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GENERAL NEWS

HUD Settles Disability Discrimination Case against CA Housing Providers

In a [press release](#) Wednesday, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) announced that it has approved a [conciliation agreement](#) resolving claims that rental property owners and managers in California denied a resident's reasonable accommodation request to keep an assistance animal.

The [Fair Housing Act](#) prohibits housing providers from discriminating against people with disabilities, including refusing to make reasonable accommodations in policies or practices when such accommodations may be necessary to provide them an equal opportunity to use or enjoy a dwelling. This includes permitting service animals or assistance animals. Housing providers, unlike public accommodations, may not prohibit people with disabilities from having assistance animals that perform work or tasks, or that provide disability-related emotional support.

The complaint came to HUD's attention when the resident with disabilities filed a complaint alleging that the housing providers discriminated against him by failing to grant his request to keep an assistance animal. After denying his request, the owners allegedly cancelled the lease, changed the locks on the unit, and threatened to call the police if he attempted to move in. The owners also allegedly claimed that the man never disclosed his need for an assistance animal, even though he provided a letter from his physician verifying his disability and need for the assistance animal.

The owners and managers denied that they discriminated against the complainant and denied any violation of law, but voluntarily agreed to settle the complaint. Under the conciliation agreement, they will pay \$10,000 to the resident, provide fair housing training for their employees, create and implement a written reasonable accommodation policy, and modify any rental forms or materials to be consistent with the Fair Housing Act.



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