



The Equal Rights Center
advancing civil rights for all

— 2013 —



Every day, people face unlawful and unfair discrimination where they live, work and shop. The Equal Rights Center (ERC)—a national civil rights organization—works to prevent, find and remedy this discrimination through testing, education, training and enforcement efforts. For more than 30 years and with more than 7,000 members nationwide and a host of corporate and community partners, the ERC has stood at the forefront of advancing civil rights by ensuring equal access and equal opportunity for ALL in housing, employment and access to public accommodations and government services.

From the ERC Board President



In last year's message, I wrote about Change and Continuity. From an organizational perspective, the change involved Rev. Dr. James Macdonell's retirement as longtime Board President, and my succession to the post. Continuity entailed the stability of the Board and senior staff, which gave me and my colleagues confidence that the ERC would continue to pursue its civil rights mission with vigor and skill, responding to long-standing problems while tackling new ones.

One year later, the theme of Change and Continuity is applicable again, but in a different respect. Don Kahl, our Executive Director, announced to the Board in December 2013 his intention to step down from his position as of March 31. Our new Executive Director, Melvina Ford, comes to the ERC with a wealth of experience in government, nonprofit management and private practice. In the first few months of her tenure, Melvina has been engaged in a whirlwind of activity, mastering the financial and administrative structure of the ERC, introducing herself to staff, cooperating attorneys, corporate partners and other key stakeholders, and demonstrating to friend and foe alike that the ERC will continue to advocate forcefully for civil rights enforcement.

As we contemplate the ERC's many achievements, which you can read about in this report and other ERC publications, we also must be mindful that 2014 is the 50th anniversary of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, the first in a series of laws—including the Voting Rights Act, the Fair Housing Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and others—that establish the civil rights context in which the ERC operates. We have made a lot of progress in this country since 1964, but the ongoing examples of discrimination that the ERC addresses every day remind us that the battle is not yet won, the race not yet finished. We continue to rely on the support of friends and colleagues to help the ERC in its efforts to make the promise of civil rights a reality for all.

Best Regards,

Robert D. Dinerstein
Board President

From the ERC Executive Director



I came to the ERC on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Viewed through the lens of history, I am certain that in the 1960's, and certainly before then, many believed the mission undertaken by those civil rights leaders of the day to be unrealistic. Even now, it's hard to imagine that a mere 50 years ago my own right

to vote, choice of where to live and ability to earn a decent living would have been uncertain at best and met with extreme animosity at worst. Unfortunately, there are many who live with that same sense of uncertainty and who face that same animosity today.

Every time I watch news coverage showing the outrage at buses carrying mothers and children who fled from Central America for safety here in the U.S., I am reminded of the old footage showing the Little Rock Nine trying to integrate Little Rock Central High School in 1957. And when our legislators and courts pass laws giving businesses the right to refuse service to LGBT individuals on religious grounds, I can't help but think about the late Senator Byrd's filibuster against the Civil Rights Act, citing biblical grounds, for which he admitted in a 2005 interview was wrong.

I am blessed to be in a position to lead an organization, with more than 30 years of storied history in the struggle to advance civil rights, that is now committed to advancing a modern day agenda that seeks to deliver on the promise of equality for ALL people. To that end, the ERC is working to extend protections for LGBT individuals in employment and housing; to combat rampant discrimination against immigrant communities; and to increase access to housing and public accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and the growing number of older individuals and wounded veterans. I can't imagine an organization better suited for this seemingly insurmountable mission.

In 2013 alone, the ERC conducted more than 1,000 civil rights tests designed to expose unlawful discrimination; we issued reports on source of income discrimination in housing and barriers for Latinos in obtaining housing; we published new toolkits, including one designed to help patients with disabilities self-advocate for more accessible health care; we welcomed four new members to our Multifamily Housing Resource Program; and we assisted more than 370 individuals with complaints of race, national origin, disability and source of income discrimination.

I don't pretend to stand in the shoes of those great men and women who birthed the civil rights struggle so many years ago, but it is my honor to lead an organization that seeks to carry their torch.

Yours in Service,

Melvina C. Ford
Executive Director

The ERC Fair Housing Program



The ERC Disability Rights Program

Housing discrimination continues to be a pervasive problem nationwide, with an estimated 4 million incidents of housing discrimination occurring each year. Founded more than 30 years ago as the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington, the ERC's Fair Housing Program is at the forefront of the effort to end housing discrimination.

TESTING & INVESTIGATIONS

In 2013, the ERC conducted 403 civil rights tests designed to identify discrimination in the sale and rental of housing all across the country.

In addition to our civil rights testing, the ERC aided 186 individuals with fair housing complaints in 2013:

Protected Class	Rental/Sales
Disability	40
Familial Status	27
National Origin	14
Race	35
Sex	29
Sexual Orientation	101
Source of Income	157
Total	403

**Fair Housing testing conducted in 2013*

Tami Diaz (pseudonym) was referred to the ERC after her landlord denied her request to move from her basement studio to a one bedroom apartment on the first floor because the landlord believed that her young son would make too much noise. The ERC assisted Tami in filing a complaint with the DC Office of Human Rights, where she was able to secure a small settlement and an agreement that the landlord allow her to move into the next one bedroom apartment that became available.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

In 2013, the ERC joined the D.C. Office of Human Rights, the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development and the D.C. Developmental Disabilities Council to present the District of Columbia's 12th Annual Fair Housing Symposium. The symposium educated and mobilized nearly

120 advocates and officials, and provided attendees with a better understanding of housing discrimination, and how it affects the lives of the people they serve.

In total, the ERC educated an estimated 5,500 individuals at 197 education and outreach events in 2013.



District Mayor Vincent C. Gray at the 2013 D.C. Fair Housing Symposium.

ENFORCEMENT & ADVOCACY

The ERC works with federal and local enforcement agencies, the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, and the private legal bar to hold those who engage in unlawful housing discrimination legally accountable.

In 2013, the ERC settled cases with 10 housing providers and management companies addressing source of income and disability discrimination in housing. As a result of these settlements, thousands of units will be made more accessible to low income individuals and individuals with disabilities.

The ERC also provided public comment on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's proposed Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule in 2013. This rule directs the Department of Housing and Urban Development's program participants to take steps proactively to overcome historic patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice and foster inclusive communities for all.

The driving force behind the ERC's Disability Rights Program is its passion for guaranteeing that people with any type of disability have equal access to all aspects of life. From medical and government offices, to restaurants, transportation and housing, the ERC ensures that buildings and services are accessible to all individuals.

TESTING & INVESTIGATIONS

In 2013, the ERC conducted testing in 12 states and the District of Columbia to access the extent to which restaurants, department stores, and government-owned and operated facilities comply with federal, state and local accessibility regulations.

ENFORCEMENT & ADVOCACY

The ERC continued to serve on the U.S. Access Board's Medical Diagnostic Equipment Accessibility Advisory Committee in 2013. In December, the Advisory Committee issued more than 50 recommendations to the Access Board designed to lead to alterations to medical diagnostic equipment that would help individuals using wheelchairs gain easier access to life-saving mammograms and other screenings, and that will prevent injuries to medical personnel when lifting individuals with mobility issues.

The ERC receives hundreds of individual complaints each year detailing discrimination faced by individuals with disabilities. In 2013, the ERC assisted 144 individual with such complaints.

One complainant came to the ERC after her request for a reasonable accommodation (to move into a ground floor apartment because of her disability) went ignored. Several months later, she slipped on the stairs seriously injuring herself. She then reached out to the ERC for help. After contacting the property manager, the ERC was able to secure the complainant's request to move into a more easily accessible apartment, helping to ensure her safety as a tenant.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

In 2013, the DRP provided expertise on civil rights protections to dozens of independent living centers, senior service organizations, and national nonprofit organizations, including presentations on accessibility in healthcare to the D.C. Independent Living Council, transportation accessibility trainings to D.C. Advocacy partners, disability etiquette and reasonable accommodation trainings to the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, and attended the D.C. Mayor's Annual Disability Awareness Expo.



Disability Rights Program Manager Kat Taylor conducts an ADA site survey in a parking lot outside of a building.



The ERC Immigrant Rights Program



The ERC Corporate Partnerships & Training Program

The Immigrant Rights Program is a trusted voice among immigrant communities and a leader in promoting language access for individuals with limited or no English proficiency.

TESTING & INVESTIGATIONS

In 2013, the ERC continued its collaboration with the D.C. Office of Human Rights to help assess levels of compliance by D.C. government agencies with the D.C. Language Access Act. The Language Access Act, one of the most progressive laws of its type in the country, requires that D.C. government agencies provide information and services in the six languages that are most commonly spoken in the nation's capital. The ERC conducted more than 272 tests on behalf of the District government under this collaboration.

The Immigrant Rights Program conducted two testing-based investigations in 2013:

The ERC and national law firm Drinker, Biddle & Reath LLP conducted a civil rights testing-based investigation revealing that Latinos seeking rental housing across the Commonwealth of Virginia experienced at least one form of adverse treatment as compared to their white counterparts in 55 percent of the 106 tests conducted (see pg. 9).

The ERC also conducted testing in collaboration with the National Council of La Raza (NCLR). The ERC conducted 225 fair housing rental tests in three major metropolitan areas to determine rates of national origin discrimination against prospective Latino renters (see pg. 9).

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

The ERC conducted 64 “Know Your Rights” workshops, presentations and trainings in a variety of languages to immigrant communities in 2013, informing individuals about their civil rights, resources available to them, and how to advocate for themselves when faced with unfair treatment.

The ERC also participated in the 2013 NCLR Annual Conference in New Orleans. Former ERC executive director Don Kahl participated in a panel discussion on housing discrimination in immigration reform. Findings were also presented from a joint report released by the ERC and NCLR (see pg. 9).



ERC Immigrant Rights Program Manager Stephanie Gonzalez-Palumbo makes an appearance on Washington, D.C.-based radio station La Mera Mara 1050 to discuss the findings of ERC testing investigations in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The ERC's Corporate Partnerships and Training (CPT) Program creates relationships with business and industry leaders who believe in making equal access and opportunity for all an integral part of the corporate culture.

The ERC's current corporate partners include:

Borger Management, Inc.	Panera Bread
Charles Tini & Associates, LLC	Pret A Manger
The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness	Prudential PenFed Realty
Dreyfuss Management	The TJX Companies, Inc.
Gates Hudson	WHH Trice & Company
Greystar	
MED Developers	
NVR, Inc.	

In 2013, the ERC and The TJX Companies, Inc., announced an initiative to promote accessibility at TJX's stores throughout the United States. TJX and the ERC are working collaboratively to review accessibility at TJX's U.S. locations—TJ Maxx, Marshalls and HomeGoods stores—and train store associates on accessibility standards and customer service for people with disabilities.

Training is an integral part of all CPT partnerships. In 2013, the ERC led 56 in-person trainings for nearly 1,700 members at locations across the country. In addition to training, the ERC works with its corporate partners to review and update policies and survey physical sites.

The ERC also operates the Multifamily Housing Resource Program (MHRP), a membership program dedicated to assisting multifamily housing developers comply with the law and increase the number of accessible apartments and condominiums in the United States.

The ERC's current MHRP members include:

American Standard	O'Connor Plumbing & Heating
AvalonBay Communities, Inc.	Paradigm Companies
The Bozzuto Group	Steven Winter Associates, Inc.
Camden Property Trust	Trammell Crow Residential
Devereaux & Associates	Washington Property Company
Donatelli Development	Watermark Residential
Gables Residential	Woodfield Investments
The JBG Companies	
Kettler	
Lerner Enterprises	
Mill Creek Residential Trust	

Fair Housing Act Checklist

Developed with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the ERC released the *Fair Housing Act Checklist: A Guide to Accessible Design and Construction Compliance* in November 2013. The checklist is a tool for multifamily housing developers that outlines accessibility requirements for design and construction as stipulated in the federal Fair Housing Act.



Equal Rights Learning Center®

In July 2013, the ERC launched the Equal Rights Learning Center®, an online educational platform for the ERC. Some of the features available in the platform include: allowing the ERC to host e-learning courses, webinars and chats available to MHRP members, enhancing data collection and outcome analysis of e-learning courses, saving course completion certificates for individual users, and integrating a “chat room” that allows users to communicate with one another.



Membership, Media & Publications

ERC MEMBERSHIP

Since becoming a membership organization in 2006, the ERC has exponentially expanded its ability to identify discrimination and to work proactively to address discrimination. In 2013, the ERC expanded its membership by 28 percent, growing to nearly 7,000 members located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 14 foreign countries.

MEDIA

In 2013, the ERC secured 19 media placements. Among the media outlets that featured the ERC's work were:

- CNN en Español
- the Huffington Post
- Think Progress
- Fox News Latino
- WTTG Fox 5
- The Washington Post
- WUSA9
- The Multifamily Executive

To read these articles online, see the PDF available at www.equalrightscenter.org/2013annualreport.

ONLINE OUTREACH AND SOCIAL MEDIA

With 31 new original posts, the ERC's blog, *For Civil Minds*, continues to be a growing point of communication. Topics covered on the ERC's blog in 2013 included: immigration reform, transgender legislation, the defeat of the Defense of Marriage Act, disparate impact, as well as many other topics related to the work of the ERC.

The ERC's social media presence also expanded the our reach in 2013, with the ERC's Twitter following growing by 22 percent, and its Facebook following increasing by 10 percent.

PUBLICATIONS

Utilizing research and information gathered through testing, advocacy efforts and conversations with community, government and corporate partners, the ERC produces a wealth of reports, self advocacy toolkits and informational brochures.

All published material is available on the ERC's website.

For a list of the publications the ERC produced in 2013, see page 9.



Will You Take My Voucher? An Update on Source of Income Discrimination in the District of Columbia documented a 28 percent rate of discrimination against Housing Choice Voucher holders in the District of Columbia, a substantial reduction from the 61 percent rate identified at the start the ERC's source of income initiative in 2005.

Precaución: Obstacles for Latinos in the Virginia Rental Housing Market, in partnership with Drinker Biddler & Reath LLP, revealed that Latinos seeking rental housing in regions throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia experienced at least one form of adverse treatment as compared to their white counterparts in 55 percent of inquiries.



Puertas Cerradas: Housing Barriers for Hispanics, in partnership with the National Council of La Raza, documented a 42 percent rate of adverse treatment against Latino testers who inquired about renting or buying a home in Atlanta, GA; Birmingham, AL; and San Antonio, TX.

Accessible Health Care and Self-Advocacy Toolkit highlights the civil rights afforded to patients with disabilities under federal law, and explains how to alert a medical service provider of an accessibility issue, and how to request a reasonable accommodation from a health care facility.



Assistance Animal Users' Public Accommodations and Fair Housing Toolkit provides an overview of the rights of people who use assistance animals under both the federal Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, and outlines the process for requesting reasonable modifications and reasonable accommodations under federal laws.



Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

2013 Totals

2012 Totals

Assets

Current assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 15,226	\$ 30,882
Accounts receivable	2,093,105	2,170,932
Prepaid expenses	5,501	5,845
Total current assets	2,113,832	2,207,659

Property and equipment	687	6,755
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Total assets	\$ 2,114,519	\$ 2,214,414
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Liabilities

Current liabilities

Accounts payable	\$ 197,038	\$ 202,163
Line of credit	276,538	258,571
Notes payable	--	--
Total current liabilities	473,576	460,734

Long-term liabilities

Deferred lease liability	71,191	37,779
Total long-term liabilities	71,191	37,779

Total Liabilities	544,767	498,513
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Net assets

Unrestricted (defecit)	(921,977)	(267,031)
Temporarily restricted	2,491,729	1,982,932

Total net assets	\$ 1,569,752	\$ 1,715,901
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Total liabilities and net assets	\$2,114,519	\$2,214,414
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Consolidated Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

2013 Totals

2012 Totals

Unrestricted net assets

Support and revenue

Contributions- donated services	\$ 3,061,090	\$ 3,878,690
Consulting contracts	503,240	650,062
Awards/settlements	364,159	518,202
Grants-Government	300,625	507,195
Grants-Foundations	20,000	64,500
Contributions and pledges	31,176	20,447
Sponsorships	60,850	--
Interest	19	9
Net assets released from restrictions	61,203	39,242

Total support and revenue	\$ 4,402,362	\$ 5,678,347
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Expenses

Program Services	4,578,209	5,517,743
Total program services	4,578,209	5,517,743

Supporting Services

General and administrative	323,409	280,156
Fundraising	155,690	102,746
Total supporting services	479,099	382,902

Total expenses	\$ 5,057,308	\$ 5,900,645
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Change in unrestricted net assets	(654,946)	(222,298)
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Temporary restricted net assets

Awards/Settlements	515,000	101,500
Grants-Foundations	55,000	30,000
Net assets released from restrictions	(61,203)	(39,242)
Change in temporary restricted net assets	508,797	92,258

Change in net assets	(146,149)	(130,040)
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Net assets, beginning of year	\$1,715,901	\$1,845,941
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Net assets, end of year	\$1,569,752	\$1,715,901
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The ERC's Supporters

The ERC thanks those individuals who donated to the organization in 2013, making the everyday work of the ERC possible.

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Crowell & Moring
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Dechert
Dickstein Shapiro
Foley & Lardner LLP
Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP
Hogan Lovells
McDermott, Will & Emery LLP
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