



## **For Immediate Release**

**July 26, 2017**

### **Contact:**

John Petruszak (708) 957-4674, x22 [southsuburban@prodigy.net](mailto:southsuburban@prodigy.net)  
South Suburban Housing Center

Jessica Aiwuyor (202) 898-1661 [jaiwuyor@nationalfairhousing.org](mailto:jaiwuyor@nationalfairhousing.org)  
National Fair Housing Alliance

## **Chicago Area Fair Housing Organizations Accuse Deutsche Bank, Ocwen Financial, and Altisource of Housing Discrimination**

***National Fair Housing Alliance and 19 Civil Rights Group Partners File New Race and National Origin Evidence of Housing Discrimination Against National Mortgage Lender and its Preservation Maintenance Companies.***

CHICAGO — Today, the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), South Suburban Housing Center (SSHC) of Homewood, HOPE Fair Housing Center of Wheaton, Open Communities of Winnetka, and sixteen other fair housing organizations across the country revealed new evidence of housing discrimination by Deutsche Bank, Ocwen Financial, and Altisource. The complaint alleges that this national mortgage lender and its servicers failed to provide routine maintenance on foreclosed homes in middle- and working-class African American and Latino communities and neighborhoods, while consistently providing better maintenance of similar foreclosed properties in white communities and neighborhoods.

Poorly maintained foreclosed properties create a harmful and dangerous environment for the local community. They also drive down the property values of homes owned by neighbors – causing the overall community to be economically depressed. The practice of neglecting foreclosed properties in African American and Latino communities increases the economic divide, perpetuates segregation, and denies people within these communities the right to fair and safe housing.

Shanna Smith, NFHA President and CEO observed, “Poor maintenance destroys a home’s curb appeal and invites vandalism or squatters because the home appears to be abandoned. Also,

the blight caused by this neglect results in declining home values for African American and Latino families who live nearby, deepening the racial wealth gap and inequality in America.”

The administrative complaint filed with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) adds Ocwen and Altisource as respondents because Deutsche Bank uses these companies to provide preservation maintenance and marketing for the overwhelming majority of properties where the Bank is listed as owner of record. Nationally, 1,100 Deutsche Bank properties have been investigated with approximately 30,000 photographs taken to support the allegations. The analysis of this substantial photographic evidence shows a stark pattern of discriminatory conduct in the maintenance of foreclosed homes in communities of color.

View photos of the properties at <http://nationalfairhousing.org/deutsche-property-photos/>.

The three Chicago area Complainants SSHC, HOPE, and Open Communities, have collectively investigated 105 Deutsche Bank properties from 2012-2015. John Petruszak, Executive Director of SSHC stated, “The lack of maintenance of Deutsche Bank’s properties have continued to lower property values in the south suburban communities of color, robbing neighboring residents of the normal wealth/equity they expected to obtain as homeowners.”

A power point presentation containing the details and photographs of the Chicago area Deutsche Bank owned properties investigated by the three area complainants has been posted on SSHC’s website [www.southsuburbanhousingcenter.org](http://www.southsuburbanhousingcenter.org).

The Fair Housing Act makes it illegal to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status. It is also illegal to discriminate based on the racial composition or national origin of neighborhood residents. This law applies to housing and housing-related activities, which include the maintenance, appraisal, listing, marketing, and selling of homes.

#### **Highlights of Significant Racial Disparities Found in the Chicago Area Investigations:**

- 63.6 percent of Deutsche Bank properties in communities of color had **trash or debris** on the premises, while only 26.8 percent of the properties in White communities had the same problem.
- 45.5 percent of Deutsche Bank properties in communities of color had **a broken, boarded, or unsecured window**, while only 10.7 percent of properties in White communities had the same problem.
- 28.6 percent of Deutsche Bank properties in communities of color had **unsecured, broken, or boarded doors**, while only 17.9 percent of the properties in White communities had the same problem.

--more--

---

### [The National Fair Housing Alliance](#)

Founded in 1988, the National Fair Housing Alliance is a consortium of more than 220 private, non-profit fair housing organizations, state and local civil rights agencies, and individuals from throughout the United States. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the National Fair Housing Alliance, also provides comprehensive fair housing education, advocacy and enforcement programs.

### [South Suburban Housing Center](#)

SSHC is the private, non-profit, regional fair housing and housing counseling agency primarily serving over 100 communities in southern Cook, Will and Kankakee counties of Illinois since 1975. SSHC's Fair Housing Enforcement Services extend to Grundy and Iroquois Counties in Illinois, Lake County, Indiana, and several central Illinois cities. SSHC's current Fair Housing Enforcement and Housing Counseling programs assist individuals in all protected classes and ensure that housing providers recognize and comply with the fair housing laws.

*The work that provided the basis for this investigation was supported in part by funding under a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this release. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Government.*

####