

Elana Eden
Director of Media, Outreach & Education
(213) 387-8400 ext. 1102
eeden@housingrightscenter.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER FILES TO PROTECT SECTION 8 VOUCHER HOLDERS IN LOS ANGELES

[LOS ANGELES, CA – DECEMBER 15, 2021] — The Housing Rights Center (HRC) has filed a lawsuit on behalf of an elderly tenant in Los Angeles who suffered illegal discrimination because she receives a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher. HRC joins plaintiff Rhina Tejada in bringing this action against Vision Property Investment LLC and its CEO, Lea Rosenfield, for source of income discrimination in violation of city and state law.

Ms. Tejada, a 78-year-old senior on a fixed income, has lived in her Los Angeles apartment for 22 years. In fall 2019, after waiting for many years, she finally received a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher to subsidize her rent. This voucher is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered by the City of Los Angeles, which pays all or a portion of the rent directly to the landlord. But, the lawsuit alleges, Ms. Rosenfield—whose company owns and manages multiple other properties throughout Los Angeles—staunchly refused to accept the monetary assistance for her long-term tenant and began a year-long campaign to blatantly undermine Ms. Tejada's fair housing rights. HRC's investigation later uncovered Ms. Rosenfield and Vision Property Investment's multiple illegal actions to avoid accepting Ms. Tejada's lawful rental payments and to deny other Section 8 voucher holders their rights to equal housing.

“With this case, we are raising awareness about source of income protections in California—and placing landlords and property management companies on notice that HRC is actively protecting the rights of Section 8 voucher holders like Ms. Tejada,” said Zachary Frederick, HRC Staff Attorney.

Discrimination against Section 8 rent subsidy programs was included in the existing law already making it illegal to discriminate against a tenant or a potential tenant based on the source of their income in both the City and County of Los Angeles and the State of California. Still, HRC receives numerous complaints each year about landlords and management companies refusing to accept these important vouchers. In 2020, HRC launched a campaign to identify, educate, and hold accountable landlords and property management companies in Los Angeles County that routinely discriminate against Section 8 voucher holders.

The Housing Rights Center, founded in 1968, is the nation's largest non-profit civil rights organization dedicated to securing and promoting fair housing. Its free services include landlord tenant counseling, outreach and education, and discrimination investigation. If you believe you

have experienced discrimination based on source of income or any other protected class under federal or California law, please contact the Housing Rights Center at **1-800-477-5977** (TTY: 1-213-201-0867) or info@housingrightscenter.org.

###

The Housing Rights Center is a non-profit organization established in 1968 to actively support and promote equal opportunity and freedom of residence to all persons without regard to their race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, familial status, disability, marital status, ancestry, age, source of income, or other characteristics protected by law. HRC engages in activities including outreach and education, testing and investigation, and legal advocacy to identify barriers to fair housing and to counteract and eliminate discriminatory housing practices in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

This material is based on work supported by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under FHIP Grant FPEI #20062. Any opinion, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of HUD.