

Ensuring Fair Housing Compliance: The Role of Mystery Shopping in Upholding the Fair Housing Act

Presented by Jancyn Evaluations

Introduction

The phrase, “Rising tides lift all ships,” often attributed to President John F. Kennedy, reflects the principle that collective progress benefits everyone. This sentiment is particularly relevant as we celebrate National Fair Housing Month each April. Established to honor the passage of the Fair Housing Act on April 11, 1968, this month serves as a reminder of our commitment to ensuring equal housing opportunities for all Americans, free from discrimination.

The Significance of the Fair Housing Act

The Fair Housing Act was designed to protect individuals from discrimination when buying, renting, or selling homes. It upholds the fundamental human right of fair treatment and the broader vision of inclusive communities. Shortly after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration further reinforced these protections by establishing April as National Fair Housing Month, ensuring continuous awareness and enforcement of fair housing laws.

Current Landscape of Fair Housing Oversight

As of this writing, the position of Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) remains vacant. However, this does not deter the mission to uphold and strengthen fair housing practices. Scott Turner, the newly confirmed Secretary of HUD, has emphasized the broader impact of housing, stating, “Housing goes beyond the four walls of a home; it helps build thriving communities and is the foundation of the American Dream.” His statement underscores the need for proactive measures in ensuring compliance with fair housing laws.

The Role of Mystery Shopping in Fair Housing Compliance

One of the most effective ways to ensure compliance with fair housing regulations is through a mystery shopping program. This approach involves Independent Contractor Evaluators who assess interactions between customer-facing housing employees and potential renters or buyers. By documenting their experiences, these mystery shoppers provide impartial, thorough, and critical feedback regarding adherence to fair housing principles.

Vicki Dempsey, Vice President of Jancyn, Inc., and elite member of the www.mspa-americas.org, highlights the importance of such evaluations: “Federal fair housing laws were put in place to ensure that all citizens have equal rights when it comes to housing

options. A mystery shopping program can inform the owners and managers of housing units if their employees are in compliance with these laws. The reporting we provide not only answers questions regarding fair housing practices, but also identifies potential concerns such as ‘steering’ or language that might be perceived as discriminatory.”

The Value of Continuous Monitoring and Training

Fair housing compliance is not just a once-a-year initiative—it requires ongoing commitment. Jancyn’s mystery shopping programs serve as the third-party ‘eyes and ears’ for housing providers, delivering unbiased insights into rental and sales experiences. These evaluations not only detect potential fair housing violations but also offer valuable data for employee training and policy refinement.

Conclusion

One of the most effective ways to honor Fair Housing Month is by ensuring that the Fair Housing Act remains a respected and enforced law. By leveraging mystery shopping services such as those provided by Jancyn Evaluation Shops, www.jancyn.com, property owners and managers can maintain the integrity of fair housing practices. Regular monitoring and evaluation help foster a culture of compliance, ensuring that every individual receives the fair and equal treatment they deserve in housing transactions.

Through diligence and commitment, we can all contribute to a future where fair housing principles are upheld, fostering inclusive and thriving communities for generations to come.