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Housing Group Issues a Critique of Its Flawed Discrimination Investigation

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IMAGE: Daniel Zender

The group that issued a flawed report on housing discrimination in Portland last spring has released [an analysis](#) that justifies its earlier study while criticizing state and city officials who found fault with it.

The Fair Housing Council of Oregon conducted a 2010 housing audit that it said found evidence of discrimination in two out of three landlords it surveyed.

The study, paid for by the city of Portland, triggered breathless [headlines](#) and [angst-filled editorials](#) about the racism in the city.

As *WW* later reported, however, **the audit was [misleading, fundamentally flawed](#) in its methods and [filled with errors](#).**

City officials called the audit “shoddy” and have said they will not hire the Fair Housing Council of Oregon again until the organization cleans up its act.

The Fair Housing Council in September hired an outside consultant to examine its study. Not surprisingly, the group’s consultant gave the group’s efforts a big endorsement while affirming that the study made mistakes.

The Fair Housing Council has since [proposed changes](#) in the way it does housing audits. The audits use testers posing as potential renters to compare how whites are treated compared to Latino or African-American testers.

The consultant’s report, released last week, says the Bureau of Labor and Industries, which discovered many of the flaws in the audit, wasn’t thorough in its review. And the report by implication criticizes city officials for releasing the names of landlords who supposedly were found to have demonstrated disparities toward the group’s testers. Making the names public made it impossible to conduct follow-up investigations.