

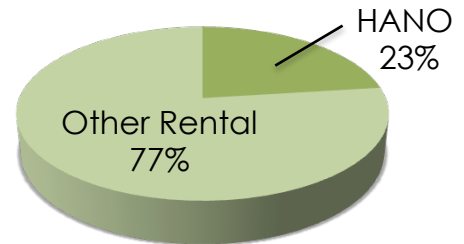
# Fact Sheet • HANO's Criminal Background Policy

## The Problem:

HANO's current criminal background policy prevents family reunification and encourages recidivism. People who are returning from prison as well as those who have never served time, but have an arrest or criminal record, all face denial.

Past mistakes should not be a permanent barrier to stable housing and the ability to contribute positively to our city.

- With 18,000 families with vouchers and 2,000+ public housing units, HANO is responsible for roughly one-quarter of the City's rental units.
- 98% of HANO families are African American.



HANO has publicly recognized that its criminal background policy has a disparate impact on African-Americans. It's failure to act perpetuates the continued denial of housing for this group and may run afoul of the Fair Housing Act.

## Background:

At the request of community members and advocates, HANO's board adopted policy changes in May 2013 that called for:

- an immediate end to denials simply because of an arrest record,
- an objective screening tool for convictions, and
- a limited look-back period for convictions.

In consultation with property managers, advocates, and other stakeholders, HANO developed detailed procedures, but they were never implemented. In April 2015 HANO published draft changes to its Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) that eliminated all references to these procedures.

**“Terrible, it was terrible—disability, anxiety. It made it all so much worse, deep depression.”** – HANO client, after being turned down in 2013 for a project-based unit because of a 1991 conviction. Client also had to pay fees for the background check that barred him.

## The Solution:

HANO has already done the work to create a screening tool that meets the needs of all stakeholders. It should immediately implement a criminal background policy that promotes family reunification and combats recidivism, by considering only convictions and not arrests, and only for a limited look-back period.