



Get the facts!

Fair Housing Tester FAQ

What is a fair housing tester?

A tester is a volunteer who poses as a renter or homebuyer for the purpose of collecting evidence about housing transactions in our community. A tester meets with a real estate agent, landlord, property owner or building manager to ask about housing availability and records the factual events of the visit. This process is called “testing.”

Why is testing important?

Very few housing discrimination complaints have enough evidence to warrant legal action without information gathered by a tester. For someone brave enough to register a housing discrimination complaint, the evidence gathered by a tester can make a significant difference in achieving a just outcome.

What is a tester required to do?

Once you attend a three-hour training session and satisfactorily complete a practice test, you’re ready to serve as a tester. Testing assignments are handed out on an as-needed basis. After you receive a test assignment, you visit the housing provider in question, complete a questionnaire, write a factual narrative, and submit these documents to Open Communities’ test coordinator in a timely manner.

What is the time commitment?

While test assignments are time-sensitive, this work can be arranged to fit into your schedule. Testers include people who are employed and test in their free time, retirees, college students, and those in between jobs; some testers test once a year, some more frequently.

What is the stipend?

In addition to the satisfaction of knowing you’re helping prevent and uncover housing discrimination, you receive a modest stipend and travel reimbursement. You receive \$35 for the initial training and practice test and are then reimbursed \$60 for each rental test and \$85 for each home sales test. In all cases, you receive reimbursement for travel and related out-of-pocket expenses. *Note: The frequency of test assignments cannot be guaranteed, so volunteers should not rely on these stipends as income.*

If you’d like to volunteer to perform this valuable community service, contact:

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Open Communities is a leading voice for housing, economic and social justice in north suburban Chicago, working to promote inclusive communities that are welcoming to all.