



Go Undercover with Legal Aid!

April 11, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(Minneapolis, Minn.)—Fifty-five years ago, today, April 11, 1968, housing discrimination was banned by law, but it still happens. “We’ve come a long way since the signing of the Fair Housing Act, but we have a long way to go,” says Elana Dahlager, MMLA attorney, “which is why we’re making a public appeal to increase the numbers of volunteers on our teams of testers.”

Testers are volunteers who go out when a complaint of housing discrimination comes into Legal Aid. They pose as housing applicants and document their experiences. Before the pandemic, MMLA’s testing teams operated under the radar. Post-pandemic, MMLA is launching a not so quiet re-start, publicly urging people of every age, color, national origin, ability, gender and sexual identity—to join the effort.

Housing discrimination can be subtle. Landlords and property owners who favor some housing applicants over others might not know their reasons for doing so could be a violation of housing law. “If they’re not aware of fair housing practices, they should be,” says Housing Investigations Coordinator Erica Whitaker, “because we’re out there, making sure the law is being followed.”

Detecting discrimination requires training. For those who step up as testers, free training will be provided by Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. To volunteer, reach out to Erica Whitaker at Ewhitaker@mylegalaid.org.

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