

PRACTICE FAIR HOUSING



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



Spring/Summer 2014
Vol. 3

Equal access to housing is a right protected by both federal and state law. The City of San Diego strives to increase housing opportunities and equality for its citizens. Our "Practice Fair Housing" program offers free services to the community in order to promote equal housing opportunities and our goal for the program is to emphasize solutions through education and enforcement – so that our shared values of community, opportunity and equality can be realized.

What is Fair Housing?

There is often much public misunderstanding about the meaning of the term "fair housing." What does it really mean?



Fair Housing means the ability of persons of similar income levels who are seeking housing in similar housing markets and who have **like qualifications**, will have available to them the **same range of housing choices** without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability (physical/mental) or familial status (presence of children),

as provided under the federal Fair Housing Act. California laws have the same protections as federal law and further protect against housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, source of income, marital status, age, ancestry or arbitrary status.



Calendar of Events

See our calendar of events for updates on future events, workshops and fair housing activities at: www.sandiego.gov/cdbg/fairhousing

Fair Housing Month – 2014

As our nation commemorates the anniversary of the passage of the federal Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended), the month of April is designated throughout the U.S. as "Fair Housing Month". The federal Fair Housing Act enunciates a national commitment to fair housing without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, familial status and disability.



In special recognition of this anniversary and the City of San Diego's robust "Practice Fair Housing" program, the San Diego City Council joined the national celebration and proclaimed April 2014 "Fair Housing Month" in the City. During the proclamation, the City premiered its first Fair Housing public service announcement created by City 24 in partnership with Legal Aid Society of San Diego. The PSA was the result of a coordinated, regional effort highlighting disability and service animals.

A special thanks to Cox Communications and Time Warner Cable for generously airing the PSA during the month of April...and to Erika Sims and Graham Bloem (dog handler) for the donation of their time and energy as featured in the PSA.

To view the PSA, click here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJYL84USOYo&feature=youtu.be>



City Council "Fair Housing Month – April 2014". From Left to Right: Doug White, Cox Communications; Branden Butler, Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc.; Graham Bloem, Shelter to Soldier; Gregory Knoll, Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc.; Michele Marano, City of San Diego; Council President Todd Gloria; Erika Sims; Joe Gabaldon, Time Warner Cable; Tom Tomlinson, City of San Diego and Appaswamy "Vino" Pajonor, Housing Opportunities Collaborative.

Fair Housing Month is Personal for this Veteran

Erika Sims, a San Diego resident, a Marine Corps and Army veteran who honorably served her country, is featured in a fair housing Public Service Announcement (PSA) developed in a collaborative effort between Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc. and City of San Diego. This PSA spotlights veterans and persons with mental disabilities who use a service animal and have been victims of unlawful housing discrimination. For Erika, the message behind this PSA is very personal. She herself was a victim of housing discrimination upon her return from serving her country in Iraq. Erika's landlord refused to renew her lease merely because she had a service dog.

Erika Sims, was a Lance Corporal in the Marines from 2001-2005, and a Sergeant in the Army from 2005-2013. She served her country honorably while in Iraq in the push to Baghdad. Like so many other returning veterans, Erika returned from Iraq with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression, causing her to retire from the military with a full disability. Part of Erika's treatment plan for her PTSD included having a service

dog to assist her with her disability in her home. When Erika returned from serving in Iraq, she rented an apartment in downtown San Diego and requested a reasonable accommodation under the Fair Housing Act to have a service dog.

In Erika's case, her reasonable accommodation to have a service dog to assist with her disability was denied by her former landlord, and the landlord refused to renew her lease because she had a service dog. The landlord's actions caused Erika to suffer severe emotional distress as she only recently returned from serving in Iraq and was now facing eviction. As a newly returned veteran, Erika did not know where to go for fair housing assistance, and relied upon a family friend attorney to assist her.

Under Federal and State Fair Housing Laws, a person with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation to have a service dog, or assistance animal, if the service dog or assistance animal is needed to assist the person with his/her disability in order to have equal enjoyment of the unit. A landlord may



not raise rent or charge a pet deposit fee in response to a reasonable accommodation request for a service dog or assistance animal.

As the focus of the new fair housing public service announcement, Erika's bravery is not only shown by her service to our country, but also by the fact that she is standing up for fair housing rights for her fellow veterans with disabilities that may require a service dog or assistance animal, so her fellow veterans and community members will not have to suffer the housing discrimination she encountered.

Erika Sims is now an employee with a local defense contractor. In addition, she has gone on to start her own nonprofit organization, Combat to Clinic, whose mission is to assist returning veterans to attend college to specifically train in counseling to assist other veterans with mental health disabilities, such as PTSD. Erika also works with the local nonprofit, Shelter to Solider, which trains and provides service dogs at no cost to returning veterans with mental health disabilities.



San Diego Regional Alliance for Fair Housing

Housing discrimination does not stop at our City boundaries. In an effort to affirmatively further fair housing choice throughout the San Diego region, the City has taken an active role in the San Diego Regional Alliance for Fair Housing – a group of professionals working together to ensure that all residents of the San Diego region have equal access to housing. It is comprised of members of the fair housing community, government entities, enforcement agencies and housing providers. This group had its roots in the early 1980's when the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) appointed the Community Housing Resource Board (CHRB). HUD had the vision of unifying fair housing efforts in the region and provided early leadership to foster a collaborative approach to affirmatively further fair housing and end discrimination in housing choice. HUD had provided strong leadership to the first CHRB in San Diego which led to one of the strongest, most active, CHRBs in California. Over the years, the CHRB became less active and in a recent effort to strengthen collaborative efforts in the region, the organization was renamed the San Diego Regional Alliance for Fair Housing (SDRAFFH). The SDRAFFH meets on a quarterly basis to promote fair housing education, training and advocacy.

The SDRAFFH also oversees the preparation of a regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (commonly known as an

Take Action

If you believe you have been denied housing or the opportunity to apply for housing in the City because of a characteristic protected by federal or state law, you may contact the City's Fair Housing hotline at **1-800-462-0503** or call the Fair Housing Center at Legal Aid Society at **1-844-449-3500**.

- ✓ Make sure to contact the hotline within one-year of the incident,
- ✓ Speak to a housing counselor and provide facts about the incident,
- ✓ If merited, you may be referred to our legal service provider for further investigation of your concerns,
- ✓ An attempt will be made to assist both parties in resolving the issue,
- ✓ If the issue remains unresolved, and there is evidence that a violation of the law has occurred, the complaint may be litigated in court.



"AI"), which has historically been funded with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and local funds contributed by all CDBG entitlement jurisdictions in San Diego County on a pro rata basis. The San Diego region will be embarking upon an update to its regional AI during Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

For more information about the San Diego Regional Alliance for Fair Housing, visit: www.sdfairhousing.org

Fair Housing News Across the Nation



Source URL: <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2014/03/prweb11627394.htm>

Public University Students Are Now Benefiting from Emotional Support Animals

February 28, 2014

As the spring semester or trimester gets underway, a recent HUD ruling means that public university students with psychiatric disabilities now have the right to have their Emotional Support Animals with them in their dormitories. San Francisco therapist Michael Halyard describes the rights and benefits of Emotional Support Animals for people with psychiatric disabilities.



"For some people, their emotional support animal is the one thing keeping them stable in spite of suffering from severe mental illness. San Francisco, California"

This spring semester or trimester, public university students with psychiatric disabilities now have the right to have emotional support animals with them in their college residence halls and dormitories. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) notified its regional offices last April that public universities must comply with the Fair Housing Act which allows for emotional support animals.

More and more people, including college students, are alleviating their psychiatric symptoms by having emotional support animals serve as their companions. "Emotional support animals are pets that provide therapeutic benefit to their owners through devotion, affection and companionship. Unlike other service animals, emotional support animals do not require training to carry out specific tasks, and require only the same amount of training as an ordinary house pet," says San Francisco therapist Michael Halyard.

Halyard is a San Francisco Marriage and Family Therapist and can be found on the websites <http://www.sftherapy.com> and <http://www.sanfranciscopsychotherapy.com>. Emotional support animals should not be confused with psychiatric service dogs. The latter referring to dogs that require special training to perform specific tasks that help a person mitigate the effects of a mental illness-like turning on the lights for a person with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

"Going away to college for the first time is hard for most kids, but is made even harder for those prone to depression or other mental illness. Emotional support animals provide emotional security, unconditional love, and act as a secure base for their owners," explains Halyard.

"Many people struggle with situations that used to be easy for them. Frequently, it is a traumatic life event that triggered a psychological inability to function in day to day activities. Other people have biological-based psychiatric disorders that affect their ability to function. For all of the above, the company of a beloved pet serving as an emotional support animal can considerably diminish or eliminate their symptoms," adds Halyard.

Halyard says whether it's disorders like Major Depression, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Agoraphobia, Panic Disorder, PTSD, Autism Spectrum Disorders or Schizophrenia, people who have psychiatric disabilities can benefit tremendously from having an emotional support animal present in their lives. "For some people, their emotional support

animal is the one thing keeping them stable in spite of suffering from severe mental illness," argues Halyard.

The two federal laws that regulate emotional support animals are the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 (ACAA) and the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (FHAA). The ACAA and regulate emotional support animals on commercial aircraft and the FHAA regulate emotional support animals in housing. "Emotional support animal" is legal terminology and defines rights to owners by the ACAA and FHAA. HUD's recent notification means that public universities must allow emotional support animals and comply with the Fair Housing Act.

For those off-campus and non-students, landlords are required to provide reasonable accommodations to allow disabled tenants to have an emotional support animal even when there's a "no pet" policy if they have the proper documentation. Landlords must waive security deposits for pets, but the owner can be charged for any damage caused by the emotional support animal. Airlines are used to people bringing their emotional support animals on board and have policies in place. Most airlines don't charge an extra fee for emotional support animals but they do require the proper documentation and advanced notice 48 prior to the flight.

In order to have your pet become an emotional support animal, you need to get a letter from your physician or licensed mental health professional recommending the emotional support animal to help with your disability, and the pet has to be able to live peacefully with people without being a danger or nuisance.

California registers service animals through each county's animal enforcement department. San Francisco residents can get a service-dog tag from the Animal Care and Control Department if they have a letter recommending an emotional service dog from their therapist or physician.

"It's important to train your animal so that it doesn't bother other people, as there are still establishments that will allow let them to accompany you-but it is now up to the establishment," says Halyard.

"People get such tremendous benefit from their emotional support animals! Emotional support animals reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and even can return a person to a higher level of functioning. A person who has a major mental illness may be able to live a fairly normal life," explains Halyard.

"If you already have psychiatric condition that substantially limits at least one of your major life activities, you may qualify to designate your pet as an emotional support animal," adds Halyard.

WBEZ91.5 Published on WBEZ 91.5 Chicago (<http://www.wbez.org>)

Source URL: <http://www.wbez.org/news/new-report-reveals-pervasive-discrimination-housing-voucher-program-109946>

New report reveals pervasive discrimination in housing voucher program

April 1, 2014

The Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law spent two years investigating discrimination in the subsidized housing market and found rampant racial discrimination. Subsidized housing vouchers, commonly referred to as Section 8, allow families to rent in the private market. A new report outlines the discrimination (<http://cafha.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CLCCRUL-CHA-testing-report.pdf>).

To assess fair housing practices, trained investigators posing as potential

Continued next page.

At A Glance

What have we accomplished during our Practice Fair Housing Campaign? Here is a summary of our accomplishments during the first half of Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013):

1829	multilingual informational brochures distributed
434	fair housing inquiries received
25	fair housing discrimination investigations implemented
23	fair housing investigations resolved
22	random fair housing tests conducted
10	new fair housing testers trained
6	articles published
5	workshops conducted
45	persons educated regarding fair housing rights

From Page 3: Fair Housing News Across the Nation

tenants inquire about availability, terms and conditions to assess compliance. White and black testers, with comparable backgrounds, tried to rent from landlords.

Landlords already participating in the voucher program discriminated against tenants based on race 33 percent of the time, most commonly by steering them to other buildings or neighborhoods. This also happened based on disabilities 44 percent of the time and against families with children 25 percent of the time.

Landlords in opportunity areas - places with low poverty - who were not participating in the Chicago Housing Authority's voucher program discriminated against white testers with vouchers 55 percent of the time. In 39 percent of the tests, landlords directly refused to rent to them. And a little more than half of the landlords who told white testers that they accepted vouchers discriminated against African American testers who said they had vouchers. Opportunity areas are an important tool to break up segregation in the housing market; voucher holders tend to be clustered in low-income, segregated black communities.

"Race is still a pressing concern within the city of Chicago and within our region. Even though this happened specifically within Chicago, it's probably not a surprise to any of us that it's probably the reality going even beyond that scope," said Morgan Davis, executive director of the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance.

The study was conducted for the CHA. In a statement, the agency said it takes allegations of fair housing violations very seriously and "educates owners, property managers and participants to ensure that federal, state and local fair housing laws are adhered upon. CHA also assists the Chicago Commission on Human Relations in its investigations of potential housing discrimination cases and/or fair housing violations."

Natalie Moore is a WBEZ reporter. nmoore@wbez.org Follow Natalie on Google+, Twitter

FAIR HOUSING HOTLINE

1-800-462-0503

Multilingual Brochures

The City of San Diego now has informational Fair Housing brochures available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Chinese. To view these brochures, please visit: <http://www.sandiego.gov/cdbg/fairhousing/>

Local Resources

The City has engaged the services of two Fair Housing Service Providers to provide community outreach and legal services:

Housing Opportunities Collaborative

1100 Broadway San Diego, CA 92101-5612
(619) 283-2200 | General Inquiries
(800) 462-0503 | Fair Housing Hotline

Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc.

1764 San Diego Avenue, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92110-1987
(877) 534-2524 | General Inquiries
(844) 449-3500 | Fair Housing Center
(800) 462-0503 | Fair Housing Hotline

Other Fair Housing Resources

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fair Housing Division

600 Harrison Street, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94107-1300
(800) 347-3739

California State Department of Fair Employment & Housing

611 West Sixth Street, Room 150
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3101
(800) 233-3212



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Planning, Neighborhoods and Economic Development Department • Economic Development Division

Fair Housing and Special Programs

1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1400
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 236-6381

This newsletter is funded in whole or in part with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to the City of San Diego.

This information is available in alternative formats upon request.

