



Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc.

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Housing Discrimination Complaint Settles for \$33,000

Executives, inc. Rescinds English-Language Policy

RICHMOND, VA –Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc. (HOME), Executives, inc., and CBP Properties, LLC have jointly settled a fair housing complaint alleging that a policy maintained by Executives, inc. that at least one lease signer be able to sufficiently communicate in English constitutes discrimination based on national origin. HOME alleged that the policy unfairly excluded otherwise qualified families from obtaining the housing of their choice because of their national origin.

In December of 2013, a Spanish-speaking home seeker attempted to view a rental home listed by Executives, inc. Her bilingual daughter had accompanied her to be an interpreter. The home seeker was allegedly denied access to see the home when the office receptionist learned that no adult would be on the lease that could speak sufficient English.

In 2014, HOME investigated the claim and confirmed Executives’s policy of requiring at least one applicant to speak English to the satisfaction of property management. HOME then filed a formal complaint with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and HUD referred the case for investigation to the Virginia Fair Housing Office.

To settle HOME’s claims, Executives, inc. has changed its language policy, which now instructs staff to provide housing opportunities to prospective tenants regardless of their English proficiency. Executives’ staff will continue to attend regular fair housing training. Executives will also reimburse HOME for costs and expenses incurred during the investigation. The original complainant settled her own fair housing complaint with Executives, inc. to the satisfaction of both parties.

All parties are pleased to have the matter resolved. Heather Crislip, president and CEO of HOME stated, “Language is a barrier for many in our commonwealth, but that should not deny a person’s access to housing. We are grateful to Executives for recognizing this unnecessary barrier and acting swiftly to update their policy to reflect inclusion and opportunity.”

Brown Pearson, owner of Executives, inc., echoed Crislip’s sentiment: “At Executives, inc. we pride ourselves on providing high quality housing coupled with excellent customer service. We want to assure the community that we are welcoming to all applicants regardless of their national origin, and our policies and training reflect that commitment.”

According to the National Fair Housing Alliance’s [Where You Live Matters 2015 Fair Housing Trends Report](#), 10.6 percent of complaints nationwide involved the protected class of national origin with 2,925 reported instances in 2014. Any persons who believe that they or someone they know were treated differently because of their language or national origin anywhere in Virginia should contact HOME for free help at 804-354-0641 or visit HOMEofVA.org. The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination based on seven “protected classes”: race, color, religion, national origin, sex,

disability, and familial status (families with children under age 18). In addition to these seven, Virginia fair housing laws offer an additional protection for individuals aged 55 years or older.

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 victims of discrimination. You can learn more about HOME and all of its services at www.HOMEofVA.org.

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