



Open Doors

News from the Metropolitan St. Louis
Equal Housing and Opportunity Council

EHOC Settles Familial Status Complaint

EHOC recently settled a familial status complaint against a St. Louis City property management company. Between July 31, 2013 and August 4, 2013, EHOC conducted a series of matched-pair tests at a property located in the 26th Ward of St. Louis City, just north of Forest Park. EHOC initiated a complaint after the testing revealed that respondent refused to rent out 2-bedroom apartments to 4-person families with children.



Refusing to rent a two-bedroom apartment to a family of four may be a violation of the Fair Housing Act under the familial status protections.

In general, courts and HUD have found a two-person per bedroom standard to be reasonable. Housing providers enforcing stricter occupancy requirements are potentially in violation of the Fair Housing Act's prohibition against discrimination based on familial status.

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EHOC is supported by a grant through the U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development and through grants from St. Louis City Community Development Administration, St. Louis County and from supporters like you.

The respondent attempted to justify its practice by arguing that the properties in question were too small for four occupants based on city ordinances limiting occupancy based on available sleeping area. City inspectors, however, had issued Certificates of Inspection indicating that the apartments in question were approved for four occupants.

EHOC ultimately settled the complaint contingent upon respondent's agreement to (1) rent out two-bedroom units at the property in question to up to four people; (2) have its owners, agents, and employees attend a fair housing training provided by EHOC; (3) conspicuously display a Missouri Fair Housing Poster at each of its properties and the Equal Housing Opportunity logo on its website; and (4) continually comply with local, state, and federal laws relating to housing practices and not engage in discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, disability, or familial status.

Group Home Case Continues in Springfield, Missouri

EHOC is assisting a group home for people with substance abuse disabilities after it was ordered to shut down by the city of Springfield, MO. The group home in question is run by Recovery Chapel, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ministering to families in recovery from substance use disorders.

Courts have routinely held that the Fair Housing Act entitles group homes for persons with disabilities to operate in neighborhoods zoned for single family occupancy, even if the group homes would otherwise exceed the number of unrelated persons generally allowed to live in a single family home.



The group home in question was originally ordered to be shut down by the city building administrator, who determined that the property was a "Community Corrections Facility" because more than one person living at the property was on probation or parole. The group home filed an appeal with the City of Springfield Board of Adjustment, where EHOC advocated in



Mission

The Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council (EHOC) works to ensure equal access to housing and places of public accommodation through education, counseling, investigation and enforcement of fair housing laws.

Services

Education - EHOC provides education about fair housing to consumers as well as to housing providers, real estate agents, local governments, architects and others. If you are a nonprofit organization and would like to set up a workshop, please call 800-555-3951 x7016.

Fair Housing Complaint Counseling and Investigation - EHOC assists those who believe they have been discriminated against in housing due to their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, familial status, disability or because of sexual orientation, marital status, age (40+), ancestry, military

favor of allowing the group home to continue to operate. After some debate, the Board let the city building administrator's determination stand, denying the property from operating as a group home.

EHOC is now pursuing an appeal in federal court on behalf of Recovery Chapel. Recovery Chapel's complaint alleges that the failure to allow the property to operate as a group home for persons with disabilities violates the Fair Housing Act, the Missouri Human Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the plain language of the Springfield Zoning Ordinance.

Upcoming Events

Join us on Saturday, June 28 at Health and Sustainable Housing Fair, hosted by the Lemay Housing Partnership!



9:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Maria Center, School Sisters of Notre Dame Campus
336 E. Ripa Ave., St Louis MO 63125

Featuring presentations and booths on energy efficiency, rain barrels, home maintenance tips, and more! EHOC will be presenting on fair housing and will have information and resources available about fair housing and landlord tenant rights.

[View the flyer here.](#)

Welcome EHOC's Summer Interns!

EHOC is excited to welcome our summer interns! This year, we have students from Washington University in St. Louis School of Law and St. Louis University School of Public Health and Social Justice.

status, source of income under applicable local laws.

Tenant Hotline - EHOC offers a hotline to educate people on Missouri Landlord - Tenant law and to prevent homelessness.

Support

EHOC receives support from the U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD); St. Louis City CDA; St. Louis County Community Development and through tax-deductible contributions.

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Staff Attorney

Alexia Anderson,



Our interns assist with the landlord tenant hotline by providing information and assistance for individuals experiencing housing difficulties. They are trained in fair housing and landlord tenant law, and they help participate with fair housing education events. They also are trained as housing discrimination testers.

Interns also work on research projects that help further the mission of EHOC in ensuring equal access to housing. This summer, our interns are working on projects to promote a broader definition of family in local ordinances, strategies that affirmatively further fair housing, investigating impacts of crime-free housing ordinances, and promoting housing opportunities for immigrants and refugees.

We thank our interns for their hard work and service to further fair housing in the St. Louis region!

More Ways to Support Fair Housing

Have you considered putting the Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing & Opportunity in your will? If you are interested in making a bequest to EHOC to support future fair housing work, please contact Will Jordan at 314-534-5800 ext. 7018

The Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing & Opportunity Council offers four easy ways to support fair housing. Supporters can make a secure credit card donation to EHOC through [Network for Good](#) by clicking [here](#).

Supporters can also mail in a contribution to Alexia Anderson, EHOC, 1027 South Vandeventer Ave., 6th Floor, Saint Louis, MO 63110.

Supporters can also use [Good Search](#) as your Search Engine and select the Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing & Opportunity Council as the

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Website

www.ehocstl.org

Did you know?

Under the Fair Housing Act, it is illegal to implement land use or zoning policies that treat people with disabilities less favorably than people without disabilities. The Act states that disability is defined as any "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities". This includes persons recovering from

recipient.

You can also contribute to EHOC by shopping online through [iGive.com](https://www.give.com) and select Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing & Opportunity Council as the recipient.

We are grateful for your support!

substance abuse and addiction to illegal drugs, as long as they are not current users of illegal drugs. Disallowing a group of people with disabilities to live in a group home may be a violation of the Fair Housing Act. For more information, see the [Joint Statement by HUD and DOJ on Group Homes, Local Land Use, and the Fair Housing Act.](#)

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