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Housing Accessibility Lawsuit Settles for \$600,000 Plus Retrofits to Apartment Complex

Shockoe Valley View Apartments in Richmond, Va.

RICHMOND, VA - Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc. (HOME) and the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) have [settled](#) a housing discrimination case with Hunt Investments, LLC; Walter Parks, Architect, PLLC; MGT Construction Management, Inc.; Cedar Street Genesis, LLC; and Genesis Homes Manager, LLC. The case alleged that Defendants violated the federal Fair Housing Act by failing to design and construct Shockoe Valley View apartments in compliance with [accessibility requirements](#). The Fair Housing Act requires all new multi-family housing built after 1991 to be accessible and usable by people with disabilities. The agreement settles all claims.

In addition to retrofitting the complex to be accessible for people with disabilities, the Defendants also agreed to pay \$600,000 in damages, costs, and attorneys' fees. HOME and NFHA will establish a \$100,000 accessibility fund to help retrofit other homes in the community.

Heather Crislip, president and CEO of HOME stated, "Everyone deserves the opportunity to choose where they want to live and to have access to all of the amenities of a housing complex. We are pleased that Shockoe Valley View Apartments will be made accessible and that this fund will provide grants to people with disabilities to make additional units accessible. We are proud that the resolution of this case helps to dismantle indifference within the building industry of the rights of persons with disabilities."

The Defendants agreed to retrofit the complex by making extensive modifications, including alterations to ensure accessible routes within the building for people who use wheelchairs; alterations to ensure accessible exterior routes throughout the complex, including to and around accessible parking spaces; and alterations to ensure public and common areas, as well as the important features in each dwelling unit, are usable and accessible.

Shanna L. Smith, President and CEO of the National Fair Housing Alliance, stated, "It is important that the Shockoe Valley View Apartments are being modified to increase accessibility for the 151 units in that complex,

but it is our broader hope that this settlement will send a clear message to architects, builders, and developers in Virginia and across the country that apartment buildings must be designed and built so people with disabilities can travel around the property and maneuver through their apartments without encountering barriers.”

The case was originally filed in October 2014 after an investigation by HOME and NFHA. The U.S. Department of Justice filed a Statement of Interest in May 2015 in support of the Plaintiffs. HOME and NFHA were represented by Laura Arandes, Steve Dane, and John Relman of Relman, Dane & Colfax, PLLC, Morgan Williams of NFHA, and Tim Schulte of Shelley Cupp Schulte, P.C.

The settlement agreement is available [here](#).

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc. (HOME), founded in 1971, is a statewide fair housing non-profit. HOME's mission is to ensure equal access to housing for all people. HOME investigates housing discrimination and provides support for discrimination victims. You can learn more about HOME and all of its services at www.HOMEofVA.org.

The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) was founded in 1988. NFHA is a consortium of more than 220 private, non-profit fair housing organizations, state and local civil rights agencies, and individuals from throughout the United States. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the National Fair Housing Alliance, through comprehensive education, advocacy and enforcement programs, provides equal access to apartments, houses, mortgage loans and insurance policies for all residents in the nation.

For additional information: Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice Accessibility (Design and Construction) Requirements for Covered Multifamily Dwellings under the Fair Housing Act: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=JOINTSTATEMENT.PDF>

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