

HUD CHARGES OKLAHOMA LANDLORDS WITH DISCRIMINATING AGAINST VETERAN WITH DISABILITIES

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced today that it is charging the landlords of a Moore, Oklahoma rental home with violating the Fair Housing Act by denying the reasonable accommodation requests of their tenant, a veteran with disabilities. Read the charge.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits housing providers from denying or limiting housing to persons with disabilities, or from refusing to make reasonable accommodations in policies or practices for people with disabilities. This includes waiving pet fees for persons with disabilities who use assistance animals.

The case came to HUD's attention when a combat veteran living with a mental disability who uses an emotional support animal filed a complaint alleging that the owners of the house he was renting. The tenant complained that AMH 2015-1 Borrower, LLC, and its management company, AH4R Management – OK, LLC, refused to waive their pet deposit fee. HUD's charge alleges that although the man provided the owners and management company with medical documentation attesting to his need for the animal, they denied his request to waive a \$250 pet fee. Under the law, assistance animals are not considered pets.

Disability is the most common basis of fair housing complaint filed with HUD and its partner agencies. Last year alone, HUD and its partners considered over 4,900 disability-related complaints, or more than 58 percent of all fair housing complaints. HUD's charge will be heard by a United States Administrative Law Judge unless any party to the charge elects to have the case heard in federal district court. If an administrative law judge finds after a hearing that discrimination has occurred, he or she may award damages to the complainant for their loss as a result of the discrimination. The judge may also order injunctive relief and other equitable relief, as well as payment of attorney fees. In addition, the judge may impose civil penalties in order to vindicate the public interest. If the case is heard in federal court, the judge may also award punitive damages to the complainant.

People who believe they have experienced discrimination may file a complaint by contacting HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at (800) 669-9777 (voice) or (800) 927-9275 (TTY). Housing discrimination complaints may also be filed by going to www.hud.gov/fairhousing, or by downloading HUD's free housing discrimination mobile application, which can be accessed through Apple and Android devices.