



# Housing Rights ADVOCATE

Issue 17, Winter 2001  
www.housing-rights.org

The Austin Tenants' Council

Safe • Affordable • Fair Housing for All

## TNRCC and the Water Bill Blues

Over the past few years, Austin Tenants' Council has had a tremendous number of calls and complaints about water bills. Many landlords are now billing tenants for water in apartments that used to be all-bills-paid. Because they were not designed to have the tenants pay for water, these apartment complexes typically receive one large bill for water usage by all apartments in the complex. This bill is called a "master-meter" bill and the landlord must then split it among the tenants. Since installing individual meters or sub-meters for each unit is very costly, most landlords use a formula to estimate how much each tenant should pay. Splitting a master-meter bill among tenants in this manner is known as "allocating" the bill.

The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) regulates how a landlord may allocate the master-meter water bill. TNRCC recently adopted new rules in response to outcry from tenants who believed that the previous rules were unfair. On September 27, 2000, the new and much more complicated water allocation rules took effect. However, these new rules have not solved the basic problem: there is no completely fair way to divide a master-meter bill without actually installing meters or sub-meters.

The complete rules are far too extensive to describe completely so the following discussion includes the most important highlights. Refer to the TNRCC website or contact ATC for more information.

The new rules require the landlord to deduct part of the master-meter bill for common areas before dividing the rest of the bill among the tenants. They also require the landlord to disclose information pertaining to the water allocation in the lease contract or in a written addendum. Along with other disclosures, the lease agreement must include the following:

- that the tenant will be billed for water on an allocated basis,
- that the tenant has a right to information from the landlord to verify the bill,

- the average monthly bill, & highest and lowest bills for all units in the past year,
- the date bills are usually issued and date usually due,
- a clear description of the allocation method used to calculate the bill.

The rules also define the approved methods for allocating a water bill. (Landlords with an existing allocation method must switch to one of the new methods by 9/29/01.) To calculate a tenant's water bill, the landlord must use one of the following :

1) The number of occupants in the tenant's dwelling as a percentage of the total number of occupants in all apartments.

2) This is a modified version of method 1. It recognizes that apartments with two or more occupants do not typically use two or more times as much water as a single occupant. This occupancy formula assigns a fractional portion for each occupant in excess of one. It must use a fractional portion of no less than that on the following scale:

- a) unit with one occupant = 1
- b) unit with two occupants = 1.6
- c) unit with three occupants = 2.2
- d) unit with more than three occupants = 2.2 + 0.4 per each additional occupant over three;

For example, in a complex of 50 tenants, an apartment with two occupants would pay 1.6/50 or 3.2% of the total bill.

3) So that landlords do not have to calculate the total number of tenants at the beginning of the month as in methods 1 and 2, the rules allow the landlord to use a fixed formula that estimates the number of

See Page 2

## Volunteer & Community Service Awards 2000

ATC recently honored more than 100 individuals and organizations for outstanding volunteer and community service in tenants' rights and fair housing during 2000 in the Austin area.

Volunteers from the Austin community founded ATC almost 28 years ago, and each year ATC depends on volunteers to support our organization and advocate for

housing rights. Some volunteers answer tenant-landlord questions on our counseling line, remove architectural barriers for disabled tenants, testify at City Council hearings on behalf of ATC, speak at housing education workshops, or act as testers for the Fair Housing Program. These community servants display caring and dedication to housing rights when ATC



Staff member Enrique Serrano presents a volunteer service award to Roberto Angulo, editor and publisher of El Mundo newspaper.

asks for their support.

We also honored newspaper editors and publishers in the African-American and Latino community for donating space for housing rights public service announcements, and two local radio stations who produced free fair housing educational CD's in English and Spanish for our visually impaired clients.

We presented outstanding community service awards to members of several local tenants associations from subsidized

See Page 5

### Inside:

Attorney Referral Program  
Fair Housing Case Updates  
Braille Documents Available  
Folleto en español

## Braille Documents to be Available at ATC

Over the next year, the Austin Tenants' Council intends to translate its brochures and other information into Braille. The Lola-Wright Foundation generously donated funds for the purchase of a Braille-writer and translation software.

In the past, ATC has had to pay for such translation out-of-house and the process has been slow. Though most of the brochures and forms ATC uses are available in audio and computer formats, many persons with visual impairments prefer Braille. Translating out-of-house also does not allow for letters and other more immediate documents to be translated effectively.

Having a Braille-writer in-house is an important asset for ATC's programs and to the agencies to whom ATC distributes its materials. ATC regularly provides tenant-landlord brochures, fair housing materials and the Guide to Affordable Housing.

The timing for getting the Braille-writer could not be better because ATC is about to begin a statewide campaign to inform persons with disabilities about their fair housing rights. ATC will be distributing a CD with information about fair housing rights in audio and computer formats. The CD will be given to individuals and agencies that assist persons with disabilities. Because of the new equipment, it will now include Braille instructions.

The Foundation also donated funds for the purchase of new computer equipment. ATC typically does not have resources in its contracts with governmental agencies for the purchase of computers. Equipment costs always represent a problem for ATC, but the Lola Wright Foundation has given ATC valuable resources in pursuing its mission to protect the housing rights of all people.



## Attorney Referral Program Certified by State Bar of Texas

The Austin Tenants' Council's Cooperating Attorney Referral Program has been certified by the State Bar of Texas for the 2001 calendar year. The program's development and success is attributable to the efforts of two former law clerks, Trevor Lind and Ernest Cromartie, and our current law clerk, Patrick Banis. All three have provided invaluable effort and insight to the development of the program.

ATC's Cooperating Attorney Referral Program provides attorney referrals for clients of ATC's tenant-landlord and fair housing programs who live in the Austin-Metropolitan area. Participating attorneys agree to waive their fees if they accept a referral. The attorney will seek to recover attorney fees from the other party rather than from the client. Clients are, however, required to pay for actual costs such as filing and service fees.

ATC does provide some limited assistance with these actual costs. One of the unique features of the Attorney Referral Program is that attorneys who represent fair housing clients can access the Revolving Litigation Expense Fund (RLEF). This fund provides reimbursement for actual costs on a limited basis. The attorney will be required to reimburse the fund if litigation is successful. The RLEF makes it easier for the attorney to accept a referral and easier for the client to afford the costs of litigation.

The Austin Tenants' Council only refers its own clients and only after the client's case has been developed so that it is likely to succeed. Such referrals are made at the discretion of ATC's general counsel and never by telephone.

Attorneys who would like more information about the program should contact ATC's Law Clerk, Patrick Banis, at 512-474-7007.

Clients interested in the program should first contact ATC's Telephone Counseling Line for more information. The phone number for the counseling line is 474-1961.



## Water Bill Blues

Continued from page 1

occupants based on the number of bedrooms in each unit. The total number of occupants in the entire apartment complex is estimated using the same formula. The percentage a tenant pays is then determined by dividing the estimated (not actual) number of occupants in the tenant's apartment by the estimated number of occupants in the entire complex.

- a) dwelling unit with an efficiency = 1
- b) dwelling unit with one bedroom = 1.6
- c) dwelling unit with two bedrooms = 2.8
- d) dwelling unit with three bedrooms = 4 + 1.2 for each additional bedroom;

For example, in a complex with five two-bedroom units and five one-bedroom units, the landlord would first estimate the total number of occupants as  $5 \times 2.8 + 5 \times 1.6 = 22$  occupants. A tenant living in a two-bedroom unit would then pay  $2.8/22$  or 12.7% of the total bill.

4) A factor using a combination of square footage and occupancy in which no more than 50% is based on square footage. The square footage portion is based on the total square footage living area of the tenant's unit as a percentage of the total square footage living area of all units of the apartment complex.

5) The rules also allow landlords who use a partially sub-metered water bill to calculate the tenant's total water usage. For instance, some landlords pay for the hot water, but the tenant pays for cold water usage based on a sub-meter. Thus, the landlord can use the sub-metered cold water usage of the tenant's dwelling unit divided by all sub-metered cold water usage in all dwelling units to determine the percentage of the total water bill the tenant must pay.

Whether these new rules are any more fair than the previous rules is hard to say. It will depend on how they are used in practice in actual apartments.

The above information is an attempt to explain the new rules simply, but they are complicated. The full text of the rules is available on the TNRCC website at [www.tnrcc.state.tx.us](http://www.tnrcc.state.tx.us). Violations of the rules should be documented in writing and sent to TNRCC: Outreach & Information Assistance Section, MC-141; P.O. Box 13087; Austin, TX 78711-3087. They can be reached by telephone at 512-239-6100.



# TNRCC y los Problemas con su Cuenta de Agua

**D**urante los últimos años, el Austin Tenants' Council ha tenido un enorme número de llamadas y quejas sobre cuentas del agua. Muchos propietarios ahora están mandando la cuenta de agua a sus inquilinos en los apartamentos que eran todo-cuenta-pagados. Porque no fueron diseñados para tener los inquilinos pagar agua, estos complejos reciben típicamente una cuenta grande para el uso del agua por todos los apartamentos en el complejo. Esta cuenta se llama una cuenta del "medidor central" y el propietario debe entonces partirla entre los inquilinos. Porque la instalación de los medidores individuales son muy costosos, la mayoría de los propietarios utilizan un fórmula para estimar cuánto debe pagar cada inquilino. Partiendo una cuenta del medidor-central entre inquilinos de este modo se conoce como "asignando" (o *allocating*) la cuenta.

La Comisión de la Conservación del Recurso Natural de Texas (TNRCC) regula cómo un propietario puede asignar la cuenta del agua de medidor-central. TNRCC adoptó recientemente nuevas reglas en respuesta a protesta de los inquilinos que creyeron que las reglas anteriores eran injustas. Del 27 de septiembre, 2000, las nuevas y mucho más complicadas reglas de la asignación del agua tomaron efecto. Sin embargo, estas nuevas reglas no han solucionado el problema básico: no hay manera totalmente justa de dividir una cuenta del medidor-central sin realmente la instalación de los medidores.

Las reglas completas son demasiado extensas a describir totalmente así que la discusión siguiente incluye lo más importante. Refiera al *website* de TNRCC o hable con el ATC para más información.

Estas nuevas reglas requieren al propietario deducir las áreas comunes antes de dividir el resto de la cuenta del medidor-central entre los inquilinos. También requieren al propietario divulgar la información que pertenece a la asignación del agua en el contrato de renta o en una adición escrita. Junto con otros declaraciones, el contrato de arrendatario tiene que incluir el siguiente:

- que mandarán la cuenta al inquilino para el agua sobre una base asignado,
- que el inquilino tiene una derecha a información del propietario para verificar la cuenta,

- la cuenta mensual media, la cuenta más alta y las cuentas más bajas para todas las unidades en el último año,
- la fecha generalmente se publican las cuentas y la fecha generalmente están debidos,
- una descripción clara del método de la asignación usado para calcular la cuenta.

Las reglas también definen los métodos aprobados para asignar una cuenta del agua. (Los propietarios con un método existente de la asignación deben cambiar a uno de los métodos nuevos antes del 29 de septiembre, 2001.) Para calcular la cuenta del agua de un inquilino, el propietario debe utilizar uno del siguiente:

1) El número de ocupantes en la vivienda usado como porcentaje del número total de inquilinos en todos los apartamentos.

2) Esta es una versión modificada del método 1. Se reconoce que los apartamentos con dos o más ocupantes no utilizan típicamente dos o más veces el agua como un solo inquilino. Este fórmula de la ocupación asigna una porción fraccionaria para cada inquilino en el exceso de uno. Debe utilizar una porción fraccionaria de no menos que eso en la escala siguiente:

- a) unidad con un inquilino = 1
- b) unidad con dos inquilinos = 1,6
- c) unidad con tres inquilinos = 2,2
- d) unidad con más de tres inquilinos = 2,2 + 0,4 por cada inquilino adicional más de tres;

Por ejemplo, en un complejo de 50 inquilinos, un apartamento con dos inquilinos pagaría 1,6/50 o 3,2% de la cuenta total.

3) De modo que los propietarios no tengan que calcular el número total de inquilinos al principio del mes como en los métodos 1 y 2, las reglas permiten que el propietario utilice un fórmula fijo que estime el número de los inquilinos basados en el número de recámaras en cada apartamento. El número total de inquilinos en el complejo entero se estima usando el mismo fórmula. El porcentaje que un inquilino paga es determinado dividiendo el número estimado (no real) de ocupantes en el apartamento por el número estimado de inquilinos en el complejo entero.

# El Programa de Referencia de un Abogado Fue Certificado por la Barra de Abogados de Texas

**E**l Programa de Referencia de un Abogado del Austin Tenants' Council ha sido certificado por la Barra de Abogados de Texas por el año 2001. El desarrollo del programa y el éxito es atribuible a los esfuerzos de dos escribanos legales anteriores, Trevor Lind y Ernest Cromartie, y de nuestro escribano legal actual, Patrick Banis. Los tres han proporcionado esfuerzo inestimable y comprensión al desarrollo del programa.

El Programa de Referencia de un Abogado de ATC proporciona a las referencias del abogado para nuestros clientes del inquilino-propietario y de vivienda justa quienes viven en el área de Austin. Los abogados que participan acuerdan renunciar sus honorarios si aceptan una referencia. El abogado intentará recuperar honorarios del abogado del otro partido más bien que del cliente. Sin embargo, los clientes tendrían que pagar costos reales tales como costos de la corte.

El ATC provee de una cierta ayuda limitada con estos costos reales. Una de las características únicas del programa de la referencia de un abogado es que los abogados que representan a clientes de vivienda justa pueden tener acceso al Fondo del Costo del Pleito (RLEF). Este fondo proporciona al reembolso para los costes reales en una base limitada. Requerirán al abogado reembolsar el fondo si el pleito es aceptado. El RLEF hace más fácil para que el abogado acepte una referencia y más fácil para que el cliente produzca los costes del pleito.

El Austin Tenants' Council refiere solamente a sus propios clientes y solamente después del cliente se ha desarrollado el caso de modo que sea probable tener éxito. Tales referencias se hacen por la discreción de los consejeros de ATC y nunca por teléfono.

Los abogados que quisieran más información sobre el programa deben ponerse en contacto con nuestro escribano legal, Patrick Banis, al 512-474-7007.

Los clientes interesados en el programa deben primero hablar la línea de consejos para más información al 474-1961.

**Vea la Página 4**



# Programas de Vivienda Justa Reciben Financiamiento

## HUD

Evva M. Plaza, Secretaria Asistente por La Igualdad de Oportunidad y Vivienda Justa, recientemente anunció la selección del Programa Cooperativo de Texas de Vivienda Justa (Texas Cooperative Fair Housing Program) para ser financiado por dos años bajo el Programa de Iniciativas de Vivienda Justa -Componentes Asociados de Vivienda Justa del año fiscal 2000.

El Programa de Vivienda Justa de "Austin Tenants' Council" fue financiado con \$220,641 (FHIP); el Concilio de Vivienda Justa de San Antonio con \$239,426 (FHIP) y la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Texas con \$250,000 (FHIP) se han unido para crear el Programa Cooperativo de Texas de Vivienda Justa (TCFHP, por sus siglas en inglés). Estas tres organizaciones primordiales de vivienda justa proveerán educación, alcance e imposición a través de la colaboración y el esfuerzo de asistir a todas las clases protegidas bajo el Acta de Vivienda Justa a través del Estado mientras se alcanza a personas discapacitadas. El TCFHP también concentrará sus esfuerzos de vivienda justa en recientes inmigrantes a lo largo de la frontera Texas-México. Estas dos poblaciones están debajo de un existente servicio de vivienda justa y tradicionalmente han sufrido de una gran discriminación en las prácticas de vivienda.

El TCFHP expandirá la muy efectiva educación y alcance del Programa de Vivienda Justa del "Austin Tenants' Council" para que tenga un impacto a nivel estatal. El Concilio de Vivienda Justa de San Antonio proveerá investigación de prácticas de discriminación en vivienda, probando en diferentes condados adyacentes a la frontera de Texas-México. La Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Texas proveerá iniciativas de vivienda justa como el equivalente substancial del Estado en exigir que se provea vivienda justa.

El Programa Cooperativo de Texas de Vivienda Justa facultará a personas con incapacidades y recientes inmigrantes con el conocimiento que ellos necesitan para proteger sus derechos a vivienda justa y esos derechos han sido violados.



## LULAC

ATC quiere extender su gratitud a la División de Austin de LULAC (Liga Unidad de Ciudadanos Latinoamericanos) para financiar por seis meses el Proyecto de Alcance y Educación de Vivienda Justa. Este proyecto alcanzará a los hispanos en el área de Austin a través del uso de anuncios de servicio público -sobre los derechos de vivienda- que se pasarán en las estaciones de radio latinas/hispanas y periódicos en español. Este esfuerzo de alcanzar y educar a la comunidad llegará a la personas que son víctimas, de la aplicación irrazonable de estándares a inquilinos.

Una de las prácticas que LULAC admitió que examinará, es la política de cobrar -a hispanos y recientes inmigrantes- rentas o depósitos basados en el número de personas (incluyendo recién nacidos) que vivirán en la unidad de renta. Esta práctica -contrariamente- afecta a familias con niños y parece estar dirigida a inmigrantes hispanos que no hablan inglés.

La meta del proyecto es la de incrementar la conciencia pública de los derechos de vivienda con los recientes inmigrantes. Esta unión ofrece una gran oportunidad a ambas agencias, para hacer un llamado sobre los temas de vivienda justa que afectan a la comunidad de Austin.



### Se Necesitan Probadores Para el Programa de Vivienda Justa

ATC necesita voluntarios para ayudarnos colector información acerca de las practicas de vivienda en Austin. Se necesitan personas quienes pueden colector información objetivamente acerca de vivienda disponible mientras afectan como un inquilino o comprador. Se provee entranamiento y se pagan los voluntarios según el trabajo pedido. Favor de hablar con Paul Leddy (email: paul@housing-rights.org) o Nekesha Phoenix (email: nekeshaphoenix@housing-rights.org) al 474-7007.

**¡Lucha Contra la Discriminación en la Vivienda!**

## La Tristeza Cuenta de Agua

Continúa de la Página 3

- a) unidad con menos de una recámara = 1
- b) unidad con una recámara = 1,6
- c) unidad con dos recámaras = 2,8
- d) unidad con tres recámaras = 4 + 1,2 para cada recámara adicional;

Por ejemplo, en un complejo con cinco unidades de dos recámaras y cinco unidades de una recámara, el propietario primero estimaría el número total de inquilinos como  $5 \times 2,8 + 5 \times 1,6 = 22$  inquilinos. Un inquilino que vive en una unidad con dos recámaras entonces pagaría  $2,8/22$  o 12,7% de la cuenta total.

4) Un factor usando una combinación de la cantidad de la ocupación y los pies cuadrados en la cual no más que 50% se basa en los pies cuadrados. La porción de los pies cuadrados se basa en los pies cuadrados en la unidad del inquilino como porcentaje de los pies cuadrados de todas las unidades del complejo.

5) Las reglas también permiten a los propietarios que utilizan una cuenta parcialmente medido del agua para calcular el uso total del agua del inquilino. Por ejemplo, algunos propietarios pagan el agua caliente, pero el inquilino paga el uso del agua fría basado en un medidor individual. Así, el propietario puede utilizar el uso del medidor individual del agua fría de un inquilino dividida por todo el uso del medidor individual del agua fría en todas las unidades para determinar el porcentaje de la cuenta total del agua que el inquilino debe pagar.

Si estas nuevas reglas son más justas que las reglas anteriores es difícil decir. Dependerá de cómo se utilizan en la práctica en apartamentos reales.

La información antedicha es una tentativa de explicar las nuevas reglas simplemente, pero son complicadas. El texto completo de las reglas está disponible en el *website* de TNRCC en [www.tnrcc.state.tx.us](http://www.tnrcc.state.tx.us) Las violaciones de las reglas se deben documentar por escrito y enviar a:

TNRCC: Outreach & Information Assistance Section, MC-141 PO Box 13087 Austin, TX 78711-3087.

Se pueden comunicar por teléfono al 512-239-6100.



# Fair Housing News

## Fair Housing Case Updates

**A**TC thanks the complainants, plaintiffs, testers, witnesses, and attorneys who have worked for fair housing by participating in litigation or pursuing administrative housing discrimination complaints with the US Dept. of HUD. In all "settled" cases reported in this newsletter the defendant, unless otherwise noted, denies the allegations of discrimination made by the plaintiff and the parties have agreed to resolve the case prior to a trial on the merits. Fair housing testing and investigations conducted by ATC's Fair Housing Program are funded by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development.

### Update on Silver Ridge Complaints

With respect to the ten housing discrimination complaints filed against Silver Ridge Apartments almost one year ago, the Austin Human Rights Commission has dismissed one of them and, with respect to the other nine, has determined that reasonable cause **does not exist to believe that Silver Ridge Apartments, Stanford Properties, Inc. or Silver Ridge Associates engaged in discriminatory housing practices. However, the Austin Human Rights Commission did find** reasonable cause to believe that Silver Ridge Apartments, Stanford Properties, Inc. and Silver Ridge Associates discriminated against five of the original complainants by retaliating against them for filing fair housing complaints. As a result, the Austin Human Rights Commission filed suit against Silver Ridge Apartments, Stanford Properties, Inc., and Silver Ridge Associates on February 12, 2001, seeking damages, administrative penalties, investigative fees, a temporary and permanent injunction and reasonable attorney's fees. The City contends in its petition that during the pendency of the administrative complaints Silver Ridge filed a petition in court seeking leave of court to depose several of the persons who had filed discrimination complaints and that this was retaliatory and violated fair housing law.

### Esquivel v. Argosy Apartments

Rachel Esquivel contacted ATC & alleged that Argosy Apartments had discriminated

against her because of her familial status. Ms. Esquivel alleged that Argosy uses an occupancy policy that is overly restrictive to families with children. Esquivel & her partner lived in a 1-bedroom apartment at Argosy and they had a baby in late April 2000. Soon after, Esquivel received a notice of lease non-renewal from Argosy management. Esquivel alleges that Argosy manager Linda Partington stated her lease would not be renewed because Argosy has a policy that does not allow 3 persons to reside in a 1-bedroom apartment, even if one of those persons is a young infant. At the time of the lease nonrenewal, Esquivel's newborn child was only 3 months old. ATC assisted Esquivel in filing an administrative housing discrimination complaint with HUD against Argosy Apartments. In addition, fair housing testing by ATC supported Esquivel's claim that Argosy Apartments will not rent a 1-bedroom apartment to a family of 3 persons where one of those persons is an infant under 6 months of age. Esquivel's administrative housing discrimination complaint was referred by HUD to the Austin Human Rights Commission, and an investigation into her complaint is currently pending.

### O'Neal v. Sneed Realtors

ATC announced the settlement of a disability discrimination complaint against the company that formerly managed Grant Villa Apartments. In November 1997, Ethan O'Neal, contacted ATC's Fair Housing Program and alleged Grant Villa Apartments discriminated against him on the basis of his disability. O'Neal, who is blind, telephoned Grant Villa Apartments and requested a reasonable accommodation that they mail him an application so his independent living counselor could assist him. O'Neal alleged that Grant Villa manager Fannie Spates refused his request and shouted at him over the telephone (saying she would not mail him an application because it is against their policy). Fair housing testing by ATC provided evidence to support O'Neal's claim that Grant Villa would not mail an application to a blind prospective tenant. O'Neal filed an administrative housing discrimination complaint with HUD against the owner of Grant Villa and the management company involved, Sneed

Realtors. HUD opened an investigation into O'Neal's complaint and assisted O'Neal and Sneed Realtors in reaching an Enforcement Agreement where Sneed Realtors agreed to pay O'Neal \$1000 in relief and refrain from committing any act of discrimination in violation of the Fair Housing Act. O'Neal's complaint against Grant Villa Charitable Trust, the owner of the apartments, is still pending with HUD.

### ATC v. Sneed Realtors

After gathering testing evidence that supported Ethan O'Neal's complaint, ATC also filed an administrative housing discrimination complaint with HUD against the owner of Grant Villa Apartments and the former management company Sneed Realtors. HUD recently reached an Enforcement Agreement where Sneed Realtors agreed to pay ATC \$250 in relief.

### Service Awards

*Continued from page 1*

housing developments for their fight for tenants' rights, and to individual community activists and organizations who advocate for safe, affordable housing. Also honored were legal services programs and local attorneys willing to represent our clients in tenant-landlord and fair housing claims, legislators who work to improve laws affecting tenants rights, and counselors in social service agencies who recognize housing rights violations and refer their clients to ATC for assistance.

We sincerely appreciate the continued support and trust from the Austin community, where word of mouth referrals from satisfied clients continue to flood our counseling line and in-house counseling programs. We at ATC are grateful that the community still feels confidence in our housing rights advocacy and extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to all the volunteers and community servants who take time to help ATC fulfill its mission of "Safe, Affordable and Fair Housing for All."



### Fair Housing Testers Needed

Please contact Paul Leddy (email: paul@housing-rights.org) or Nekesha Phoenix at (email: nekeshaphoenix@housing-rights.org) 474-7007.

# Programs and Services/*Programas y Servicios*

## **FAIR HOUSING VIVIENDA JUSTA**

**THE FAIR HOUSING PROGRAM / EL PROGRAMA DE VIVIENDA JUSTA** - This program helps any person in the Austin metropolitan area who has been discriminated against in the rental, sale, financing or appraisal of housing. FHP investigates complaints and coordinates legal services to assist victims of discrimination when their rights under State and Federal fair housing laws have been violated. *Este programa ayuda a cualquier persona en el area metropolitana de Austin quien se ha enfrentado con discriminación en la renta, compra, financiamiento, o evaluación de vivienda. El FHP investiga las quejas y coordina servicios legales para las victimas de discriminación cuando sus derechos están violados bajo las leyes estatales y federales de vivienda justa. Call / llame al 474-7007.*

### **Austin Tenants' Council Staff**

**Patrick Banis** ..... Law Clerk  
**Mary Daniels Dulan** ..... Fair Housing Activities Coordinator  
**Nathan Fish** ..... Program Specialist I  
**Cruz Garcia** ..... Housing Specialist  
**Chris Garza** ..... Program Specialist II  
**Paul Leddy** ..... Fair Housing Testing Coordinator II  
**Nekesha Phoenix** ..... Fair Housing Testing Coordinator I  
**Lucia Peres-Salinas** ..... Intake Specialist  
**Sam Persley** ..... Program Specialist III  
**Bruce Rodenborn** ..... Program Development Specialist  
**Jennifer Scott** ..... Housing Specialist  
**Enrique Serrano** ..... Fair Housing Specialist  
**Katherine Stark** ..... Executive Director

## **TENANT-LANDLORD INQUILINO-PROPIETARIO**

**TELEPHONE COUNSELING / CONSEJOS POR TELEFONO** - Trained counselors answer tenant-landlord questions and make appropriate referrals. However, ATC offers no legal advice. *Consejeros contestan preguntas acerca de inquilinos-propietarios y hacen referencias necesarias. Sin embargo, ATC no ofrece consejo legal. Call / llame al 474-1961.*

**IN-HOUSE COUNSELING / CONSEJOS EN LA OFICINA** - Counseling information and materials are provided to clients in need of more in-depth assistance. *Se provee información y materiales a los clientes que necesitan mayor información. Call for an appointment / llame para una cita a 474-7006.*

**CRISIS INTERVENTION / INTERVENCION CRISIS** - Counselors mediate on behalf of tenants to resolve emergencies that threaten their housing. *Consejeros median en nombre del inquilino a resolver una emergencia que amenaza su vivienda. Call / llame al 474-1961.*

**RENTAL REPAIR ASSISTANCE / AYUDA CON REPARACIONES DE ALQUILER** - The Renters' Rights Assistance Program helps low-income renters enforce their rights for repairs through advocacy and mediation. *El Programa de Asistencia con los Derechos de Inquilinos ayuda a los inquilinos de bajo ingreso da fuerza a sus derechos para reparaciones por medio de negociación y mediación. Call / llame al 474-7006.*

**LEASE FORMS / CONTRATOS** - ATC provides lease packets and brochures describing landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities to landlords for a small fee. *ATC vende paquetes de contratos y folletos, por una cuota nominal, describiendo los derechos y las responsabilidades del propietario y del inquilino. Call for more information / llame para mayor información a 474-7006.*



**Housing Rights Advocate**  
**Austin Tenants' Council**  
**1619 E. Cesar Chavez St.**  
**Austin, Texas 78702**

**Nonprofit  
Organization  
U. S. Postage Paid  
Austin, Texas  
Permit No. 1138**

**If your agency would like to receive additional copies of this newsletter or if you have any changes to the mailing list, contact Jennifer at 474-7006 or at [jen@housing-rights.org](mailto:jen@housing-rights.org). If you prefer to view our newsletter online, we will be happy to remove your name from our mailing list.**

Housing Rights Advocate is published quarterly by the Austin Tenants' Council, 1619 E. Cesar Chavez, Austin, TX 78702. The publication is supported by grants from the City of Austin (CDBG) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The publisher is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained herein. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.

The Austin Tenants' Council, as a sub-recipient of the City of Austin, is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Reasonable modification and equal access to communications will be provided upon request. Please call 474-1961 (voice) or Relay Texas at 1-800-735-2989 (TDD) for assistance.