

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
AND
THE TEXAS APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

BACKGROUND

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Texas Apartment Association (TAA) are signing this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to demonstrate their continuing commitment to work together to reduce discrimination in rental housing. Under this MOU, TAA and HUD will undertake specific actions that will help further the national policy of providing fair housing to all, as articulated by the Fair Housing Act and its amendments. HUD acknowledges that TAA has a long-term commitment to supporting the principles and concepts of fair housing and promoting fair housing to its members and the rental housing industry in Texas.

Fair housing is a vital component in our nation's real estate market. The fair housing laws ensure a person's right to housing without regard to race, color, religion, sex, familial status, handicap or national origin. These laws ensure that each family or individual that seeks rental housing is treated fairly. Rental housing is an important housing solution, particularly for low- and moderate-income families and persons with disabilities. This collaboration is an attempt to eradicate discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities.

The diversity of our nation's population means that in growing numbers of housing transactions, the parties will be from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Over two-thirds of the new households being formed this decade will be minority and immigrant, underscoring the importance of ensuring fair and equal treatment in the housing market and the paramount importance to not only the families and individuals seeking housing, but also to the success and continuing strength of America's economy.

TAA and HUD are addressing ongoing concerns about fair housing discrimination by creating new and innovative education and outreach programs, improving training and internal practices to combat discrimination against minority families and persons with disabilities in the rental housing market, and reaffirming each entity's continued commitment to achieve the goal of fair housing and increasing housing opportunities for minorities and persons with disabilities in all communities across this country.

Each signatory to this MOU pledges its continuing cooperation and has identified specific organizational actions to undertake or in which to participate to further the purposes of this agreement and increase rental housing opportunities for all minorities and persons with disabilities in the state of Texas.

SIGNATORY ACTIONS:

TAA and HUD agree to undertake the following joint and individual actions:

- TAA will distribute fair housing information to all of its affiliated local associations and will encourage its affiliated locals to invite HUD local fair housing staff and fair housing experts, such as those from Fair Housing Assistance Program or Fair Housing Initiatives Program recipients, to make

presentations to property owners and site managers on fair housing and civil rights requirements.

- TAA will conduct a series of “leadership workshops” with rental housing owners and marketing experts for minority and the disability communities to identify and promote an understanding of industry best practices for creating rental-housing opportunities for minorities and persons with disabilities.
- TAA will encourage its affiliated local associations to participate in community fair housing and equal opportunity activities.
- TAA and its affiliated local associations will encourage their members to use advertising for housing and apartment rentals that indicate to the general public that the advertised housing is open to all persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex, familial status, handicap or national origin.
- TAA and its affiliated locals will encourage members to display, in prominent places in their offices, fair housing posters as required in 24 CFR Part 110.
- TAA will continue to periodically disseminate, through its magazine, newsletter and website, information to its members about fair housing issues, with a particular focus on accessibility related issues.
- TAA will continue to update its online and in person fair housing courses to include relevant accessibility related information.
- HUD and TAA will work together to develop and disseminate consumer education materials in Texas. This material will assist in increasing understanding in the minority and disability communities and the general public about the rental housing application process, tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities, discriminatory housing practices and complaint procedures, and the many benefits of decent, safe and sanitary rental housing.
- On an annual basis, HUD will participate in the TAA Education Conference and similar conferences, including the conference on April 19-21, 2007, in Houston, TX.
- HUD will share with TAA and seek its input regarding any new initiatives to educate and inform the public about the rights and responsibilities of all persons engaged in rental housing transactions, as defined by the Fair Housing Act.
- TAA will invite rental and fair housing experts from Texas to speak at rental industry events and encourage other local rental and apartment trade groups in the State of Texas to do the same. HUD will do likewise at appropriate HUD housing forums and encourage the HUD Regional and local offices to do the same.

- HUD will promote the voluntary assistance of substantially equivalent State and local Fair Housing Assistance Program agencies and private nonprofit Fair Housing Initiatives Program agencies in the State of Texas to disseminate consumer education materials at housing fairs and on the internet.
- TAA members have expressed confusion regarding the fair housing accessibility law and interpretations of that law. HUD agrees to discuss with TAA HUD's enforcement policies with respect to the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act.
- HUD will continue to work with other Federal agencies, and substantially equivalent state and local entities, to inform and advise them about HUD guidelines, regulations, and interpretation and application of the Fair Housing Act, particularly with respect to accessibility.

IMPLEMENTATION

This MOU is effective 30 days from the date of the last signature on this document.

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity



Kim Kendrick

4/19/07
Date

Texas Apartment Association
President



Cheryl Pucci

4-19-07
Date