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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Secretary Ben Carson



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HUD WITHDRAWS FAIR HOUSING ASSESSMENT TOOL

Flawed assessment tool found to be confusing, difficult to use for local governments

WASHINGTON - After a months-long technical evaluation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) today announced that it is withdrawing a computer assessment tool originally intended to be helpful to local governments in meeting their obligations under the Fair Housing Act to 'affirmatively further fair housing.'

HUD found that rather than assisting local governments in formulating acceptable Assessments of Fair Housing (AFH), the Local Government Assessment Tool was confusing, difficult to use, and frequently produced unacceptable assessments. As a result, the Department is withdrawing the tool, plans a series of national listening sessions, and will seek public comment on the best framework for local governments to further fair housing choices in their communities (Read HUD's notice).

With today's action, HUD is reaffirming its commitment to the Fair Housing Act and the law's requirement that recipients of HUD funding must affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH).

HUD's Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Anna Maria Farías said, "We believe in furthering fair housing choice in our neighborhoods, but we have to help, not hinder those who have to put our rules into practice. We must make certain that our tools can facilitate the goals we all share-to build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination."

Background

In July of 2015, HUD published a regulation to equip local governments with data and tools to help them meet their long-standing fair housing obligations to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH) in their use of HUD funds. However, HUD found convincing evidence that the Assessment of Fair Housing tool for local governments wasn't working well. In fact, more than a third of those early submitters initially failed to produce an acceptable assessment-not for lack of trying but because the assessment tool intended to help them wasn't helpful in promoting fair housing.

Consequently, last January, HUD extended the deadline for local governments to submit an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH). In today's notice to its stakeholder community, HUD announced it found the tool to be flawed and will now review the assessment tool and its function under the AFFH regulations to make it less burdensome and more helpful in creating impactful fair housing goals.

As a result of today's notice, HUD is also withdrawing its January 5, 2018, notice that extended the deadline for submission of an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) by local governments (Read HUD's notice).

In addition, any local government that has not yet submitted an AFH that has been accepted by HUD must conduct a robust Analysis of Impediments (AI) to fair housing choice within its jurisdiction. HUD is reminding these local governments that the legal obligation to affirmatively further fair housing remains in effect, and their AIs serve as effective fair housing planning tools. (Read HUD's notice).

Meanwhile, HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity is offering an unprecedented level of technical assistance to local jurisdictions in the preparation of their fair housing analyses. Read more.

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HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all.

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