

ARLINGTON BRANCH #7047
NAACP

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Dominique Jenkins, Assistant Secretary
Roy Austin, Treasurer
Adriana Spain, Assistant Secretary

At-Large Executive Committee Members

Karen Nightingale, Symone Walker, Esq.,
James Younger, Esq.

April 30, 2021

Mr. Mark Schwartz
Arlington County Manager
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite #318
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Serrano Apartments

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is committed to ensuring that all Arlington residents, regardless of race, have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing. On April 23, 2021, the Arlington Branch NAACP President and Housing Committee Co-Chair participated in a walk-through of the Serrano Apartment buildings and six apartments organized by Serrano Tenant Association leadership. We have been working with Serrano tenants since 2019 to support their attempts to address ongoing health and safety issues. We observed severe problems that suggest a culture of deferred maintenance and underinvestment in the property during our walk-through. Attached is a report from our walk-through, and we have included a high-level summary of the issues below.

1. Pest Control – All of the residents we spoke with in both Serrano buildings said severe mice/rat infestations exist in their units. The infestations have forced some residents to move all food out of their kitchens and significantly impacted their ability to cook and store food safely, placing additional burdens on these low-income tenants.
2. Physical Deterioration – Some units showed large cracks in the walls, light fixtures and switches that did not work, and rust and broken glass fixtures on the balconies.
3. HVAC Issues – In the apartments we visited, the inside of most HVAC units were filthy with old filters and years of accumulated dust and muck. We also observed significant water damage on the floors beneath them.
4. Lack of Care – In some units where maintenance was conducted, the "fixes" demonstrated a lack of care (i.e., foam to fill in mouse holes jutting out from walls and cupboards, screeching plumbing in bathrooms, and sloppy craftsmanship).

Arlington County Taxpayers have invested significant amounts of money through Federal, commonwealth, and county programs to build and preserve affordable housing. The lack of decent living conditions we observed should not be acceptable either to AHC, Inc. or Arlington County. While AHC, Inc. has made some progress addressing the most egregious issues, these units do not reflect our values or priorities for low-income residents in Arlington.

In addition to joining us for a walk-through of the Serrano Apartments, we request that the County Manager:

1. Ensure that the county has at least one dedicated staff member to work directly with tenants in Committed Affordable (CAF) units to address their issues and concerns.
2. Take immediate and significant steps to ensure Arlington's non-profit partner's repair and rehabilitate all CAF units in disrepair, especially at the Serrano Apartments.
3. Make all policy and management changes necessary to ensure that all CAF residents have safe, decent, and affordable homes now and in the future.

Sincerely,



Julius D. "J.D." Spain, Sr.
Branch President

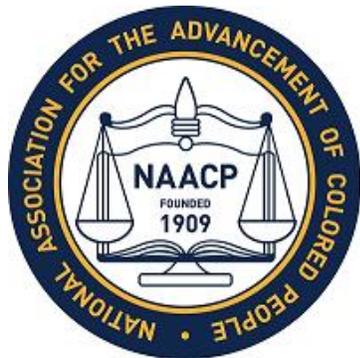


Kellen M. MacBeth
Co-Chair, Housing Committee



Wanda R. Younger
Branch Secretary

c: Shannon Flanagan-Watson, Deputy County Manager
Arlington County Board Members
Anne Venezia, Housing Director, CPHD
Arlington Branch NAACP Executive Committee



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NAACP

NAACP walk-through of Serrano Affordable Housing Units, 5539 Columbia Pike 5535, Arlington, VA 22204

Date/Time of Photos: April 23, 2021, 6:00 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.

Attendees: Arlington Branch NAACP President, Housing Committee Chair, 3 Community Leaders, and 10+ tenants

Number of Apartments Visited: Five (5)

Discrepancies Found: Multiple Residential HVAC Systems (Mold/Water Leaks), Possible Asbestos Issues, Poor Ventilation throughout two buildings and apartments, Severe Electrical Hazards, Unsatisfactory/Poor Recent Repairs, **Severe Rodent Issues, Poor Courtyard Lightening and Security,**

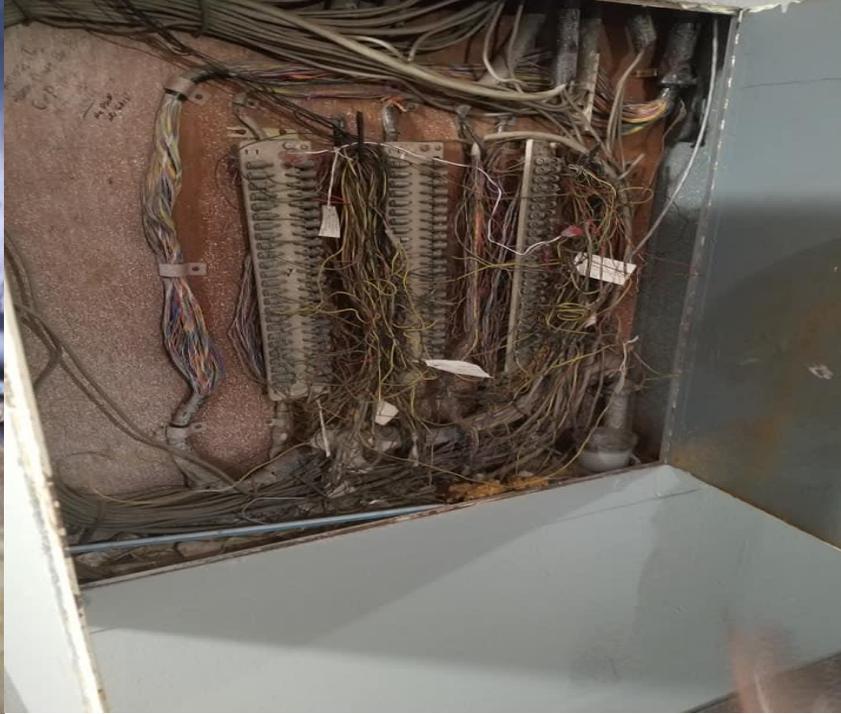
Housing Committee

The mission of Housing Committee shall: (1) **study housing conditions in the local community;** (2) **receive and seek to address complaints of discrimination;** (3) oppose all restrictive practices whether public or private; and (4) disseminate information and render such other assistance which eliminates discrimination in housing.

NAACP mission statement is “ to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and **ensure the health and well-being of all persons.**”

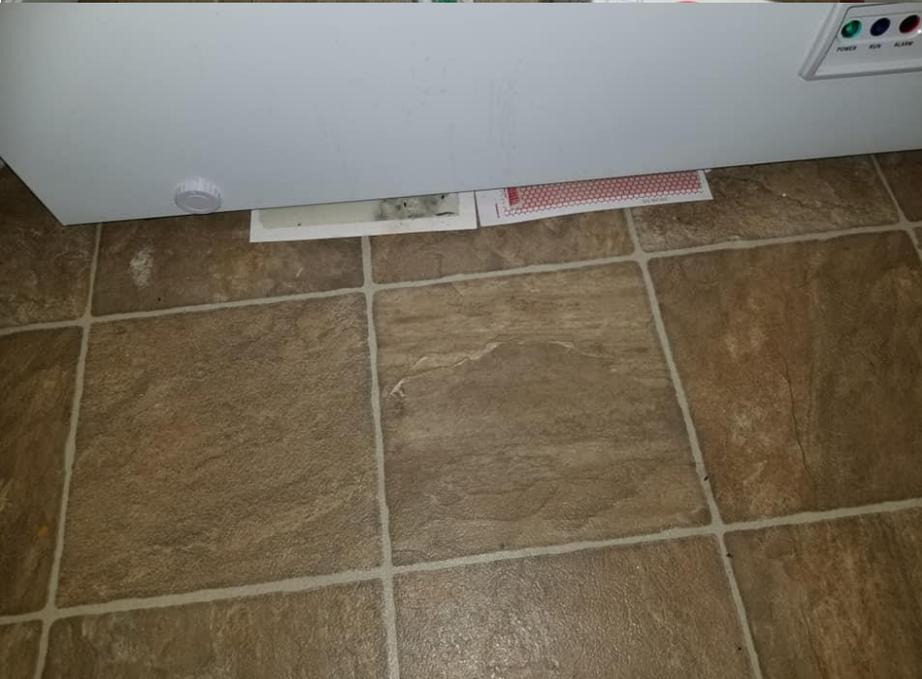


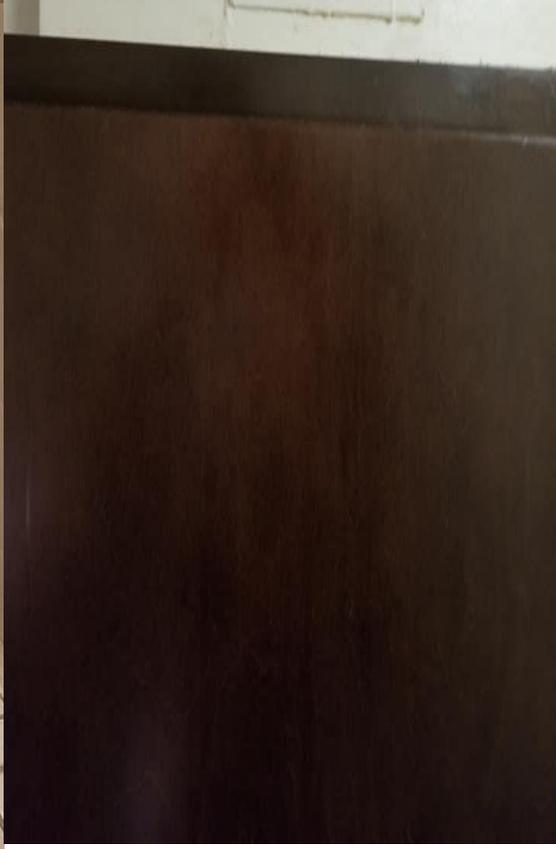






Rodent Feces





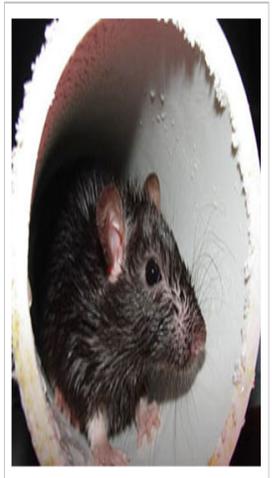


Rodents



Worldwide, rats and mice spread over 35 diseases. These diseases can be spread to humans directly, through handling of rodents, through contact with rodent feces, urine, or saliva, or through rodent bites. Diseases carried by rodents can also be spread to humans indirectly, through ticks, mites or fleas that have fed on an infected rodent.

This web page offers helpful suggestions on rodent control during and after a rodent infestation. The primary strategy for preventing human exposure to rodent diseases is effective rodent control in and around the home. This is achieved by eliminating any food sources, sealing even the smallest entries into homes, and successfully trapping rodents in and around the home.



Rodents

- 🏠 Rodents Homepage
- ➕ Prevent rodent infestations
- ➖ Diseases from rodents
 - ➔ Directly transmitted by rodents
 - ➔ Indirectly transmitted by rodents
- ➕ Cleaning up after rodents
- ➕ Resources

Diseases directly transmitted by rodents

- Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome +
- Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome +
- Lassa Fever +
- Leptospirosis +
- Lymphocytic Chorio-meningitis (LCM) +
- Omsk Hemorrhagic Fever +
- Plague +
- Rat-Bite Fever +
- Salmonellosis +
- South American Arenaviruses (Argentine hemorrhagic fever, Bolivian hemorrhagic fever, Sabiá-associated hemorrhagic fever, Venezuelan hemorrhagic fever) +
- Tularemia +



Serrano Apartments, Arlington, VA
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