



HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER

WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY IN HOUSING

March 2021

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Housing Rights **NEWS**



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HOUSING RIGHTS HOTLINE: 1-800-477-5977

TTY: 1-213-201-0867

www.housingrightscenter.org



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**CA COVID-19
RENT RELIEF**

**Help is here for renters and
landlords struggling with rent.**

Check eligibility and apply!

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**FAIR HOUSING
CERTIFICATION
FOR HOUSING PROVIDERS**

**UPCOMING 2021
TRAINING DATES:**

APRIL 30, 2021
MAY 28, 2021
JUNE 25, 2021

Contact
outreach@housingrightscenter.org
for pricing.

YOU'RE INVITED: APRIL 2021 HOUSING RIGHTS SUMMIT

Chancela Al-Mansour, Executive Director

On April 22, the Housing Rights Center will host our annual summit celebrating National Fair Housing Month, **"COVID-19 and the Legacy of Housing Discrimination: The Road to Recovery."** This virtual event, taking place just over a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, will tackle how decades of inequity in American society have shaped the impacts of today's public health crisis on people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, and other members of our society's most marginalized communities. The extraordinary events of this past year have left civil rights advocates with much to reflect upon and discuss, and we look forward to a day of vibrant, fruitful collaborations that will advance our shared goals of justice and equality in housing.

Already, the new administration has taken several historic steps toward equality in housing. First, the White House issued a statement recognizing the federal government's own role in fueling segregation, exclusion and decline in past decades, and outlining a framework for addressing the long-standing impacts of those actions (*see p. 4*). Additionally, the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) recently announced that for the first time ever, the federal government would **ban housing discrimination based on sexual orientation**, even in states that did not already have these protections (*see p. 2*).

Despite these promising steps, however, California and the United States still face many increasingly urgent problems in housing. For thousands of tenants unable to pay rent due to the economic impacts of the pandemic, the current protections against some types of evictions will not be enough to keep them

from losing their homes. Millions of others will face extensive debt from which they may never recover. Meanwhile, **discrimination and violence against Asian residents** have reached new heights in recent weeks, spreading fear and uncertainty through communities already subjected to years of displacement, isolation, and exclusion (*see p. 5*). The need for support, services, and advocacy to advance access to housing is as strong as ever.

To meet this ongoing need, HRC continues to expand the services we offer to residents throughout Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. **Housing counseling by appointment** is now available four days a week, in addition to the live hotline and email options offered every day (*see p. 4*). Our HUD-approved **Fair Housing Certification Trainings for housing providers**, including landlords, property managers, rental agents and more, are now offered in Spanish. And we continue to give **free online workshops every week** to help tenants and landlords navigate their protections and find relief during this time.

In April, our 2021 Housing Rights Summit will include an online resource fair bringing together the many wonderful partners who provide crucial assistance around the region—including food and basic needs, healthcare and mental health services, child development and education, senior support, help accessing public benefits, and, of course, housing. To feature your organization's services, please email outreach@housingrightscenter.org. And to join us in bringing this exciting event to life, please register at www.housingrightscenter.org. We can't wait to see you there. ◀

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HUD BANS HOUSING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION & GENDER IDENTITY

Susan Lin, Senior Outreach Coordinator

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently announced that it will, for the first time in United States history, work to combat discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. All HUD offices and HUD funded partners are to immediately assess their activities and take the appropriate actions to ensure the Fair Housing Act is fully enforced.

In California, the development of LGBTQ+ protections began in 1992, when Californians gained protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation under the state Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA). In 2003, these protections were strengthened to include gender identity and expression. One year later, California expanded FEHA to prohibit discrimination based on “gender,” including through

“a malicious form of discrimination,” said Chancela Al-Mansour, Executive Director of the Housing Rights Center. “Housing security and public health are deeply intertwined, and our current circumstances make it more important than ever that all individuals, regardless of how they identify or who they love, have equal access to housing and fair treatment.”

HUD’s directive follows President Biden’s Executive Order 13988, which calls for the advance-

 Can my landlord evict me for being gay?



No your landlord cannot evict you on the basis of your sexual orientation. You are protected by both Federal and California law.



Speak to a Housing Counselor Today.

Housing Rights Hotline: 1(800) 477-5977

TTY: 1(213) 201-0867

Email: info@housingrightscenter.org

The Housing Rights Center welcomes the expansion of federal housing protections to the nation’s LGBTQ+ communities. This guidance from HUD has powerful significance for all federally funded agencies, as well as for the 27 states that still do not have their own laws banning housing discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals. The administration’s commitment will help to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer-identifying individuals are delivered the full promise of the Fair Housing Act.

Assembly Bill 196, which was intended to prohibit discrimination against transgender employees. Finally, the Civil Rights Act of 2005 established laws against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status in business practices—including shopping malls, bars and restaurants, schools, medical offices, and other services used by the public.

“As a HUD partner agency, the Housing Rights Center is now able to invest further resources in helping those who have been affected by this per-

ment of LGBTQ+ rights and protections throughout American society. The order cites *Bostock v. Clayton County* (2020), an employment discrimination case in which the Supreme Court held that sexual orientation and gender identity are protected under the category of “sex” as defined in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Housing Rights Center is committed to the fight against housing discrimination. Individuals who feel they have been discriminated against for their sexual orientation and/or gender identity can contact HRC to have their case investigated free of charge. ◀

HIGHLIGHTS: PROTECTING & EMPOWERING RENTERS THROUGH FAIR HOUSING LAWS

HRC works to inform our communities about the fair housing laws that protect all of us. Want to schedule a workshop? Send an email to our team at outreach@housingrightscenter.org.



IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES: HOUSING RIGHTS

In the United States, everyone—regardless of their citizenship status—is protected from discrimination under fair housing laws. The Housing Rights Center recently conducted a workshop on tenant protections for immigrants, refugees, asylees, and asylum seekers served by the International Rescue Committee. The workshop reviewed legal protections for tenants based on national origin, primary language, immigration status, and more. Participants also learned about COVID-19 eviction protections and rental assistance.



GREATER LOS ANGELES AGENCY ON DEAFNESS, INC.

In December, the Housing Rights Center teamed up with the Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness, Inc. (GLAD) to conduct a Housing Rights Workshop focused on sexual harassment and assault in housing for their clients. We were able to advise clients on reasonable accommodation and modification requests and gain insight into the discrimination deaf and hard of hearing individuals face in housing.



LAUSD OFFICE OF HOMELESS EDUCATION

Throughout the pandemic, schools have remained a vital community hub providing valuable information, resources, and support to students and families across California. In recent months, the Housing Rights Center has worked with the Los Angeles Unified School District's Homeless Education Office to train more than 300 school employees serving communities throughout Los Angeles County. By empowering schools to help families assert their rights and protections, we can prevent student homelessness.

Looking for affordable housing?

PROJECT PLACE

RENTAL LISTINGS - MARCH 2021

PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER



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WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY IN HOUSING

www.housingrightscenter.org/rental-listing

HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER APPLAUDS PRESIDENT BIDEN'S PROACTIVE APPROACH TO FAIR HOUSING

Katherine Jara, Outreach Coordinator

The Housing Rights Center (HRC) commends President Biden's recent order on furthering fair housing and addressing the racial injustices historically sponsored by the federal government.

The White House's memo committed to counteracting the previous actions taken to exclude people of color from safe, accessible, and affordable housing opportunities and to segregate neighborhoods across the United States. It acknowledges that by driving policies such as redlining, strategic disinvestment, and inequitable development, the federal government and the housing industry helped to create the dramatic disparities in homeownership, generational wealth, and physical and mental health that still persist today in Black, Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and Native American communities across the United States. Read the full memo here.

"The administration's commitment to working closely with communities on the ground will enable HRC and our fair housing partners to better protect the rights of people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ+

community, and other protected groups," said Chancela Al-Mansour, Executive Director of the Housing Rights Center. "We are looking forward to working with government and the housing industry to right these historic wrongs as we strive toward integrated and inclusive communities."

An especially important part of the new administration's fair housing framework is the potential reinstatement of the 2015 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule, which holds federal agencies and grantees accountable for actively working against discrimination in housing and urban development. Similarly, the anticipated readoption of the disparate impact standard, which addresses policies that appear neutral but have a discriminatory effect, will greatly strengthen HRC's ability to uncover bias and promote inclusive communities.

Fair housing is essential to our society, especially as housing insecurity has risen to urgent levels nationwide. HRC looks forward to continued leadership from the White House and HUD Secretary appointee Marcia Fudge on housing access, combating discrimination, and ending segregation. ◀

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS FREE WEEKLY FACEBOOK WORKSHOPS

MONDAYS 1 PM

LIVE Housing Rights Q&A

Real questions from real people, answered live on Facebook every week. (All questions are anonymized.)

TUESDAYS 2 PM

Housing Rights Workshop (English)

Learn how you are protected from discrimination in housing.

JUEVES 2 PM

Taller de Derechos de Vivienda (Español)

Learn how you are protected from discrimination in housing.

FRIDAYS 2 PM

COVID-19 Updates for Tenants and Landlords

Get updates on the newest laws for tenants and landlords during the COVID-19 emergency.

Need help?



Housing Rights Hotline

Toll Free: 1-800-477-5977

TTY: 1-213-201-0867

Email: info@housingrightscenter.org

Appointments: www.housingrightscenter.org/help

HRC CONDEMNS VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Susan Lin, Senior Outreach Coordinator

The Housing Rights Center (HRC) is extremely concerned about the increase in racist violence against Asian Americans across the country, and urges Southern California residents to be vigilant about standing up to hate against individuals of all nationalities and skin colors.

HRC provides services to individuals who have been affected by housing-related hate violence and other forms of housing discrimination. HRC counsels victims of discrimination about their rights, investigates incidents, and refers victims to government agencies or attorneys for litigation and enforcement as needed. Additionally, HRC provides education and outreach to individuals and organizations on housing-related hate crimes and other forms of housing discrimination.

In the year since the COVID-19 pandemic began, more than 3,000 hate crimes have been reported against Asian Americans and many more are feared to have been unreported. A recent Harris poll found that 75 percent of Asian Americans fear becoming victimized by racist incidents, fueled in part by

inflammatory political rhetoric and racial scapegoating. Targeted attacks escalated ahead of the Lunar New Year and the Day of Remembrance for Japanese American internment, including the murder of 84-year-old Vicha Ratanapakdee in San Francisco.

The recent spate of xenophobic rhetoric and hate crimes echoes the long history of state-sanctioned racism faced

of policies that displaced, excluded, and endangered Asian communities continues to shape our society.

Today, California state law protects the right to be free from hate speech and violence, as well as discrimination in housing and employment. HRC reminds the public that it is illegal to deny someone a housing opportunity because they are Asian; to segregate Asian residents to parts of a building or neighborhood; and to harass or use slurs against current or potential tenants of Asian descent, among other forms of discrimination.

Finally, while this article addresses the rise in the incidents against one group that consists of many different countries of origin and ethnicities, these protections are extended to persons of all races, ethnicities and national origins.

Please contact the Housing Rights Center if you witness or experience discrimination, bias, hate speech, or violence against any race, ethnicity or national origin. Reports can be made to our hotline at 1-800-477-5977 (TTY: 1-213-201-0867), by email at info@housingrightscenter.org, or on our website at www.housingrightscenter.org/help. ◀

COVID-19 Reminder:

It is unlawful to discriminate based on race, nationality, or ethnicity.

COVID-19 doesn't recognize these factors, and social stigma can contribute to the spread of the virus.

by Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States and California. Following the expiration of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act barring immigration from China, California's 1913 Alien Land Law prohibited Asian residents from purchasing land; shortly thereafter, Los Angeles' Chinatown was splintered to make way for Union (train) Station and the 101 Freeway. Last week commemorated the 79th anniversary of U.S. Executive Order 9066 mandating the imprisonment of Japanese Americans in concentration camps, including two in California. The legacy

SAVE THE DATE

April 22, 2021
9 AM – 12 PM PDT

Join the Housing Rights Center for our 22nd annual summit and resource fair celebrating National Fair Housing Month—**now online!**



COVID-19 & THE LEGACY OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

CONFERENCE TOPICS:

- COVID-19 and marginalized communities
- Fair housing in the Biden era
- Update on eviction protections

RESOURCE GALLERY:

The online resource gallery will make it easy to find legal aid and social services with just one click. Please contact us at outreach@housingrightscenter.org to feature your organization at this dynamic event!

Registration coming soon
www.housingrightscenter.org/summit