Project Sentinel
Fair Housing Presents:
Fair Housing rights

Ana Andrade
Community outreach coordinator
Who Are We?

- We are a non-profit organization
- We are non-partisan; we advise and assist both Landlords and Tenants

DEPARTMENTS:

- Dispute Resolution - Counseling & Mediation
- Housing Counseling - Foreclosure prevention, mortgage delinquency, and default counseling, reverse mortgage counseling, financial and credit counseling
- Fair Housing/ Housing Discrimination
Our mission

We develop and promote fairness and equality of housing opportunities for all persons and advocate peaceful resolution of disputes for community welfare and harmony.
PS Offices & Service Areas

Service Areas
• Santa Clara County
• San Mateo County
• Sacramento County
• Stanislaus County
• PLUS
• City of Merced
• City of Fremont
• West Sacramento

Office Locations
• Santa Clara
• Sacramento
• Gilroy
• Redwood City
• Modesto
What does Project Sentinel’s Fair Housing Center do?

- Investigate FH complaints
- Conduct testing to detect discriminatory practices
- Educate both tenants and housing providers
- Provide advice and consultation to both tenants AND housing providers
- Can assist and potentially represent in HUD or DFEH administrative complaints
Protected Categories

Federal
► Race/Color
► National Origin
► Religion
► Sex
► Sexual Orientation
► Gender Identity
► Disability
► Familial Status

California
► Marital Status
► Age
► Source of Income
► Arbitrary
► Military/Veterans
► Immigration Status
► Primary Language
Disability

- A physical or mental impairment that limits one or more of a person’s major life activities
- A record of having, or being perceived as having, such an impairment.
What is a Reasonable Accommodation?

- A change in rules, policies, practices, or services which may be necessary to enable a person with a disability an equal opportunity to obtain, use and enjoy his or her home.

- Or simply put: an exception
Examples of RA’s

- Service animals
- Emotional support animals
- Transfer of units
- Extensions of time

- Break Lease
- Rental due date change
- Caretaker or live-in aid
- Second chances
- Accessible parking spaces
Supporting a reasonable accommodation request

- A housing provider can ask for proof of disability if the disability is not obvious or readily apparent, e.g., not visible to the eye.

- Any reliable third party who is in a position to know about the individual's disability such as a doctor or other medical professional, a peer support group, or a non-medical service agency, may provide verification of a disability and a disability-related need for a reasonable accommodation.
What needs to be in a letter supporting a reasonable accommodation?

- (1) a statement confirming your disability
- (2) a brief explanation of how the requested accommodation helps with your disability *(the connection)*

Check out our Reasonable Accommodations Toolkit for sample letters and templates!
Denying an RA

- If the requested accommodation would cause an undue administrative or financial burden

- If the request would require a fundamental change to the housing provider’s program

- If the requested accommodation would cause an undue health and safety burden
Reasonable Modifications

- Same as RAs, except a physical change to the unit.
- Landlord can reasonably require a return to original condition (wear and tear excepted) if the RM would be unacceptable to a new tenant.
- Landlord has the right to approve plans and ensure a workmanlike product.
Reasonable Accommodations & Modifications

Who pays for any costs associated with a Reasonable Accommodation?

→ The Landlord

Who pays for any costs associated with a Reasonable Modification?

→ The Tenant
Using Criminal Records in Housing

► In 2016, HUD placed restrictions on broad criminal history prohibitions in tenant selection.

► Arrests should not be considered at all, only convictions.*

► No blanket bans!

► Landlords should look at individual circumstances, such as type of conviction, how long ago it occurred, behavior since then, etc.

*Check out our Criminal History Toolkit!
Gender discrimination covers two special issues

**Sexual Harassment**
- Owner, manager, employee
- Neighbors

**Domestic Violence**
- Early lease termination
- Eviction of abuser
- Lock changes
- Non-eviction due to police calls
Familial Status

- The presence of minors under 18 years old and pregnant women.
- To treat people/families with children differently.
- Overly restrictive rules directed at children are prohibited, as they treat households with children different than adult-only household.
- Occupancy limits.
- Rules specifically about children.
- Common areas and supervision.
Source of Income

- Housing providers must accept all sources of income so long as it is legal and verifiable.
- This may include: SSI, SSDI, child/spousal support foster care support, etc.
- This includes: Section 8
- Beware when you hear: “Professionals preferred.”
- This does not mean that it is illegal for a housing provider to require a minimum income. But it is important to note that for section 8 voucher holders, the minimum income requirement must reflect the tenant portion of their rent.
National Origin

• It is illegal to treat someone differently because they are from another country. Based on:
  • Accents
  • Language
  • Culture (food, clothes, etc.)
  • Name
  • Living Conditions

This is related to immigration status.
**Immigration Status**

It is not illegal for a LL to rent to an undocumented person.

**IDs:**
- A LL cannot ask for 2 forms of ID from a person of a different national origin, but only 1 form of ID from an American.
- In most cases, a LL may not refuse to accept a consulate ID.
Immigration Status:
Cal. Civ. Code § 1940.3

- **Prohibits:**
  - Inquiry about applicant or tenant’s immigration or citizenship status
  - Requiring applicant or tenant to state or certify immigration or citizenship status

- **Permits:**
  - Verification of identity
  - Verification of financial qualifications
CREATING A RENTER’S RESUME

Before you apply for rentals, consider crafting a renter’s resume. In a competitive rental market, a renter’s resume can highlight your qualifications as a good tenant, and help to mitigate any negative factors that may impact your application such as a lack of or bad credit history.

NAME AND CONTACT INFO

Include your contact information such as your phone number, email, or mailing address at which the landlord can contact you at the top of the resume.

TENANT BACKGROUND

Providing a brief paragraph of introduction is a great way to portray yourself in a positive light. You may also list the type of rental and price range you are looking for.

OPTIONAL SECTIONS:

Depending on your rental/credit history or lack thereof, there are certain points you may want to address on your renter’s resume:

- Employment
- Rental history
- Reference contact information
- Reference letters
- Proof of income

FULL NAME

1234 Someplace St. Sacramento, CA  (888)-987-6543  | fakeemail@sampledomain.com

Background

I have lived and worked in San Jose for two years. I am currently employed as a construction worker at Carl’s Construction Company. Ideally, I am looking for a 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom apartment for $2000 a month or less.

Employment

Construction Worker at Carl’s Construction Company ................................March 2016-Present
Supervisor: Jane Draper, Manager (999)-123-4567
Job Employment Company .................................................June 2017-March 2018
Supervisor: June Hinglebert, Assistant Manager (555) 123-4567

Rental History

Clearwater Creek Homes, 456 Creek St. Anytown, CA 98765 ..........June 2018- present
Rent: $1800/month
Draper Housing, 123 Street St. Anyplace, CA 98750 .................June 2017-June 2018
Rent: $1500/month

References

Previous landlord: June Hinglebert, Assistant Manager
Phone: (555) 123-4567
Email: jhingleb@joans.org

Previous employer:

Additional Documents Available Upon Request

- Proof of income (includes pay stubs, written notes from an employer verifying regular employment and income, copies of checks from an employer, pension checks, etc.)
- Letter of recommendation from landlord
- Letter of recommendation from employer
- Letter of recommendation from neighbor
Retaliation

- It is illegal to harass, evict, or otherwise discriminate against any person in retaliation against that person for opposing discrimination, or helping another person oppose discrimination.

- If the housing provider takes any form of adverse against a tenant shortly after they become aware that the tenant is asserting fair housing rights.
Advocacy Tips

► Always keep copies of any documentation that you receive from your housing provider.
► Document, document, document
► If denied from housing, request a denial letter.
► Use your resources, call Project Sentinel!
FIGHT FOR FAIR HOUSING WITH PROJECT SENTINEL

WE'RE HIRING!

Make between $20-$55 per Fair Housing Testing or Survey you work on!
Get compensated for time & reimbursed for mileage and expenses.
Must be 18 or older.
Bilingual Candidates Encouraged to Apply.

TO REGISTER FOR OUR NEXT TRAINING EMAIL
BRIANA LUCIO AT BLUCIO@HOUSING.ORG

TESTER TRAININGS EVERY FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
10AM-11:30AM OR 5-6:30PM
Questions?

Contact information:
- fairhousing@housing.org
- Fair Housing Intake: 1888-324-7468
- www.housing.org