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GENERAL NEWS

DOJ Sues MO Landlords with Discrimination Based on Criminal History

In a [press release](#) yesterday, the Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)) announced that it has filed a [lawsuit](#) alleging that the owners and managers of a residential rental property in Kinloch, Missouri, discriminated against prospective Black tenants by banning them with any past felony conviction and certain other criminal histories, in violation of the [Fair Housing Act](#).

The complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, alleges that, during their respective periods of ownership or management of the property from at least November 2015 to January 2024, the defendants enforced a ban on tenants with felony convictions and certain other criminal histories, regardless of how long ago the conviction occurred. By choosing to use that policy, known to have significant racial disparities, the defendants likely deterred prospective Black tenants from applying to rent and excluded them from housing opportunities.

The allegations were based, in part, on evidence generated by the department’s Fair Housing Testing Program, in which individuals pose as prospective renters to gather information about possible discriminatory practices. The lawsuit seeks monetary damages to remedy the harms caused by the defendants’ policy, a civil penalty to vindicate the public interest, and a court order barring future discrimination.

Former Buffalo Public School Wins Historic Preservation Award

HUD’s Office of Policy Development and Research ([PD&R](#)) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation ([ACHP](#)) have [announced](#) Public School 75 of Buffalo, New York, now known as the Charlie Bush Building, as the winner of the [2024 ACHP/HUD Secretary’s Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation](#). This annual award recognizes a single project that has successfully advanced the goals of historic preservation, while providing affordable housing for low and moderate-income families and individuals.

According to the announcement, the Charlie Bush Building opened as Public School 75 in 1925. It closed in 1979 and after serving other purposes, shut its doors for good in the early 2000s. After sitting vacant for two decades, the building fell into disrepair, however, the Western New York Veterans Housing Coalition saw the potential to support local veterans and families by restoring the school into housing. The Coalition teamed up with other organizations to preserve School 75 and create 47 apartments, a mix of studio, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom units, including 33 with supportive services for veterans and military service-disabled individuals.

You can learn more about the winning project and the Excellence in Historic Preservation award program [here](#).



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