



## For Immediate Release

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### **“Still No Home for the Holidays” for Katrina Survivors** *National Fair Housing Alliance Files Housing Discrimination Complaint and Issues Report about Discrimination Post-Hurricane*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – December 22, 2006 – The National Fair Housing Alliance today filed race discrimination complaints against two apartment complexes in the Gulf States of Florida and Texas: Governors Gate Apartment Homes in Pensacola, FL and Crestbrook Apartments in Burleson, TX. The Alliance also issued *Still No Home for the Holidays*, a report outlining the housing discrimination that hurricane survivors continue to face this holiday season.

An undercover investigation revealed that employees of Governors Gate Apartment Homes and Crestbrook Apartments lied to African-American homeseekers about the cost of housing, unit availability and the application process. The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or familial status.

In December 2005, the Alliance conducted an investigation in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee and Texas which revealed a 66 percent rate of discrimination against African-American hurricane evacuees. The Alliance filed five complaints with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ( HUD) against apartment complexes in Alabama, Texas, and Florida.

“We are appalled that these apartment complexes didn’t learn from our complaints last year,” said Shanna L. Smith, President and CEO of the National Fair Housing Alliance. More apartment complexes will face charges in the near future as NFHA continues to monitor treatment of African-Americans, Latinos and Asian-Americans affected by the hurricane.

The Alliance also released *Still No Home for the Holidays*, a report detailing the damaging effects of FEMA, HUD, and local policies on Gulf Coast residents, especially African-Americans, people with disabilities, families with children, and immigrants. The report highlights housing discrimination in Louisiana and Mississippi.

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“Federal, state and local governments, as well as private housing providers, continue to violate federal laws in their perpetuation of segregation,” continued Smith. “The images of Katrina’s destruction have left an indelible mark on our national conscience and have made it clear that racial discrimination and segregation have prevented generations from gaining opportunities. At such a time, fair housing enforcement and education are crucial to preventing a recurrence of segregated living patterns.”

At Governors Gate Apartment Homes in Pensacola, FL, employees regularly provided white homeseekers with information about various available units, while African-American homeseekers were told either that no units were available, that some units were available at higher rents than those quoted to whites, or that there was a waiting list for apartments. In one instance, an African-American homeseeker was told it was necessary to pay \$300 to get on a waiting list for units as they became available. Less than one hour later, a white homeseeker was given a rental application for available units and was invited to apply with no mention of a waiting list.

At Crestbrook Apartments in Burleson, TX, African-American homeseekers did not have their calls returned while white homeseekers had their calls returned within hours. When African-Americans called again and spoke with employees, they were told substantially different information about available units. One African-American homeseeker was told that there might be an apartment available in the next few weeks and was instructed to mail in an application with a month of pay stubs to verify that she made three times the monthly rent to qualify for the apartment. A white homeseeker was told apartments were currently available and was invited to fax in her application without mention of pay stubs or qualification. In another instance, an African-American homeseeker was told that there would be both a credit check and a criminal background check; white homeseekers were not told of these requirements.

The Alliance filed its complaints with HUD. For this investigation, the National Fair Housing Alliance used white and African-American individuals, known as testers, posing as potential renters. The African-American testers were better qualified than their white counterparts based on income, employment and other factors.

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**About the National Fair Housing Alliance ([www.nationalfairhousing.org](http://www.nationalfairhousing.org))**

Founded in 1988 and headquartered in Washington, DC, the National Fair Housing Alliance is a consortium of more than 220 private, non-profit fair housing organizations, state and local civil rights agencies, and individuals from throughout the United States. Through comprehensive education, advocacy and enforcement programs, NFHA protects and promotes equal access to apartments, houses, mortgage loans and insurance policies for all residents of the nation.