

HUD: Housing discrimination down, but not out

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Housing discrimination against African-Americans and Hispanics is down more than 25 percent, says a HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development) study that was released last week.

"Discrimination in Metropolitan Housing Markets: Phase I" revealed that this percentage is the lowest since 1989. Discrimination against African-Americans looking to rent is down 18 percent while it is unchanged for Hispanics.

HUD, the nation's housing agency, which aims to increase homeownership among minorities, sponsored the study, which was conducted by the

Urban Institute.

Mel Martinez, Housing and Urban Development secretary, said that the results "illustrate that we are making efforts, but there is still work to be done."

HUD stated that this study is "the most ambitious effort" done so far to measure the extent of housing discrimination in the country against people due to race or ethnic background. Previous studies done on the matter were last conducted in 1977 and 1989.

A technique called "pair testing" was utilized in the study to measure the level of housing discrimination. Two individuals - one minority and the other a white, non-Hispanic - were assigned nearly identical characteristics and responded to the same advertisement within a short period of time of one another to test the adverse treatment. The results of this study are based on 4,600 paired tests between 1989 and 2000.

Home sales discrimination against blacks has declined to 17 percent, down from 29 percent, and has also declined for



Atlanta's had the highest incidence of housing discrimination, according to a HUD report.

and discrimination against Hispanics has remained the same at 25 percent. Hispanic renters are now more likely to experience discrimination in their housing search than African-Americans.

The black/white tests indicated that the overall incidence of consistent white-favored treatment for renters was higher than the national average in Atlanta at 30.0 percent. Sales discrimination was higher than the national average of 17 percent in Austin, Texas (25.3 percent), and Birmingham, Ala. (27.3 percent). Most metropolitan areas experience housing discrimination at or near the national level, which is 21.6 percent.

This study was the first phase of four housing discrimination reports, and future studies will provide a national estimate of discrimination against Asians, Native Americans and persons with disabilities.

For more information, call (800) HUD-USER or visit www.hud.gov.



Martinez

Latham

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brainer. More than a dozen people attended Tuesday's meeting to show their support for Johnson.

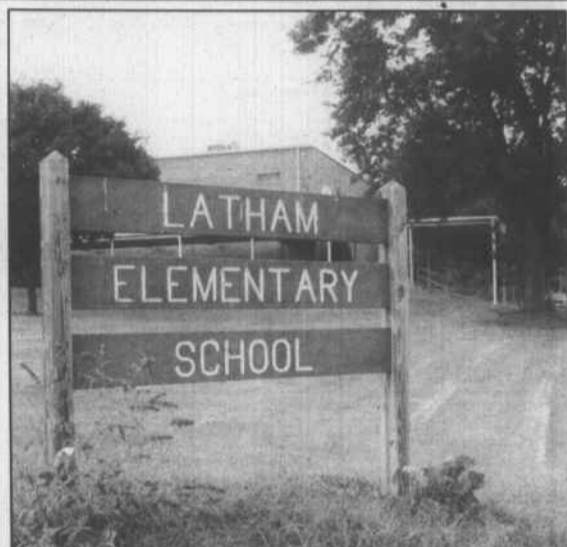
"Here is somebody who worked with Dr. Fields, who is appreciated in the same way and who appreciates the neighborhood, and the school and those parents and those students. We feel like that is a reasonable step for the School Board to make," said the Rev. Ellen Yarborough, a pastor associated with Green Street Baptist Church, which shares the same South Winston-Salem neighborhood with Latham.

A committee is already interviewing prospective candidates for the Latham job, according to David Fairall, human resources director for the school system. A batch of applicants was already interviewed, and another is expected to face the committee tomorrow.

Superintendent Don Martin will ultimately pick a candidate to recommend to the School Board, which has to approve the choice. Martin favors the committee's role so that he can get as many different perspectives as possible before he makes his recommendation, Fairall said.

The committee consists of School Board members, Latham teachers, and administrators. There are no parents on the committee, but Fairall said Martin has met with Latham parents to get their input.

School Board member Gene-



va Brown, a member of the selection committee, was one of Fields' closest friends. She said her main objective on the committee is to find someone who is immensely qualified to take over the school.

"We need to find the very best person to fit what's going (on) at that school at this time," she said.

The president of the Latham Parent-Teacher Association says that parents strongly support making Johnson the school's next principal. But she told the board that regardless of who is named the school's new principal, he or she should be prepared to continue to guide Latham forward.

"No matter who becomes our

Hispanic home buyers to 20 percent, down from 27 percent.

The study showed that black home buyers experienced discrimination with inspec-

tions, steering, financing assistance, and encouragement.

Hispanic home buyers also reported discrimination with steering and financing assistance.

Where renting is concerned, discrimination against blacks has declined to 22 percent, down from 26 percent,

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ble, buyers with stable and verifiable incomes, reasonably good credit and funds for down payments can have their housing costs subsidized up to \$30,000.

"People don't actually think that they can buy a home, but we work with you to get you home ready," said Gaddy, who mentioned that some buyers use their income tax returns to pay off debts while others choose to apply income tax returns to down payments and closing costs.

Gaddy added: "There are benefits to being a homeowner, especially at income-tax season; homeowners receive a greater return; the most important benefit is that you have an asset. You can leave a legacy for your children's children."

According to Jane Milner, Housing Partnership director, well over 100 families have bought and moved into homes, in the last five years, as a result of the Housing Partnership. Milner also explained that the partnership aims to blend resources from the private and public sectors to provide affordable housing for hardworking residents of

Winston-Salem.

"The biggest problem that we have is qualifying the home buyers fast enough to move them into all of the (developments)," said Milner, who says that their goal is to complete the building of 300 homes by 2003.

The majority of the Housing Partnership's clients are African-American, but Gaddy says that they prefer their housing sites to be in economically and racially mixed neighborhoods, which both she and Milner agree "make for a healthier community." Strict guidelines and covenants, says Gaddy, are enforced in all of the Housing Partnership developments in order to maintain appreciation of each of the sites.

Potential buyers are often encouraged to participate in the IDA (Individual Development Account) program, which is a combination of budget and credit counseling with a program of matched savings, Gaddy says. Hill participated in the IDA program and she attended economic literacy classes all while saving a small portion of her earnings on a regular basis.

"The main thing is that they have the interest of homeownership. When clients (attend IDA

classes) and see the presentations, all they say is 'thank you' because their eyes have been opened to information they have never been provided with before," Gaddy said.

Currently five developments - Sunbridge, Ridgewood Place, Esquire Place, Berry Gardens and Pleasant Hill - are located around the county and serve Housing Partnership clients. Each one- or two-story home has a minimum of three bedrooms, one and a half baths, with the option of having a garage and basement. Clients can also choose the builder.

"Anybody looking for a place (to live) needs to get in touch with Olivia (Gaddy). As long as they have patience and the time, she can get them on the right track," Hill said.

With the holiday season just around the corner, Gaddy encourages interested home buyers to stay on the path to homeownership and not to lose focus of their visions, plans or goals for homes they want to purchase.

Call 725-8704 for further information about the Housing Partnership of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County.

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