



HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER

WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY IN HOUSING

Housing Rights NEWS

FALL 2022

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HOUSING RIGHTS HOTLINE: 1-800-477-5977

www.housingrightscenter.org



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT ... HRC IN THE NEWS

ERICA NAM, OUTREACH COORDINATOR

LAist: LA is Reopening Its Section 8 Housing Voucher Waitlist For the First Time in Five Years (SEPTEMBER 21, 2022)

...The last time the city's housing authority opened its waitlist — back in October 2017 — nearly 188,000 households applied for 20,000 available spots.

Officials anticipate even higher demand this time. They're expecting about 365,000 households to apply for just 30,000 available waitlist spots. Based on those figures, applicants will likely have a less than 1-in-12 chance of getting picked.

"Those numbers speak volumes," said Chancela Al-Mansour, executive director of the L.A.-based Housing Rights Center. "There's not enough affordable, safe, decent housing for individuals, for families, for people on fixed incomes, for low-income persons. We have a huge housing crisis in Los Angeles."

KCRW: 30,000 Section 8 housing vouchers hit LA. Will stigma disappear? (SEPTEMBER 27, 2022)

...Al-Mansour says that while finding housing can be extremely difficult, once Section 8 tenants successfully do so, they will often try their best to keep it. "Landlords should know that tenants with Section 8 vouchers understand and appreciate the value of that Section 8 voucher. They're not, for the large part, going to do anything to jeopardize losing that Section 8 voucher."

The New York Times: Meta Agrees to Alter Ad Technology in Settlement with U.S. (JUNE 21, 2022)

...Chancela Al-Mansour, executive director of the Housing Rights Center in Los Angeles, said it was "essential" that "fair housing laws be aggressively enforced."

**NO SECTION 8?
NO MORE.**

California law protects the rights of tenants to use income from public assistance, including Section 8 vouchers, to pay rent.

REPORT DISCRIMINATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Housing Rights Hotline: 1-800-477-5977
www.housingrightscenter.org/help

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"Housing ads had become tools for unlawful behavior, including segregation and discrimination in housing, employment and credit," she said. "Most users had no idea they were either being targeted for or denied housing ads based on their race and other characteristics."

Get the full story at www.housingrightscenter.org/in-the-news. ◀

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COVID-19 TENANT PROTECTIONS

UPDATE

For more updates on changing local protections, join HRC's email list at www.housingrightscenter.org/email-sign-ups.

1) Emergency eviction protections apply in all Los Angeles County cities and unincorporated areas until December 31, 2022.

The Los Angeles County COVID-19 Tenant Protections give tenants a defense against evictions for reasons that are not their fault, including some owner move-ins; having unauthorized occupants or pets; and nuisance (such as noise).

2) Many tenants experiencing financial hardship because of COVID-19 can delay the date their rental payments are due.

To delay rental payments, tenants **must** notify their landlord in writing. A notice with instructions is available in English and Spanish at www.housingrightscenter.org.

City of Los Angeles: When the City's emergency declaration is lifted, tenants will have 12 months to pay their delayed rent.

City of Baldwin Park: When the City's emergency declaration is lifted, tenants will have 6 months to pay their delayed rent.

City of Pasadena: Rent that was due before June 30, 2022 must be paid back by December 31, 2022. As of July 1, 2022, some tenants can continue to delay rental payments per Los Angeles County requirements (see *below*).

All other Los Angeles County cities and unincorporated communities: As of July 1, 2022, only tenants who earn 80% of the area median income or less (see *below*) can delay rental payments that were due before December 31, 2022. Delayed rent from this period must be paid back by **December 31, 2023**. ◀

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

FREE WEEKLY WORKSHOPS

Housing Rights Q&A

MONDAYS 1 PM
FACEBOOK

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

COVID-19 Tenant Protections Workshop

SPANISH: THURS. 6PM
ENGLISH: FRIDAYS 2 PM

REGISTER NOW:
www.housingrightscenter.org/register

Get updates on the newest laws for tenants and landlords during the COVID-19 emergency. Learn what to do if you can't pay your rent, you received an eviction notice, or you owe rent from previous months and you need time to pay it back.

PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD:	1	2	3	4	5	6
HIGHEST INCOME TO DELAY RENT:	\$44,800	\$51,200	\$57,600	\$57,600	\$69,120	\$74,240

Get your questions answered by a trained housing counselor—now available by appointment.

Questions about rent increases, security deposits, evictions, repairs, harassment, or any other housing issues?

The Housing Rights Center's team of trained Housing Counselors are standing by to inform you about landlord-tenant law and fair housing rights.

Email outreach@housingrightscenter.org to make an appointment for a one-on-one, confidential phone call or Zoom call. Open hours are:

WEDNESDAYS
11 am - 2 pm
Español disponible

THURSDAYS
11 am - 2 pm
Español disponible

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: HRC IN D.C., LAUSD FAMILIES, KOREAN OUTREACH AND MORE

See upcoming events at www.housingrightscenter.org/workshops.

HRC Presents at National Fair Housing Conference in D.C.

In July, HRC staff joined fair housing advocates from across the U.S. at the National Fair Housing Alliance conference in Washington, D.C. As part of this year's theme, "Advancing Fair Housing to Build an Inclusive Economy," HRC presented on outreach strategies to reach diverse communities on both sides of the digital divide, during the pandemic and beyond.



LAUSD Family Academy: "Get to Know Your Housing Rights"

More than 600 parents and community members joined HRC and the LAUSD Family Academy in August for a bilingual workshop on COVID-19 tenant protections. Families from across Los Angeles County learned to claim their rights and protections during the ongoing pandemic emergency.

Expanding Korean outreach with community partners

This month, HRC teamed up with Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California, the Korean-American Federation of Los Angeles, and the Koreatown Youth + Community Center on two events focused on engaging Korean communities. At the Koreatown Town Hall on September 17 and the Korean Legal Clinic on September



21, tenants learned about protections from housing discrimination based on nationality, language, immigration status, and more, plus how to find affordable housing and resources. ◀

Apply for Section 8 in the City of Los Angeles

On October 17, 2022, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) will open applications to join the **waiting list** for Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8).

Sign up for HRC's emails for updated information as it is released: www.housingrightscenter.org/email-sign-ups.

DISABLED SENIOR CAN LIVE SAFELY AT HOME WITH ASSISTANCE FROM HRC

BRADLEY THOMAS, PROJECT DIRECTOR

Last month, HRC received a call from a tenant asking for help confronting discrimination because of her disability. Ms. Miller, 67, has lived at her senior apartment building in Camarillo, CA for seven years and uses a Section 8 voucher to pay her rent. She has both mental and physical disabilities, and uses a mobility assistance device (walker).

Because Ms. Miller walks unsteadily, her doctor agreed that she would be safer at home if the carpet were replaced with solid surface flooring, like wood or tile. Ms. Miller knew that the **Fair Housing Act** requires landlords to allow necessary and reasonable changes for tenants with disabilities, so she wrote to her property manager to request a **reasonable modification**.

After receiving Ms. Miller's request in January, the management company promised to replace the carpet by June. But when June arrived, they informed Ms. Miller that they wouldn't remove the carpet until sometime in 2023 when they had more funding.

In many cases, the Fair

Housing Act requires tenants to pay for modifications themselves. But because this senior property receives federal financial assistance, it is also covered by the **1973 Rehabilitation Act**, which requires them to fund reasonable modifications unless doing so would be an excessive financial and administrative burden. In this case, the property management never provided any evidence that replacing the flooring in Ms. Miller's apartment—a 462-square-foot one-bedroom in a building of more than 300 units—would cause the organization an undue burden or impact the program in any way.

At this point, Ms. Miller had already waited six months on a promise that hadn't materialized. The longer she had to wait, the more likely she could come to harm. So when she contacted HRC in August, we opened an investigation into **disability discrimination** on her behalf.

First, a case analyst called the management company's office and verbally demanded they grant the modification request, as they had agreed and as required by federal law, with-

out further delay. When they repeated their claim that the request was granted but simply delayed, HRC escalated the issue. We sent a complaint letter to the onsite property manager, the management company's main office, and the property owner. That letter reminded the housing providers that an undue delay in fulfilling a reasonable modification request can be just as serious as refusing to allow the modification at all—both are illegal housing discrimination.

Not long afterward, HRC received a letter from the manager stating that the tenant's flooring would be replaced by September 2022. And on August 30, 2022, we received confirmation from both the tenant and the management company that the modification was complete. The tenant was extremely thankful, and we are so happy that we could help her assert her right to live safely and equitably in her rental home. ◀

Note: All complaints to HRC are confidential. HRC has changed the names of the complainants featured in this newsletter, as well as some details of their stories, in order to protect their anonymity.

Need help?



Housing Rights Hotline

Toll Free: 1-800-477-5977

TTY: 1-213-201-0867

Email: info@housingrightscenter.org

Appointments: outreach@housingrightscenter.org

HRC PREVENTS DISCRIMINATORY EVICTION OF A DISABLED SENIOR

GRACE GARCIA, CASE ANALYST

In March, HRC got a call from a tenant in crisis. At 80 years old, and after 50 years living in her Los Angeles apartment, Ms. Lee had been told by her landlord that she would be evicted if she did not clear out her garage in only 3 days.

Ms. Lee has a physical disability, and her doctors warned that strenuous activity would not be safe for at least another 90 days. Clearly, she would not be able to meet the 3-day deadline—so her landlord filed for eviction.

When Ms. Lee reached out to HRC, we contacted her landlord to request a **reasonable accommodation** based on her disability: rescind the eviction, and give her more time to move her belongings as per her doctor's recommendations.

Under the **Fair Housing Act**, property owners have to grant many requests that would benefit tenants with disabilities, but only if they are reasonable. Ms. Lee's landlord and his attorney argued that her request was *unreasonable* because the way she stored her belongings made the garage unsafe.

Naturally, it's important for landlords to ensure that conditions at their properties are safe. But Ms. Lee was not asking for permission to keep her garage in its current state. She simply needed more time to correct the problem because of her physical limitations—and we believed that was reasonable.

HRC promptly sent the landlord and his attorney a copy of the doctors' recommendation to grant Ms. Lee an extension,

along with photos showing how Ms. Lee was doing her best and getting help from others to make progress on her garage while still following her doctors' orders.

But when the landlord and his attorney didn't respond, it was clear they didn't plan to cancel the eviction. So HRC reached out to a partner organization and secured Ms. Lee legal representation for her court date on August 11, 2022. The very same day, the judge ruled in her favor and rescinded the eviction. Now, Ms. Lee can stay in her longtime home, *and* her garage will be in safe condition. ◀

Note: All complaints to HRC are confidential. HRC has changed the names of the complainants featured in this newsletter, as well as some details of their stories, in order to protect their anonymity.

**Owe Rent?
Eviction Notice?**

You Have Rights!

www.stayhousedla.org

TRANSGENDER & NONBINARY RIGHTS IN EMERGENCY SHELTERS

FAIR HOUSING FOR THE UNHOUSED

Can a shelter refuse to admit me because I'm transgender or nonbinary?

No. Under the Equal Access Rule, federally funded shelters may not refuse admission based on sex, gender, gender identity, or gender expression, and single-sex shelters must place you according to your gender identity. For example, a women's shelter must accept both transgender and cisgender women. In California, a nonbinary individual can choose the single-sex program where they feel safest.

What do I have to tell shelter staff about my gender identity?

Single-sex shelters may ask your gender so they know where to house you. They must accept your self-identification, and cannot require "proof" such as medical or legal documents. It is **always** your choice whether to share the sex you were assigned at birth, and if you do, it must be treated as confidential information.

Can a shelter segregate me from other residents because I'm transgender or nonbinary?

A shelter should never **require** you to sleep in a separate area simply because you are not cisgender or do not conform to gender stereotypes. On the other hand, they should accommodate you if you **request** a bed in a different area because you feel vulnerable. You may also make this request for reasons other than your gender identity.

Can a shelter require me to use bathrooms for the sex I was assigned at birth?

No. If there are gender-segregated facilities, like restrooms, showers, or dressing rooms, you must be allowed to use those that match your gender identity. If there are single-stall restrooms, California law requires that they be open to people of all genders.

Can a shelter ban me from wearing clothing associated with my gender identity, like bras or binders?

No. In shelters with gender-specific dress codes, you must be able to follow the dress code that matches your gender identity.

What if I'm harassed at a shelter?

Shelter staff **must** intervene in harassment or discrimination by other residents, and they can never kick you out because you are being harassed. Staff must also use your self-identified name and pronouns.

For more information or to report discrimination, contact the Housing Rights Center today.

1-800-477-5977

www.housingrightscenter.org



FALL 2022

Trainings & Workshops

www.housingrightscenter.org/workshops

EL MONTE

LANDLORDS & TENANTS

Oct.11 6 PM

MONTEBELLO

TENANTS

Oct.18 6 PM

BEVERLY HILLS

LANDLORDS & TENANTS

OCT.19 6 PM

LA LAW LIBRARY

LANDLORDS & TENANTS

OCT.24 5-6 PM
English & Spanish

PALMDALE

LANDLORDS

Oct.25 6 PM

LANCASTER

LANDLORDS

Oct.26 6 PM

FACEBOOK LIVE Q&A

LANDLORDS & TENANTS

MONDAYS 1 PM

COVID-19 UPDATES

LANDLORDS & TENANTS

FRIDAYS 2 PM

FAIR HOUSING CERTIFICATION TRAININGS

LANDLORDS & HOUSING INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

OCT.28 10 AM - 1 PM

NOV.18 10 AM - 1 PM

DEC.16 10 AM - 1 PM

QUESTIONS?
OUTREACH@HOUSINGRIGHTSCENTER.ORG