Homeseeker with Disability Achieves Settlement in Housing Discrimination Case

Tunisha Perkins, a Brown Deer resident with a disability, has settled a housing discrimination complaint against Barbara Tremel of Waukesha. As part of the settlement agreement, Tremel agreed to pay Perkins $7,500.

In her complaint against Tremel, Perkins alleged that she had been denied the opportunity to rent a single-family home on the basis of her disability and source of income. While the home was owned by Tremel, she employed David Nowicki as a rental agent to interact with prospective renters. In 2009, when Perkins called to inquire about renting the home, Nowicki told her he would not rent to anyone who was disabled or unemployed.

Perkins contacted the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council (MMFHC) and filed a complaint. MMFHC counseled Perkins on her fair housing rights and conducted a testing investigation in response to her complaint. As part of the investigation, a tester called Nowicki about the home for rent. Nowicki told the tester he did not rent to anyone who had a disability and that he accepted only income derived from employment.

With assistance from MMFHC, Perkins filed housing discrimination complaints with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Wisconsin Equal Rights Division (ERD) in September 2010. ERD issued an initial determination of probable cause in November 2010. As a result of the ERD initial determination, the State of Wisconsin Department of Justice subsequently represented Perkins.

Perkin's complaint was ultimately settled through the ERD administrative process in June 2015.