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HUD: Decatur Housing Authority blocked Blacks from riverfront apartments



The Westgate Gardens apartment complex in Decatur is designed for low-income elderly residents. According to the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, the Decatur Housing Authority steered Black applicants to this area instead of two riverfront properties. (Eric Fleischauer, Decatur Daily)

By Eric Fleischauer - Decatur Daily and [Mike Brown](#)

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DECATUR, Ala. (WAFF) - New documents from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development are making some startling accusations against the Decatur Housing Authority.

[Our news partners at the Decatur Daily](#) obtained a compliance review from the federal agency which charged DHA with discriminating against Blacks who were on waiting lists for homes at Jordan-Neill and Summer Manor apartments along the Tennessee River. Instead, the HUD memo suggests those applicants were steered towards Westgate Gardens on the city's northwest side.

"According to the tenant roster that was provided to the compliance review team, 100% of the units in Westgate Gardens are occupied by black tenants," according to the document signed by HUD Region IV Director Carlos Osegueda. "In comparison, the tenant roster for The Towers indicated that 94% of the units are occupied by white tenants."



Jordan-Neill apartments, one of two riverfront Decatur Housing Authority properties for low-income elderly residents next to Rhodes Ferry Park. A US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development study found it has an almost exclusively white population, while Black applicants were sent to other locations. (Eric Fleischauer, Decatur Daily)

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During the compliance review period it analyzed, according to the letter, HUD found 15 instances “where white applicants were offered and/or placed in units at The Towers before black applicants even though the black applicants were on the waiting list for a longer period of time. ... The evidence revealed that black applicants were repeatedly skipped over when units became available at The Towers.” One Black applicant “remained on the waiting list for a unit at The Towers for 1,948 days, and still was not offered a unit,” according to HUD.

HUD’s investigation found significant differences between Westgate Gardens and Summer Manor and Jordan-Neill. That includes access to things like walking trails, waterfront views, libraries, community kitchens, pianos and outdoor patios along with social activities. “The tenants at Westgate Gardens do not have similar or comparable amenities like those found at The Towers,” according to HUD. “Additionally, none of the social activities that are provided to tenants in The Towers are offered to tenants at Westgate Gardens.” The memo also noted instances of Westgate tenants being charged maintenance fees that Towers residents were not.

Decatur Housing Authority settled those claims for \$200,000, which went to many of the victims of the alleged discrimination last week. It also agreed to upgrades at Westgate Gardens estimated to be worth about one million dollars.

Decatur Housing Authority Executive Director Andy Holloway and Housing Director Jeff Snead did not return numerous messages from The Daily last week. The authority’s treasurer, Donna Gibson, declined comment Friday.

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You can read more about this incident, and see reaction from people living in the facilities at [DecaturDaily.com](https://www.decaturdaily.com)

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