

NEWS RELEASE

GREATER NEW ORLEANS FAIR HOUSING ACTION CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FAIR HOUSING CENTER AUDIT REVEALS 82% RATE OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER HOLDERS

On Thursday, August 20, 2009, the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC) released its report *Housing Choice In Crisis: An Audit Report on Discrimination Against Housing Choice Voucher Holders in the Greater New Orleans Rental Market*. Through testing, or "mystery shopping" for housing, GNOFHAC found that landlords outright refused to accept vouchers or added insurmountable requirements for voucher holders eighty-two percent (82%) of the time. Further interviews with property owners, housing advocates, tenants, and program administrators revealed that this alarmingly high rate of discrimination was driven by two main factors:

- Discrimination against low-income African Americans in both intent and impact
- The dysfunctional administration of the Housing Choice Voucher Program

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP), also commonly known as "Section 8," was designed to increase housing choice for low-income Americans, transfer the provision of housing assistance to the private market, and promote economic and racial integration. In the past decade, the HCVP has become one of the primary ways that the federal government provides housing assistance to low income Americans. As part of the *Housing Choice in Crisis* report, GNOFHAC issued a series of ten recommendations on how to improve the program.

GNOFHAC Executive Director James Perry remarks, "Our report, *Housing Choice in Crisis*, demonstrates that landlords were willing to accept vouchers in only 18% of instances and indicates that the Housing Choice Voucher Program in New Orleans is not functioning properly. Additional steps need to be taken to ensure the economic and racial integration in New Orleans that the Housing Choice Voucher Program was supposedly implemented to facilitate."

To download the report go to:
<http://www.gnofairhousing.org/news.html>

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The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC) is a private non-profit organization. The Center was established by a

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group of concerned New Orleanians in 1995 with the help of the National Fair Housing Alliance and a grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. GNOFHAC is dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination and furthering equal housing opportunities through education, outreach, advocacy, and enforcement of fair housing laws across the metro New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas. The activities described in this release were privately funded.