

August 11, 2021

**Westchester Residential Opportunities Alleges Housing Discrimination
by Dawn Homes Management at Seven Apartment Complexes
across New York State**

White Plains, NY – Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc. (WRO), a non-profit fair housing agency, has filed a housing discrimination complaint against Dawn Homes Management and DHM Properties, the manager and owner of at least 36 apartment buildings in New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The complaint, filed with the New York State Division of Human Rights, alleges housing discrimination on the basis of lawful source of income toward individuals using housing vouchers or other rental subsidies, like Section 8 vouchers and HOPWA vouchers (a federal housing voucher for individuals living with AIDS or HIV). The complaint is the result of a multi-year testing investigation conducted by WRO of seven Dawn Homes’ apartment complexes located in the Albany area and suburban counties north of New York City.

During the investigation, when Dawn Homes’ agents were told by WRO’s testers (posing as prospective tenants) that they would be renting using housing vouchers, the agents told the testers various things, including that Dawn Homes:

- Did not accept any rental vouchers or participate in any “programs”;
- Did accept vouchers but only if the applicant met a minimum income requirement of three times the total rent;
- Sometimes the agent said the voucher amount was included as income in that calculation, sometimes it was not; in either case, the income requirement was based on the full amount of the rent, even if the rental voucher would pay most or all of the monthly rent;
- Could not rent to them, but steered them to other buildings in the area not operated by Dawn Homes; and
- Will not sign contracts with third parties to pay the rent, including rental subsidy programs.

These responses violate the letter and spirit of New York’s source of income protections, and exclude households relying on housing vouchers from housing opportunities that should be available to them.

WRO’s Executive Director Marlene Zarfes stated: “Source of income discrimination has been illegal in New York State since April 2019. New York’s Division of Human Rights has made it clear that housing providers may not have policies that have the *effect* of excluding holders of housing vouchers (like onerous multiples of rent income requirements), even if the policies *look neutral* on their face. The law also prohibits housing providers from refusing to work with voucher programs because of their administrative requirements, like apartment inspections or

contractual terms required by the program administrator. Otherwise, the source of income law would be rendered meaningless.”

“WRO’s investigation shows the great lengths landlords will go to when trying to avoid complying with civil rights laws,” said WRO’s attorney, Diane L. Houk. “When a landlord illegally turns away renters seeking affordable housing during a pandemic, those families are at greater risk of ending up in unsafe and overcrowded apartments or even becoming homeless.”

Contact us: If you or someone you know uses a housing voucher and was rejected as a tenant by Dawn Homes at any of their buildings, or if you have any information about Dawn Homes’ policies or practices with voucherholders, please contact us at WRO – email us at info@wroinc.org, or call 914-428-4507 and ask to speak to Andrew Smith in our fair housing group.

WRO is represented in this matter by Diane L. Houk of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel, LLP.

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Founded in 1968, WRO is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to promote equal, affordable, and accessible housing opportunities for all residents in the Lower Hudson Valley region of New York.



LIST OF DAWN HOMES APARTMENT COMPLEXES TESTED BY WRO

1. **Chelsea Ridge Apartments** (835 units)
1 Chelsea Ridge Mall, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590 (Dutchess County)
2. **Village Park Apartments** (178 units)
5 Park Drive, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569 (Dutchess County)
3. **Netherlands Village Apartments** (132 units)
1455 Dorwaldt Blvd., Schenectady, NY 12308 (Schenectady County)
4. **Glenmont Manor Apartments** (46 units)
371 Route 9W, Glenmont, NY 12077 (Albany County)
5. **Loudon Arms Apartments** (319 units)
16B Old Hickory Drive, Albany, NY 12204-12077 (Albany County)
6. **Maple Manor Apartments** (40 units)
101 Cherry Avenue, Delmar, NY 12054 (Albany County)
7. **Mill Creek Apartments** (516 units)
16 Mill Creek Drive, East Greenbush, NY 12061 (Rensselaer County)