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Sample Survey results for Impediments to Fair Housing Choice now available

In February 2014, 210 users of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) were surveyed as to whether they believed they had experienced housing discrimination in the last three years. HCVs are federal subsidies that provide rental assistance to eligible individuals. The Iowa City Housing Authority administers the program. Holders of HCVs are able to lease affordable, privately owned rental housing. The purpose of the program is to provide individuals with safe, affordable housing options.

HCV and other rental subsidies are very useful to individuals, particularly in high cost housing markets like Iowa City. To be eligible for the HCV program, an individual/household must meet family composition requirements and must earn no more than 50% of the area median income.

In the 2014 survey results, 21% of HCV users believed they had been discriminated against in the last three years. Discrimination based on the use of HCV was the most cited reason for the discrimination (31%), followed by receiving other forms of public assistance (28%), race, national origin or color (27%). At the time of the 2014 survey, it was lawful for a housing provider to refuse to rent to an individual who used HCVs to subsidize their rent. 2014 survey results can be located online at <http://bit.ly/2fXjbtn>.

In June 2016, Iowa City's fair housing laws were amended to provide protection for individuals who use HCV or other rental subsidies to supplement their monthly rental income. Housing providers can no longer refuse to rent to an individual just because they use HCV to subsidize their rent.

Between August and September 2016, the Iowa City Human Rights Office sample surveyed 150 HCV holders with Iowa City addresses. Of that number, 32 individuals responded (20%). The Iowa City Human Rights Office enforces the City's fair housing laws and conducted this survey to determine whether HCV users saw an immediate difference in their ability to rent housing in Iowa City since the new law went into effect.

The 2016 Annual Report of the Iowa City Housing Authority cites 826 total HCVs in use in Iowa City. This report can be found at <http://bit.ly/2h6Efz4>.

In reviewing the results of the 2016 sample survey, the Human Rights Office recommends the following set of action plans. Collaborating with local housing advocates, social service agencies and the Iowa City Housing Authority to provide extensive outreach to individuals using HCV. The outreach efforts are intended to bring awareness and knowledge to individuals so that they are aware that they can file complaints when they believe they have been treated differently based on a protected characteristic in their search for housing, and that Human Rights staff will investigate their

complaint at no charge.

As part of the work plan, the Human Rights Office will also conduct more training opportunities and educational outreach on fair housing laws and regulations to the public. One of the biggest challenges the Human Rights Office encounters is that violations go unreported either because individuals do not believe that filing a complaint will change anything or they fear retaliation to them or their loved ones if they report it. Any effective outreach must counteract these thoughts and opinions.

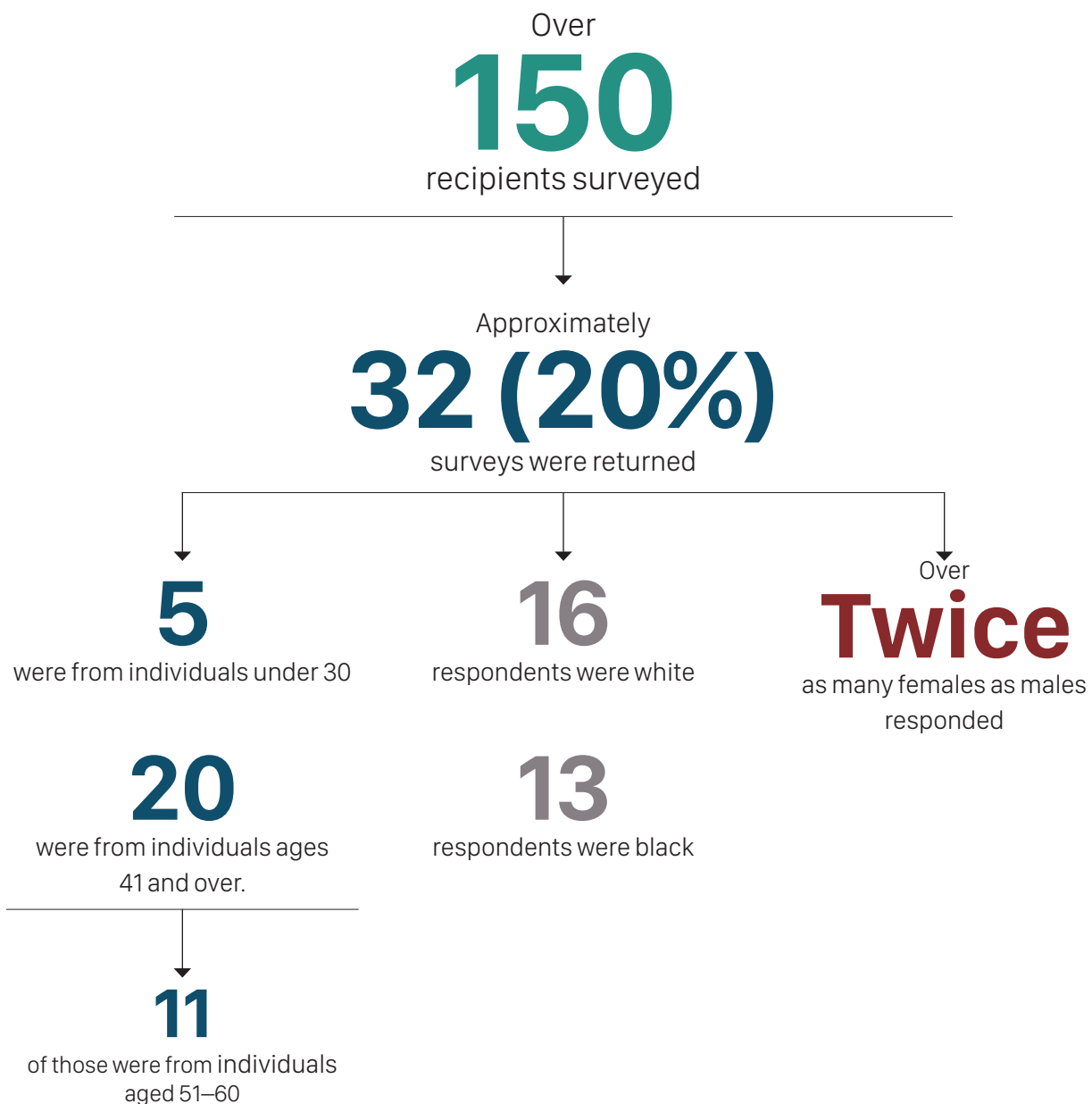
Human Rights staff quarterly reviews rental advertisements online and in print for fair housing violations. Violations of fair housing laws can include rental listings that use language discouraging individuals from renting based upon protected characteristics and can result in legal action against the housing provider, as well as the publisher of the advertising.

Starting in 2017, individuals who believe they have been discriminated against will have the additional option of submitting a housing discrimination complaint via the City's website 24/7, in addition to the written form which is currently in use. The 2016 Impediments to Fair Housing Choice document can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/2gRodp5>.

Fair Housing Discrimination Survey Results

2016





As a follow-up to the 2014 Impediments to Fair Housing Choice Survey, over 150 recipients of Housing Choice Vouchers were re-surveyed in 2016 in order to assess outcomes. Surveys were mailed to recipients with a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope included.

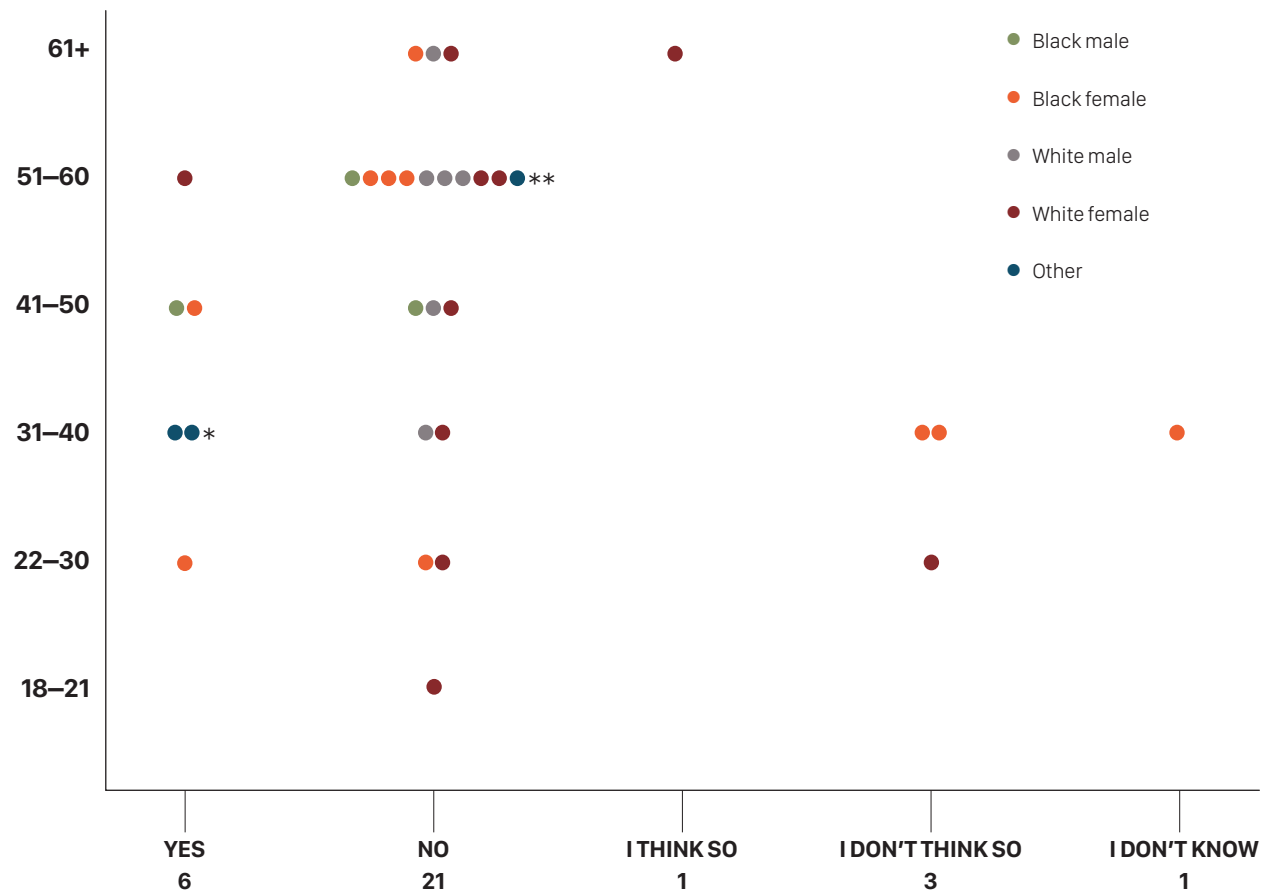
Approximately 20% of the surveys were returned.

The majority of responses received were from individuals aged 51–60 (11). Only a few were from individuals under 30 (five). Twenty of the thirty-two responses were from individuals aged 41 and over.

Over twice as many females as males responded. Of the respondents who reported they had been discriminated against, most were females, with only one male reporting having been discriminated against. Distribution of responses between Black and White individuals were roughly equal, at 13 Black and 16 White responding. The remaining three respondents were Hispanic, Mixed-race, and Other.¹

¹"Mixed-race" and "Other" were categories written in by the respondents.

1. In the last 2 years, do you believe you have been treated differently, denied, or discouraged from renting a home of your choice while searching for or living in rental housing in Iowa City? (If "No", "I don't think so", or "I don't know," please proceed to Question 12.)



*One respondent was a Hispanic female; the other was a female who wrote in "mixed race" and checked White, Hispanic, and Black.

**One male respondent wrote "other" in. This respondent also did not check any category for question 1, but was treated as a "no" because he skipped to Question 12 as those who answered no were directed to do.

The following questions count only the individuals who answered "yes" or "I think so" regarding whether they had been discriminated against in housing. One individual reported discrimination outside the 2-year time-frame given in the survey, but was still counted in the "yes" statistics. Since only seven individuals answered "yes" or "I think so," there was almost no overlap in race and gender. The one exception to this is that there were two Black females who reported housing discrimination. The answers these two individuals gave are distinguished by their age ranges listed after their designation as Black females.

2. If yes or I think so, why do you believe you were treated differently, denied, or discouraged from renting? Select all that apply.

3 Race (Example: because you are Black, White, Asian, etc.)

- Black male
- Hispanic female
- Black female, age 22–30

1 Religion

- Black male

0 Marital status (Example: because you are married, divorced, unmarried, etc.)

0 Sexual orientation

0 Color

1 Age (Example: because you are young or old)

- Black female, age 22–30

0 National origin

2 Familial status (Example: because you are pregnant or you have children)

- Mixed race female
- Black female, age 22–30

0 Gender identity

2 Disability

- Mixed race female
- White female

0 Presence or absence of dependents (Example: because your household includes someone you must care for, such as an elderly relative)

3 Public assistance source of income
(These include: Housing Choice Voucher, social security, supplemental security income, temporary assistance for needy families, family investment program, general relief, food stamps, and unemployment compensation.)

- Mixed race female
- Black male
- Black female, age 22–30

Note: the Black female age 41–50 did not check any bases.

3. Do you believe you have been treated differently, denied, or discouraged from renting more than once? If so, how many times?

1 One time

● White female

3 Two to five times

● Hispanic female
● Black female, age 22–30
● Black male

2 Over five times

● Mixed race female
● Black female, age 41–50

4. Who treated you differently, denied, or discouraged you from renting?

5 Property manager/landlord

● Black male
● Hispanic female
● Black female, age 22–30
● Black female, age 41–50
● White female

1 Government housing program staff person
(He checked both property manager and government staff person)

● Black male

1 Other (wrote in “private rental owners”)

● Mixed race female

5. What type of rental housing you were searching for or living in?

2 Apartment

● Black female, age 22–30
● White female

5 House

● Black female, age 22–30
● Black female, age 41–50
● Mixed race female
● Hispanic female
● Black male

0 Trailer or mobile home

0 Other: _____

6. Are you aware you can file a complaint of discrimination with the Iowa City Human Rights Office?

1 Yes

● Mixed race female

5 No

● Black female, age 22–30
● Black female, age 41–50
● Black male
● Hispanic female
● White female

7. Do you know where the office is located?

1 Yes

● Mixed race female

5 No

● Black female, age 22–30
● Black female, age 41–50
● Black male
● Hispanic female
● White female

8. How did you hear that you could file complaints of discrimination?

2 This form/survey

● Hispanic female
● White female

1 Friend

● Black male

1 Left blank

● Black female, age 22–30

1 IC Housing Authority

● Black female, age 41–50

1 "Because it is hard to prove
and it doesn't change anything"

● Mixed race female

9. Did you file a complaint of discrimination?

1 Left Blank

● Black female, age 22–30

5 No

● Black female, age 41–50
● Black male
● Hispanic female
● Mixed race female
● White female

10. If you have not, why?

2 Didn't know I could

- Hispanic female
- White female

1 Left blank

- Black female, age 22–30

1 "Because all the workers [are] one family"

- Black male

1 "Because it is hard to prove and doesn't change anything"

- Mixed race female

1 "I didn't want to live where I was not wanted. I found housing elsewhere and I didn't want to cause any issues."

- Black female, age 41–50

11. What would make you file a complaint?

1 "If I was unfairly treated and if I could not find a place"

- Black female, age 41–50

1 "Unfair treatment and listening/fixing my concerns"

- Hispanic female

1 "The staff will be different identity" [because all family]

- Black male

1 "Undecided"

- White female

2 Left blank

- Black female, age 22–30
- Mixed race female

Answers to the following questions are combined in question 1. Numbers given below are the raw data.

12. What is your age?

- 1** 18 – 21
 - 4** 22 – 30
 - 7** 31 – 40
 - 5** 41 – 51
 - 11** 51 – 60
 - 4** 61 or older
-

13. What is your race or ethnicity?

- 16** White, Non-Hispanic
 - 13** Black or African-American
 - 0** Asian
 - 0** American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1** Hispanic or Latino
 - 0** Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander
 - 1** "Mixed race"
 - 1** "Other"
-

14. I identify my gender as ?

- 10** Male
- 22** Female
- 0** Trans*
- 0** _____ (Fill in the blank)