

Project Sentinel Can Help

Project Sentinel is a nonprofit Fair Housing agency that provides education and counseling to community members, housing providers, and tenants about the Fair Housing laws. We also investigate complaints and advocate for those who have experienced housing discrimination.

When you call Project Sentinel, a staff member will discuss your housing problem with you and counsel you on your rights under the Fair Housing laws. If you are a tenant, we may be able to:

- investigate your complaint
- educate the owner or manager about their legal obligations
- negotiate with the property owner or manager on your behalf
- help you file a complaint with a state or federal enforcement agency
- advocate for you during the complaint process
- refer you to a free Fair Housing attorney for further legal assistance

If you are a housing provider, we may be able to:

- explain your obligations under the Fair Housing laws
- conduct a fair housing training for you and/or your staff
- provide you with additional resources to assist you with understanding and solving your Fair Housing problems

*Our services are **free of charge** and available regardless of your income or immigration status.*

Project Sentinel's Service Area

Project Sentinel is able to provide assistance over the phone or at one of our many regional offices. We provide assistance to individuals who experience housing discrimination or own rental housing in the following geographic areas:

Santa Clara County
San Mateo County
Stanislaus County
Sacramento County
City of West Sacramento
City of Fremont
City of Merced

Contact Project Sentinel for help!

Toll Free: (888) 324-7468
www.housing.org
info@housing.org

To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities:

Email: scottrell@housing.org
TTY: 7-1-1

Project Sentinel is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Housing Initiatives Program and local Community Development Block Grants.

Project Sentinel does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or familial status.

 Project Sentinel  projectsentinel  @ProjSentinel

Housing Discrimination

*Against Persons
with Disabilities*



Project Sentinel
A NONPROFIT FAIR HOUSING AGENCY



Know Your Rights

Under federal and state Fair Housing laws, it is illegal for anyone involved with housing—including owners, property managers and staff, real estate agents, HOAs, shelters, banks, and mobile home parks—to:

- refuse to rent or sell a home
- charge higher rent or security deposit
- steer people to or from homes in certain neighborhoods or parts of buildings
- evict a tenant
- apply different rules or criteria, or otherwise treat people differently
- harass or threaten a housing seeker, their friends, and family members

...**BECAUSE OF** one of the following protected characteristics:

Disability	Ancestry
Familial Status*	Sexual Orientation
Religion	Gender Identity & Expression
Sex	Marital Status
Race	Source of Income
Color	Age
National Origin	

**Family with children under the age of 18*

...or because of any **arbitrary characteristic** that has no relation to one's ability to be a good tenant or financially qualified to buy a home.

It is also illegal for your housing provider to punish you for complaining about discrimination or talking to a Fair Housing agency like Project Sentinel.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is disabled?

In California, a person is disabled if they have a mental or physical condition that limits a major life activity. Major life activities include walking, social activities, working, sleeping, and the ability to care for oneself.

What is disability discrimination?

Disability discrimination happens when a housing provider (1) treats a disabled tenant differently than a nondisabled tenant, or (2) wrongfully denies a reasonable accommodation or modification request.

What is a reasonable accommodation?

Housing providers are sometimes required to make exceptions to their rules or policies for disabled tenants. A housing provider must usually make an exception if (1) the tenant is disabled; (2) the exception will help the tenant fully enjoy the property; and (3) the request is reasonable. For example, a request that a housing provider make an exception to their "no pet" policy for a disabled tenant with a service dog would be a reasonable accommodation.

What is a reasonable modification?

Housing providers must also sometimes allow a disabled tenant to make physical changes to the property when necessary for the disabled tenant to have full access and use of her home. Examples of common reasonable modifications are the installation of a ramp or a grab bar. The cost of a modification is the responsibility of the tenant, except when the property receives federal funding.

How does a tenant get a reasonable accommodation or modification?

The tenant must first *ask* the housing provider for the accommodation. It is best if the request is in writing. It is illegal to punish a tenant for asking for an accommodation.

Does the tenant have to provide a doctor's note?

If the disability or its connection to what the tenant is asking for is not obvious, a housing provider can ask for a support note that explains the disability and/or how the disability relates to the request. The note may be written by a doctor, therapist, social worker, or any professional who is familiar with the tenant's disability and can verify the tenant's need. The note should include (1) a statement confirming the tenant is disabled, and (2) an explanation of how the request helps with the tenant's disability. The tenant does not need to disclose a diagnosis or the details of any medical problems.

What if an owner or manager does not respond to a tenant's request?

A housing provider may not ignore a request or take too long to respond. If the housing provider cannot grant the request, they must work with the tenant to find another solution.

When can a housing provider deny a request?

Simply put, when the request is unreasonable. A request is unreasonable if it would cause an extreme administrative or financial burden on the housing provider, or would require a major change to the services offered to tenants.