

PREDETERMINATION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

CP# 09-17-70975
HUD# 07-17-7573-8

PARTIES TO THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

RESPONDENTS

BIGFOOT VERNON CO-OP, INC.
Gregory G. Ladehoff
PO Box 3093
Clinton, Iowa 52732

BIGFOOT PROPERTIES, LLC
1330 Locust Street
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

CHRISTINA MILLER
Westland Village Apartments
507 Vernon Street
West Burlington, Iowa 52655

COMPLAINANT

ANGELA JACKSON
Commissioner
Iowa Civil Rights Commission
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

and

IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Description of the Parties: Complainant is a member of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission). As a member, Complainant has the authority to file a complaint alleging a discriminatory practice in violation of the "Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965," Iowa Code Chapter 216. Complainant alleges discrimination in the area of housing on the basis of race.

Complainant alleges, on May, 1 2017, Respondent Christina Miller met in person with an African American tester and told her the monthly rent would be either \$625 or \$650 per month, but when she met with a Caucasian tester, on that same date, she told them the rent would be \$595 per month. Complainant alleges the quote of a higher price to the African American tester makes that unit unavailable and constitutes a refusal to rent based on race. Complainant also alleges Ms. Miller informed and confirmed with the Caucasian tester that Respondents were running a special which either reduced the rent by \$50 per month or reduced the security deposit by \$300. Complainant alleges Ms. Miller failed to inform and confirm the special with the African American tester which resulted in different terms and conditions of rental based on race. Respondents own or manage the subject property, a 48-unit apartment complex, known as Westland Village Apartments, located at 531 Vernon Street, West Burlington, Iowa 52655.

A complaint having been filed by Complainant against Respondents with the Commission under Iowa Code Chapter 216 and there having been a preliminary inquiry, the parties do hereby agree and settle the above-captioned matter in the following extent and manner:

Acknowledgment of Fair Housing Laws

1. Respondents agree there shall be no discrimination, harassment, or retaliation of any kind against Complainant or any other person for filing a charge under the “Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965” (ICRA); or because of giving testimony or assistance, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding or hearing under the ICRA; or because of lawful opposition to any practice forbidden by the ICRA. Iowa Code § 216.11(2).
2. Respondents acknowledge the ICRA makes it unlawful to discriminate in the terms, conditions or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling or in the provision of services or facilities in connection with the dwelling because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability, or familial status. Iowa Code § 216.8(1)(b).

Respondents acknowledge the Fair Housing Act (FHA) makes it unlawful to refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin. 42 U.S.C. 3604(a) (§ 804(a) of the Fair Housing Act).

3. Respondents acknowledge the ICRA makes it unlawful to sell, rent, lease, assign, sublease, refuse to negotiate, or to otherwise make unavailable, or deny any real property or housing accommodation or part, portion, or interest therein, to any person because of the race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, disability, or familial status of such person. Iowa Code § 216.8(1)(a).

Respondents acknowledge the Fair Housing Act (FHA) makes it unlawful to sell, rent, lease, assign, sublease, refuse to negotiate, or to otherwise make unavailable, or deny any real property or housing accommodation or part, portion, or interest therein, to any person

because of the of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin. 42 U.S.C. 3604(a) (§ 804(a) of the FHA).

Voluntary and Full Settlement

4. The parties acknowledge this Predetermination Settlement Agreement is a voluntary and full settlement of the disputed complaint. The parties affirm they have read and fully understand the terms set forth herein. No party has been coerced, intimidated, threatened or in any way forced to become a party to this Agreement.
5. The parties enter into this Agreement in a good faith effort to amicably resolve existing disputes. The execution of this Agreement is not an admission of any wrongdoing or violation of law. Nor is the execution of this Agreement an admission by Complainant that any claims asserted in her complaint are not fully meritorious.
6. The parties agree the execution of this Agreement may be accomplished by separate counterpart executions of this Agreement. The parties agree the original executed signature pages will be attached to the body of this Agreement to constitute one document.
7. Respondents agree the Commission may review compliance with this Agreement. And as part of such review, Respondents agree the Commission may examine witnesses, collect documents, or require written reports, all of which will be conducted in a reasonable manner by the Commission.

Disclosure

8. Because, pursuant to Iowa Code § 216.15A(2)(d), the Commission has not determined that disclosure is not necessary to further the purposes of the ICRA relating to unfair or discriminatory practices in housing or real estate, this Agreement is a public record and subject to public disclosure in accordance with Iowa's Public Records Law, Iowa Code Chapter 22. See Iowa Code § 22.13.

Release

9. Complainant hereby waives, releases, and covenants not to sue Respondents with respect to any matters which were, or might have been alleged as charges filed with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, or any other anti-discrimination agency, subject to performance by Respondents of the promises and representations contained herein. Complainant agrees any complaint filed with any other anti-discrimination agency, including the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, which involves the issues in this complaint, shall be closed as Satisfactorily Adjusted.

Fair Housing Training

10. Respondents agree Christina Miller, and each of Respondents' current employees or agents who are involved in the management or operation of residential rental properties will receive training on the requirements of State and Federal Fair Housing Laws within 90 days of their receipt of a Closing Letter from the Commission. The training will include an overview of fair housing laws, but will emphasize the law regarding the prohibition of discrimination at the rental and pre-rental stages. The training shall be conducted by a qualified person, approved by the Commission or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Respondents also agree to send documentation to the Commission, verifying the fair housing training has been completed, within ten (10) days of its completion.

Demographics

11. On an annual basis for the next three years, Respondents agree to provide a "demographic snapshot" of all occupants at their 48-unit apartment complex located at 531 Vernon Street, West Burlington, Iowa 52655. On or before November 30, 2017, November 30, 2018, and November 30, 2019, Respondents agree to provide the demographic snapshot as of November 1, 2017, November 1, 2018, and November 1, 2019. Each snapshot shall include a list of the units by (1) apartment number, (2) name(s) of each adult occupant, and (3) the known or apparent race of each adult occupant.

Respondents agree the Commission may review compliance with this Agreement. And, as part of such review, Respondents agree to provide to the Commission, upon written request, the current contact information (names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses) for each of the adult occupants identified in any of the snapshots described above, within ten (10) days of the Commission's request.

New Policy and Practice

12. Respondents agree to adopt and implement specific written standards and procedures for offering discount specials and other cost-saving incentives to tenants and prospective tenants. The new standards and procedures will address: (1) the process for determining whether and when discount specials and cost-saving incentives are offered, (2) the process for documenting the specials and incentives, (3) the process for ensuring all of their employees and agents are aware of all specials and incentives being offered, and (4) the process for ensuring all of their employees and agents are offering and marketing all specials and incentives to all prospective tenants and tenants without regard to race or national origin.

Within 30 days of receiving a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents agree to send their new standards and procedures to the Commission.

Respondents agree they will carefully consider any revisions to their standards and procedures suggested by the Commission, and will incorporate all reasonable suggestions for revisions in their standards and procedures.

Within 10 days of finalizing their standards and procedures, Respondents agree to send a copy of their standards and procedures, with the date they were implemented, to the Commission.

Relief for Complainant

13. Respondents agree to promote Fair Housing, by printing the Commission's fair housing brochure, "Fair Housing and You," and distributing the brochure to each of their rental units on or before November 30, 2017. Respondents agree to access the brochure on the Commission's website at:
https://icrc.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2013/FairHousing_English_2013.pdf

Respondents also agree to send a statement to the Commission, on or before November 30, 2017, verifying that the brochure was, in fact, distributed to each of their tenants with the number of rental units it was distributed to.

Reporting and Record-Keeping

14. Respondents shall forward to the Commission objective evidence of the successful completion of fair housing training in the form of a Certificate or a letter from the entity conducting the training within ten (10) days of the completion of the training, as evidence of compliance with Term 10 of this Agreement.
15. On or before November 30, 2017, November 30, 2018, and November 30, 2019, Respondents agree to provide a "demographic snapshot" of all occupants as of November 1, 2017, November 1, 2018, and November 1, 2019, as evidence of compliance with Term 11 of this Agreement.
16. Within 30 days of receiving a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents agree to send their new standards and procedures for offering discount specials and other cost-saving incentives to tenants and prospective tenants to the Commission for review, as evidence of compliance with Term 12 of this Agreement.
17. On or before November 30, 2017, Respondents shall send a written statement to the Commission verifying the "Fair Housing and You" brochure has been distributed to all of their tenants, as evidence of compliance with Term 13 of this Agreement.

All required documentation of compliance must be submitted via email or U.S. Mail to:
Natalie Burnham, Iowa Civil Rights Commission
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Natalie.Burnham@iowa.gov

Bigfoot Vernon Co-op, Inc., RESPONDENT

Date

Bigfoot Properties, LLC, RESPONDENT

Date

Christina Miller, LLC, RESPONDENT

Date

Angela Jackson, COMPLAINANT

Date

Kristin H. Johnson, DIRECTOR
IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

Date