

Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit

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QUALIFICATIONS FOR TESTERS

The following are some of the key points to consider when recruiting and selecting individuals to serve as "testers" in fair housing investigations or when deciding whether or not to become a fair housing "tester":

1. Testers of **both sexes** are needed in **all sizes, shapes, colors and ages**. In many communities most complaints involve allegations of racial discrimination against Black homeseekers between the ages of 24 - 45, so a number of Black/White test teams in that age bracket are very useful. But often there is also a need for Hispanic, Arab, Jewish, Asian, Catholic, handicapped or other types of testers. And, for many tests, the comparison tester is a White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant, so there is need for a good supply of those testers as well.

2. Testers are **actors** and need to be able to feel comfortable **playing the role** of a homeseeker.

3. Testers need to be **flexible**, able to adjust to changing situations and still perform their assigned role as a homeseeker.

4. Testers are **trained** in testing procedures by experienced fair housing tester trainers, and follow specific tester assignments for each test.

5. Testers need to be **objective** observers of events. Testers do not try to "find" discrimination. Testers merely pose as homeseekers and are needed to make accurate observations of what transpires during their test.

6. Testers must be **accurate recorders** of events. Testers will be expected to make an accurate and complete written record of their test on a Test Report Form. Testers need to be able to write legibly and coherently.

7. Testers must be chosen who will make **credible witnesses** in court. Preference will be given to those individuals whose past background, current standing in the community and ability to convey a message of truthfulness and competence, will be recognized and respected by members of a jury.

8. Testers must be **reliable** individuals who can be counted on to complete their agreed upon assignments at the proper time and in the proper manner. Each tester is part of a "test team." A breakdown by one member of the team could invalidate the test.

9. Testers must be willing to maintain **strict confidentiality** about their roles as a tester. Normally, only your spouse/companion/immediate family need to know you are or are planning to become a "tester."

10. Testers must be available to **serve as witnesses** in administrative hearings, depositions or court trials.

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11. Most testers are "volunteers" with many other job, family or volunteer responsibilities. Some testers may do as many as 2 or 3 tests per week, while others may do as few as 2 or 3 per year.
12. Testers must keep the Test Coordinator informed of any changes in address, phone number, employment or family status.

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