

LEGAL NOTICE

IF YOU ARE AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN CURRENT OR FORMER RESIDENT OR APPLICANT OF THE BLAKELY HOUSING AUTHORITY, A CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT MAY AFFECT YOUR RIGHTS.

You may be affected by a class action lawsuit about whether the Blakely Housing Authority (BHA) and its Executive Director Dan Cooper discriminated against current and former African-American residents and applicants of the BHA.

The lawsuit is called *Queen King (and Others) v. City of Blakely Housing Authority and Dan Cooper*, No. 1:00-CV-109-1 (WLS), and is in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia (Albany/Americus Division). This lawsuit is a class action on behalf of a "Class," or group of people, that could include you. This notice summarizes your rights and options before an up-coming fairness hearing at which the Court will decide whether to approve a proposed settlement of the lawsuit as fair to all members of the Class.

The fairness hearing will be held on _____, 2004, at _____ a.m., at the United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, C.B. King U.S. Courthouse, 201 W. Broad Ave., Courtroom ____, Albany, GA, before the Honorable W. Louis Sands, Chief Judge.

More information about the lawsuit, the proposed settlement, the fairness hearing and your rights is available by writing to the address below or by visiting the website below. If you are included in the Class, you have to decide whether to stay in the Class and be bound by the proposed settlement or to ask to be excluded and keep your right to sue the BHA and Dan Cooper.

ARE YOU AFFECTED?

African-American current or former residents or applicants of the BHA who were or are subjected to racial discrimination or retaliation at the BHA are Class members.

WHAT IS THIS CASE ABOUT?

The lawsuit claims that the BHA and Dan Cooper discriminated in a variety of ways against African-American residents and applicants of the BHA since at least 1994. Specifically, Plaintiffs allege that the BHA and Dan Cooper have established and maintained racially segregated housing by selecting housing applicants to fill apartment vacancies based on race, rather than in compliance with the BHA's written policy establishing specific, non-race-based methods for filling vacancies. The lawsuit also alleges that the BHA and Dan Cooper have enforced the rules and conditions of rental more strictly against African-American tenants than White tenants. The lawsuit further alleges that the BHA and Dan Cooper retaliated against certain members of the Class for complaining and publicly protesting about the alleged discrimination at the BHA. The BHA and Dan Cooper have denied that they engaged in such wrongdoing.

WHAT DOES THE SETTLEMENT PROVIDE?

The proposed settlement provides for both monetary and non-monetary relief and must be approved by the Court at the fairness hearing referenced in this notice. Among the non-monetary relief, the proposed settlement requires that Dan Cooper resign from his position at the BHA and never be permitted to work for the BHA in the future. It requires the BHA to follow a non-discriminatory policy in placing tenants in apartments and provides for oversight of the BHA's policies and practices for a certain period of time by the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). It requires the BHA and certain of its employees to undergo fair housing training and to enforce the rules and conditions of rental equally and not according to race. It also requires the BHA to forgive any past-due balances of former BHA tenants who wish to move back to the BHA and, depending on their individual

circumstances and government regulations, to have other negative information deleted from the BHA files of such former tenants. For monetary relief, the proposed settlement provides for lump-sum payments to the three Class representatives, seven other individuals and one non-profit organization who started this litigation by filing administrative complaints with the Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity and who worked extensively with the attorneys representing the Class for several years to prosecute this lawsuit. It also provides certain monetary benefits to reimburse those current or former BHA tenants who, as determined by the DOJ after reviewing the BHA's files, were charged unwarranted late fees by the BHA. The proposed settlement also provides for the attorneys for the Class to receive a certain percentage – less than 20% – of any monetary benefits awarded. A more detailed description of the proposed settlement is contained in the notice available at the address and website indicated below.

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

You have a choice of whether to stay in the Class or not, **and you must decide this now.** If you stay in the Class, you will be legally bound by all orders and judgments of the Court, and you will not be able to sue, or continue to sue, the BHA or Dan Cooper for racial discrimination at the BHA that occurred through the date on which the Court finally approves the proposed settlement. In that case, you will be entitled to the benefits of the injunctive, non-monetary relief set forth in the proposed settlement and may be entitled to share in the portion of any monetary benefits allocated to reimburse those BHA tenants who were charged unwarranted late fees by the BHA and to have forgiven any past-due balance you owed the BHA at the time you moved out and, depending on your individual circumstances, to have other negative information deleted from your BHA file. **If you wish to stay in the Class, you need do nothing in response to this notice.**

You may also object to the proposed settlement. If you wish to do so, you should **not** request to be excluded from the Class. Instead, you must file a notice with the Court and provide copies to the attorneys for the parties to the lawsuit. Information about this notice, the information it must contain and where to send it is contained in the detailed notice available at the address and website indicated below.

If you wish to be excluded from the Class, you cannot receive any monetary benefits from the lawsuit if you are in fact eligible for them as explained in the paragraphs above, and you cannot object to the proposed settlement, but you will keep any rights to sue the BHA and Dan Cooper for money damages for the claims described above, now or in the future, and will not be bound by any orders or judgments of the Court that pertain to monetary damages. To ask to be excluded, you must send a written notice, requesting to be excluded from the Class, to Nancy Kilson, Esq., Proskauer Rose LLP, 1585 Broadway, New York, NY 10036-8299. The written notice must contain your name, address, daytime and evening telephone numbers, social security number and the approximate dates on which you resided at the Blakely Housing Authority. This request must be postmarked no later than _____, 2004.

HOW CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?

If you have questions or want a detailed notice or other documents about this lawsuit and your rights, please write to Nancy Kilson, Esq., Proskauer Rose LLP, 1585 Broadway, New York, NY 10036-8299. A detailed notice about the lawsuit, the proposed settlement, the fairness hearing and your rights is also available at [www.lawyerscomm.org/blakely].