of the White American and Latinx tester in two tests.**

Asian treatment tester

ERC conducted 14 *email* tests with an Asian treatment tester. **The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of the White American and the Asian tester in six tests.**

Disability Tests

Rental Tests

ERC analyzed 13 rentals on the basis of disability, all of which compared treatment between a Deaf tester using either an IP relay service or a video relay service and a hearing tester using a traditional phone service and **observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of Deaf and hearing testers in six tests.**

Summary Findings

In general, the rental tests showed housing providers were more likely to give White testers more detailed information, respond more frequently to their messages, and offer more favorable terms than to their matched pair counterparts. It was also clear that certain housing providers lack the training to provide the same level of treatment to Deaf individuals as they do to hearing individuals.

The numbers reported for the lending and sales markets were more troubling. They clearly show that historical practices of segregating neighborhoods through steering or offering no or worse loans to Black individuals is still very much an issue today.

Introduction

It is the policy of the County of Fairfax to provide fair housing throughout the County, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, familial status (households with children younger than 18), disability, elderliness (age 55+), sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or source of funds. It is also illegal to discriminate against someone because they have opposed housing discrimination, participated in an investigation, or otherwise exercised a right provided under Fairfax County's Fair Housing Act.

In order to increase awareness of Fairfax County fair housing laws and determine whether laws barring housing discrimination are being violated, the Fairfax Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs provides ongoing education and outreach efforts on fair housing issues to housing providers and the public as well as collects housing discrimination data through its fair housing testing program. As part of that effort, the agency engages in fair housing testing.

Between June 2019 through March 2021, the agency commissioned The Equal Rights Center to conduct a series of email, phone, video, and in-person tests in the rental, sales, and lending markets. The tests were designed to evaluate the willingness of housing providers to rent housing based on race (Black), national origin (Latinx and Asian), or disability (deaf or hard of hearing). The project also included testing in the sales and lending markets to compare the treatment of White and Black consumers by real estate agents and loan officers. A total of 122 tests were conducted, 93 in the rental, 15 in the lending, and 14 in the sales market. A more detailed description of the testing project, results and recommendations are provided in the main body of this report. The results will be considered in discussions regarding whether to conduct more extensive testing in these areas.

About the Equal Rights Center (ERC)

The ERC was formed in 1999 by a merger of the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington, which was established in 1983, and its sister organization, the Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington. In 2005, the Disability Rights Council and its membership joined the ERC. Through its use of civil rights testing, the ERC identifies and seeks to eliminate unlawful and unfair discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations in its home community of Greater Washington DC and nationwide. The ERC's core strategy for identifying unlawful and unfair discrimination is civil rights testing.

What is Civil Rights Testing?

Civil rights testing is an investigative tool used to gather evidence, usually in order to compare conduct to legal requirements or a policy. It involves one or more people covertly engaging in a transaction or interaction. In fair housing testing, individuals posing as home-seekers inquire about a housing unit and the information provided to the tester is recorded on a report form. Testing can be performed by matched pairs of testers seeking housing or in single contacts by one tester. Testing reveals useful information about a single individual's experience during a housing transaction, including possible

discriminatory statements and the use and application of various policies and procedures. Testing is designed to provide a fair and impartial mechanism for determining whether or not home-seekers are being treated fairly in their search for housing. Matched pair testing is one type of civil rights testing that compares treatment between two people based on one variable because all other differences are controlled. Testing has been approved by the United States Supreme Court as a legitimate means of uncovering otherwise concealed discriminatory housing practices.

FCOHREP sought fair housing testing in the rental, sales, and lending markets, conducted online, via telephone, and through on-site visits. The ERC has more than 35 years of fair housing testing experience in the region which includes conducting these types of tests on multiple protected bases.



Fairfax County's Role in Ensuring Equal Housing Opportunity

In July 1974, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the Human Rights Ordinance, establishing the Human Rights Commission “to institute an affirmative human rights program of positive efforts to eliminate discrimination and provide citizen recourse for discriminatory acts.” The Ordinance was amended by the Board of Supervisors in October 2003, November 2010, July 1, 2020, and reaffirmed effective July 1, 2021.

The Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs enforces the Fairfax County Human Rights Ordinance and the Fairfax County Fair Housing Act, as well as managing the County's Equal Employment Enforcement (EEO) program. This includes receiving and investigating each complaint filed by a person who believes that he/she has been discriminated against in Fairfax County by a private business or organization in violation of the County's Human Rights Ordinance, ensuring the County's compliance with all federal, state, and county mandates granting equal access to all County services, programs, and employment opportunities, as well as administering the County's Fair Housing Program.

On April 28, 1997, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appropriated funds for a fair housing testing program. Following the Board of Supervisor's directive, in 1998 and 1999 the Commission contracted with two fair housing testing providers to conduct fair housing rental tests on the basis of race, national origin, disability, and familial status (presence of children in the household). The Human Rights Commission published its first Testing Report in 1999. This study represented the first countywide testing study undertaken by Fairfax County. Since that time, the Commission has continued with its fair housing testing initiatives, enforcement efforts, and related education and outreach programs.

On June 23, 1997, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in Fairfax County. This document authorized the development of a plan to address fair housing impediments under the auspices of the Fairfax County Human Rights Commission and in partnership with other County agencies and appropriate regional and local community based and housing industry organizations. The Board of Supervisors decided that the Fairfax County Human Rights Commission should take primary responsibility for addressing the identified impediments including lack of availability of discrimination data, need for education and outreach, and lack of housing opportunities for families with children and persons with disabilities. Also, in August 1998 the Human Rights Commission formed a Fair Housing Task Force composed of stakeholders from the housing industry, community associations, public officials, nonprofit groups, and interested citizens. The Task Force serves in an advisory capacity to the Commission. It also provides a forum for discussion and clarification of the fair housing needs of various communities and assists in building public support for fair housing efforts.

Federal, State, and County Fair Housing Laws

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in renting, selling, or financing a home based on race, color, religion, national origin, and sex. Congress amended the federal law in 1988 to include familial status (families with children under age 18) and disability as protected classes.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) is authorized to review local and state fair housing laws to make a determination of whether these laws contain rights and remedies for alleged discriminatory housing practices that are substantially equivalent to those provided in the federal law. Once a local or state enforcement agency has been certified, HUD will refer complaints of housing discrimination to the certified agency for investigation and resolution. Fairfax County has been through the process of having its Human Rights Ordinance, as amended, reviewed by HUD for substantial equivalency certification. HUD has certified that the Fairfax County Human Rights Ordinance is equivalent to the federal law.

The Fairfax County Fair Housing Act and the Virginia Fair Housing Law prohibit discrimination in housing transactions and services on the same bases covered by the federal law: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, and familial status. Both Fairfax County and the state of Virginia also provide fair housing protections based on elderliness (55 and over), source of funds, sexual orientation, gender identity, and military status. In addition, the Fairfax County Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of marital status.



Fair Housing Testing 2019-2021

This project consisted of a series of matched-pair email, phone, video, and in-person tests to determine the availability of rental housing to Black consumers, Latinx consumers, Asian consumers, and consumers with disabilities in comparison to White consumers, White American consumers, and consumers without disabilities in Fairfax County, Virginia. The project also included testing in the sales and lending markets to compare the treatment of White and Black consumers by real estate agents and loan officers. Race and national origin have both been protected classes since the passage of the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the Virginia Fair Housing Law of 1972. Disability became a protected class under the federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and was added to the Virginia Fair Housing Law in 1991.

Fair housing laws afford equal treatment in housing for all individuals. They make it illegal to deny someone housing and impose different terms and conditions because of a person’s membership in a protected class. Two similarly situated prospective tenants should be expected to be treated equally by housing providers.

Scope of the Testing Project

ERC analyzed 122 matched-pair tests in the rental, sales, and lending markets for FCOHREP from June 2019 to March 2021. Tests were conducted using a variety of primary contact methods, as indicated in the three tables below. Though ERC originally intended to conduct the majority of testing by phone and through in-person visits, the COVID-19 pandemic severely restricted ERC’s ability to conduct certain types of testing. Many of those in-person visits were converted to other types of tests. Online tests refer to tests conducted via email or by submitting a form on a housing provider’s website. Remote tests refer to tests conducted via phone or via a video meeting.

Table 1: All Tests by Protected Class & Testing Market

Protected Class	Market			
	Rental	Lending	Sales	Total
Race (Black)	25	15	14	54
National Origin (Latinx)	41	0	0	41
National Origin (Asian)	14	0	0	14
Disability (Deaf)	13	0	0	13
Total tests	93	15	14	122

Table 2: Rental Tests by Protected Class & Primary Contact Method

Protected Class	Primary Contact Method			
	Online	In-person	Remote	Total
Race (Black)	0	6	19	25
National Origin (Latinx)	29	0	12	41
National Origin (Asian)	14	0	0	14
Disability (Deaf)	0	0	13	13
Total rental tests	43	6	44	93

Table 3: Lending Tests by Protected Class & Primary Contact Method

Protected Class	Primary Contact Method			
	Online	In-person	Remote	Total
Race (Black)	0	5	10	15

Table 4: Sales Tests by Protected Class & Primary Contact Method

Protected Class	Primary Contact Method			
	Online	In-person	Remote	Total
Race (Black)	0	0	14	14

In the 93 tests of the rental market in Fairfax County, ERC tested approximately 67 different multi-family housing units, across approximately 44 unique housing providers.

In the 15 tests of the lending market in Fairfax County, ERC tested approximately eight different banks.

In the 14 tests of the sales market in Fairfax County, ERC tested approximately nine different real estate agencies.

Limitations

ERC conducted the majority of testing under this project during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, housing providers frequently changed their offerings (in-person tours, remote tours, phone calls, emails, etc.) and the rental, lending, and sales markets have been increasingly virtual and discreet. Though the ERC instituted new remote testing procedures, its staff and testers also had to adapt to the changing work environment.

Fair Housing Testing Methodology

All of the tests conducted under this contract were matched-pair tests. This means that ERC developed tester profiles of two similarly situated consumers who differed only in their race, national origin, or ability. All race tests paired a Black tester with a White tester and were conducted in-person or remotely.¹ ERC conducted national origin email testing, which paired a White American tester profile with either an Asian tester profile or a Latinx tester profile and mentioned a specific country of origin. Specific countries of origin are kept confidential to avoid detection. ERC also conducted national origin phone testing, which paired a White American tester with a Latinx tester with an accent. For phone testing on the basis of disability, Deaf testers calling with Internet Protocol (IP) or Video Relay Services (VRS) were matched with hearing testers using a traditional phone service.²

Identification of Test Sites

Before identifying specific test sites, ERC utilized Fairfax's latest Analysis of Impediments and mapping technology to understand patterns of racial segregation in the county. ERC looked at demographic data by census tract, with specific attention on census tracts mentioned in the AI. For instance, when conducting disability testing, ERC considered whether housing providers in neighborhoods with a higher Deaf population were making accommodations. When conducting race testing, ERC considered whether neighborhoods with a high population of White individuals could be segregated due to current practices of housing discrimination. The ERC identified test sites in Fairfax County, VA through online advertising sites such as Apartments.com, Rent.com, and Zillow.com. ERC did not observe discriminatory statements in any ads.

Tester Recruitment and Training

ERC recruited from its existing tester pool for this project. ERC provides extensive training for all testers in becoming objective factfinders. Tester training includes basic fair housing information, the history of civil rights testing, the importance of objectivity, accuracy, and timeliness in testing, as well as a thorough review of test procedures, test assignment, and test report forms. After training, each tester

¹ When the ERC was unable to secure a video meeting with a housing provider, the ERC amended tester profiles and assignments to include more racial signifiers. The ERC has intentionally kept examples of these racial signifiers vague so as to preserve their testing methodology.

² Telecommunication Relay Services allow Deaf, Hard of Hearing (HoH), and individuals with speech disorders, among others, to make phone calls with the use of assistive technology. Using an online video, VRS allows Deaf individuals to make phone calls with the assistance of an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. VRS services may be preferable for Deaf users who sign and may be more accessible for Deaf users who do not know English, as it allows conversation in real-time between the Deaf user and the person they are calling, with an ASL interpreter who also speaks English as the go-between. IP Relay allows Deaf users to use a computer or their phone to make phone calls with the assistance of a communications assistant (CA). The CA places the phone call for the user, who then types or texts what they want the CA to say on their behalf, and then the CA types the response back to the Deaf/HoH User.

must complete a field exercise that is strictly evaluated before the tester is added to the tester pool. ERC provides additional training and field exercises for the lending and sales markets. Tester identities are not included in this report because they are confidential and protected to ensure the integrity of this testing project, as well as future projects and investigations.

Testing Materials

ERC prepares various test forms for each test. Testers receive tester assignment and report forms. Assignment forms give testers necessary information to conduct the test, including test site identification and contact information, as well as a tester profile, which includes family composition, income and employment information, type of housing and timeframe desired, and any special instructions. Test report forms supplement any electronic files, such as emails, text, and recordings, and give a test coordinator a written account of what occurred on the test and allows a test coordinator to assess the interaction for possible discriminatory housing practices.

Tester Profiles and Tester Preparation

ERC develops credible tester profiles for individuals seeking housing and meets with testers before their test to ensure they understand their assignments. Testers are expected to stay in contact with their test coordinator throughout their various contacts to a housing provider.

Test Review and Analysis

After each test, ERC's test coordinators meet with each tester separately to get a full understanding of what happened on the test. Staff review all test forms for accuracy and collect all test forms and any electronic files and decide if any follow-up contact is warranted. Afterward, in the case of matched-pair testing, test coordinators compare report forms and any electronic files from two different testers and look for differences.

Test Results

A note on terminology

Individuals familiar with matched-pair testing may have heard the names “control” and “protected” tester. For instance, in a race test, a White tester may be called the “control” tester, and a Black tester may be called the “protected” tester. However, many in the civil rights testing movement have pointed out that, by law, technically both a White and a Black tester would be ‘protected’ from race discrimination. Thus, the ERC uses the term “treatment tester” to refer to the tester one might suspect to receive different treatment because of their membership in a protected class. Often times, it is also simply just easier to understand and more direct to be more specific about the testers’ characteristics, so you may also see the ERC list testers by race, national origin, or disability.

The sections below outline how many tests showed differences in treatment between control and treatment testers and give examples of indicators of different treatment. Though ERC re-tested housing providers that did not give the same kind or level of information to treatment testers as they did to control testers, they were often unable to replicate the same results, indicating that more testing is needed.

Race Testing

Rental Tests

ERC analyzed 25 rental tests on the basis of race, all of which compared treatment between a Black tester and a White tester. Six tests were conducted in-person before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the remaining tests were conducted remotely, either via video meeting or via phone.

The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers’ treatment of White and Black testers in eight tests. Examples of the types of differences seen in these tests are listed below:

- Leasing agent quoted the Black tester a higher rent amount than the White tester
- Leasing agent told the White tester the apartment they were viewing was available now, but told the Black tester it was not available until later
- Leasing agent told the Black tester about more fees
- Leasing agent showed the White tester amenities, but did not do the same on the Black tester’s tour
- Both testers received the same information during the tour, but then the housing provider only sent the White tester a quote via email after the tour
- Leasing agent only offered a virtual tour to the White tester
- Leasing agent told the White tester about an additional unit in a different complex

Lending Tests

ERC analyzed 15 lending tests on the basis of race, all of which compared treatment between a Black tester and a White tester. Five tests were conducted in-person before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the remaining tests were conducted remotely, either via video meeting or via phone.

The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of White and Black testers in 8 tests. Examples of the types of differences seen in these tests are listed below:

- Loan officer only offered the Black tester first time homebuyer loan products
- Loan officer gave one tester a greater level of coaching about the home-buying process
- Loan officer gave the White tester a loan quote without asking their income
- Loan officer quoted testers different loan products with different interest rates
- Loan officer provided more coaching about savings from renting to owning to the Black tester
- Loan officer only interacted via email with the Black tester, but agreed to an online meeting with the White tester
- Loan officer only generated a quote for the White tester

Sales Tests

ERC analyzed 14 sales tests on the basis of race, all of which compared treatment between a Black tester and a White tester. All tests were conducted remotely, either via video meeting or via phone.

The ERC observed discernable differences between real estate agents' treatment of White and Black testers in six tests. Examples of the types of differences seen in these tests are listed below:

- Agent showed the White tester more condo units than the Black tester
- Agent showed the White tester condo units out of their price range
- Agent only told the Black tester about a holding deposit
- Agent only asked one tester to sign a buyer's agreement
- Agent only followed-up with the White tester to give them more information via email

National Origin Testing

Rental Tests

ERC analyzed 55 rental tests on the basis of national origin, all of which compared treatment between a White American tester and a Latinx tester or an Asian tester. In 41 of those tests, the treatment tester profile was Latinx. In 14 of those tests, the treatment tester profile was Asian.

Latinx treatment tester

ERC conducted 29 email tests with a Latinx treatment tester. **The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of the White American and Latinx tester in 13 tests.** Examples of the types of differences seen in these tests are listed below:

- Housing provider emailed both testers, but gave the control tester much more detailed information, including a quote
- Housing provider only told the control tester about income requirements
- Housing provider only left a voicemail for the control tester
- Housing provider followed-up with the control tester more times than the treatment tester
- Housing provider sent the control tester a quote several days before the treatment tester
- Housing provider followed-up with the treatment tester more times than the control tester, usually in the tester's disclosed native language

ERC conducted 12 remote tests with a Latinx treatment tester. **The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of the White American and Latinx tester in 2 tests.** Examples of the types of differences seen in these tests are listed below:

- Housing provider told the control tester about one additional unit
- Housing provider only told the control tester about community amenities
- Housing provider gave the control tester a virtual tour, but did not respond to the treatment tester's request for a tour

Asian treatment tester

ERC conducted 14 email tests with an Asian treatment tester. **The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of the White American and the Asian tester in 6 tests.**

Examples of the types of differences seen in these tests are listed below:

- Housing provider told the control tester about more units than the treatment tester
- Housing provider provided the control tester more in-depth information about the qualification requirements
- Housing provider emailed the testers about different specials
- Housing provider only called and left a voicemail for the control tester
- Housing provider only told the control tester about income requirements
- Housing provider only left a voicemail for the control tester

Disability

Rental Tests

ERC analyzed 13 rentals on the basis of disability, all of which compared treatment between a Deaf tester using either an IP relay service or a video relay service and a hearing tester using a traditional phone service.

The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of Deaf and hearing testers in 6 tests. Examples of the types of differences seen in these tests are listed below:

- Leasing agent only questioned the Deaf tester on how they found out about the complex
- Leasing agent only asked the hearing tester for their contact information
- Leasing agent only offered the hearing tester a live tour
- Leasing agent only told the hearing tester about a special
- Leasing agent initially hung up on the Deaf tester
- Leasing agent told the Deaf tester about more stringent application requirements than the hearing tester



Findings

Fair Housing Laws that protect people on the basis of race, national origin, and disability from discrimination in the rental, lending, and sales markets have been in effect for far too long for the incidence of discrimination to remain this high across sectors. In general, the tests showed housing providers were more likely to give White testers more detailed information, respond more frequently to their messages, and give them more favorable terms than their matched pair. It was also clear that certain housing providers lack the training to provide the same level of treatment to Deaf individuals as they do to hearing individuals and may not be educated on the different types of phone systems Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals may use to



communicate. In society's rapid adjustment to the remote work environment in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital that housing providers understand how to serve all consumers effectively, especially those with disabilities.

The reason why the number of tests with differences remained fairly low in the rental market but spiked in the lending and sales market may be due to the fact that many fair housing agencies have focused investigative and educational efforts solely on rental housing providers for decades. Though this distribution is likely due to the fact that in-depth testing and investigation of lending and sales markets is highly resource intensive, the numbers clearly show that historical practices of segregating neighborhoods through steering or offering no or worse loans to Black individuals is still very much an issue today.

Recommendations

The results demonstrate a need for continued attention to the ways, outright or subtle, knowingly, or unknowingly, in which housing providers and others in the housing industry discourage specific groups from seeking housing in ways that put them at a disadvantage for viewing and meeting the requirements for accessing housing in a timely manner, cost them more than other housing seekers, or inhibit or discourage them from renting or buying in specific areas. Moreover, it can lead to or maintain segregation and unequal access to resources for certain groups



A strong enforcement program, along with providing access to comprehensive education and training opportunities on a regular and continuing basis about fair housing laws and related issues is critical. Expanding outreach efforts to housing service providers; developing closer ties and opportunities for collaboration with other local organizations and advocacy groups promoting equal opportunity in housing in the County and greater D.C. area; partnering with community-based organizations, non-profit groups and agencies that serve and interact on a regular basis with target audiences; and reaching out to vulnerable populations directly through targeted campaigns using a variety of social and other media outlets to provide information about fair housing and the resources and services the Commission and others provide is recommended. In the meantime, further incorporating and emphasizing some of the more troubling aspects of the current findings into fair housing materials, presentations, and other outreach initiatives is advised. An effective testing program, strong enforcement of fair housing laws and ongoing efforts to provide outreach and education programs on fair housing compliance issues are all essential components of the County’s efforts to minimize housing bias and ensure that equal housing opportunity is a reality in Fairfax County. Of particular note, though rental testing and intakes have been a focus of the Commission for years, the Commission should consider devoting resources to investigating patterns of segregation caused by discriminatory sales and lending practices and conduct more testing in those markets.

When merited by the facts, the Fairfax County Human Rights Commission will continue to file complaints to enforce the fair housing laws of Fairfax County. Regardless of the number of discriminatory practices uncovered by testing, the goal of the Commission remains to eliminate housing discrimination throughout the County. The ability to monitor compliance through its testing program continues to be a critical component of that goal.

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Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable ADA accommodations and alternative information formats will be provided upon request.



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