
Joint Release

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Federal Reserve Board
Office of Thrift Supervision

For immediate release

Interagency Policy Statement on Fair Lending Initiatives

June 10, 1993

The four financial institution regulatory agencies are announcing initiatives that they will pursue over the next several months to enhance their ability to detect lending discrimination, to improve the level of education they provide to the industry and to their examiners, and to strengthen fair lending enforcement.

Background

A number of interagency efforts are already completed or are under way to improve fair lending detection techniques, enforcement, and education. For example:

- The agencies have issued a joint statement to financial institutions that reaffirms their commitment to the enforcement of the fair lending laws and provides the industry with guidance and suggestions on fair lending matters.
- The agencies are working on a revised supervisory enforcement policy for dealing with violations of the Equal Credit Opportunity and Fair Housing Acts. This revised policy will replace a policy issued in 1981. The revised policy specifies corrective actions for several different substantive violations of the ECOA and FHA.
- The agencies are developing uniform fair lending examination procedures and training programs. The agencies believe these new procedures will significantly strengthen existing discrimination detection programs. These new examination procedures will be publicly available this summer.

New Initiatives

The four agencies will pursue the following new initiatives over the next several months:

(more)

1. Fair Lending Training for Examiners

The agencies will develop a new training program in fair lending for experienced compliance examiners that will be conducted on a regional basis. A pilot program could be held as early as Fall 1993.

2. Fair Lending Seminar for Industry Executives

The agencies will develop and sponsor regional fair lending programs for top level industry executives (chief executive officers and executive vice presidents) to explain their efforts to enforce fair lending laws and to foster additional sensitivity and awareness among lenders about discrimination issues, specifically subtle practices that impede the availability of credit to low-income and minority individuals. The first session of this program could be held later this year.

3. Alternative Discrimination Detection Methods

The agencies will explore statistically-based discrimination analysis models. These models may help identify loan applications files for review as part of the examination process. This will significantly enhance the agencies' abilities to identify loan applicants that may have received differential treatment.

4. Stronger Enforcement of Fair Lending Laws

Each agency will implement an internal process for making referrals to the Department of Justice for violations of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act. These internal procedures will ensure that appropriate cases are being put forth for consideration by senior management.

5. Improved Consumer Complaint Programs

The agencies believe that refinements to their consumer complaint systems can also better promote the broad availability of credit on a non-discriminatory basis. During the next few months, each agency will evaluate the effectiveness of its consumer complaint system in detecting and correcting credit discrimination, and alerting the agencies to industry practices that may inhibit the free flow of credit. Each agency will announce its own specific initiatives in these areas.