

**Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law**  
**Six-Month Report to Barbara McDowell and Gerald S. Hartman Foundation**  
**Submitted March 31, 2017**

The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law (Shriver Center) is pleased to provide an update to the Barbara McDowell and Gerald S. Hartman Foundation on the progress of the litigation for which it was generously granted support, *Paul Lambert et al., v. Alexander County Housing Authority, et al.*

**Background:**

The Shriver Center, along with co-counsel Hughes Socol Piers Resnick Dym, Ltd., filed a class action lawsuit in the late spring of 2016 in federal court against the Alexander County Housing Authority (ACHA) in Illinois. The lawsuit, *Paul Lambert et al., v. Alexander County Housing Authority, et al.*, contends that the ACHA intentionally segregated its public housing by race and failed to maintain the predominantly African-American developments over the last decade, violating the Fair Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. § 3604, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Illinois Civil Rights Act of 2003. The plaintiffs also allege violations of the residential lease and the commission of certain torts.

Specifically, the lawsuit asserts that the ACHA engaged in the practice of offering only two housing developments to African-American families, whereas white families were offered housing in other developments. Further, the plaintiffs allege that certain developments were illegally designated as “senior housing” to keep out African-American families. Finally, the case claims that the two developments occupied by African-American tenants were deprived of critical upkeep, maintenance, and security measures, leading to serious health, safety, and environmental hazards for their residents and that, in contrast, the ACHA regularly provided resources toward maintenance and security measures at the predominantly white public housing developments.

The goals of the litigation are to obtain fair and equal living conditions for all individuals residing in public housing under the ACHA and to remedy the segregation and discrimination it has practiced to date.

**Status Update:**

The Shriver Center is currently in the discovery process for this litigation. Written discovery continues and initial depositions are scheduled to begin March 27, 2017. A settlement conference is set for May 2017.

The Shriver Center has retained two experts for the case and is working with them now.

Due to the continued deteriorating condition of the residential units, the Shriver Center is engaging U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and HUD for more immediate relief on future housing for residents.

**Progress Anticipated:**

A settlement conference is scheduled with the court for May 2017. The Shriver Center is requesting injunctive relief and monetary damages.

Should a settlement not be reached, the trial date remains scheduled for April 2018.

**Attorney Contact Information:**

Kate Walz, Director of Housing Justice  
[katewalz@povertylaw.org](mailto:katewalz@povertylaw.org)  
(312) 368-2679