

## Project Sentinel Can Help

Project Sentinel is a nonprofit Fair Housing agency that provides education and counseling to community members, housing providers, and tenants about the Fair Housing laws. We also investigate complaints and advocate for those who have experienced housing discrimination.

When you call Project Sentinel, a staff member will discuss your housing problem with you and counsel you on your rights under the Fair Housing laws. If you are a tenant, we may be able to:

- investigate your complaint
- educate the owner or manager about their legal obligations
- negotiate with the property owner or manager on your behalf
- help you file a complaint with a state or federal enforcement agency
- advocate for you during the complaint process
- refer you to a free Fair Housing attorney for further legal assistance

If you are a housing provider, we may be able to:

- explain your obligations under the Fair Housing laws
- conduct a fair housing training for you and/or your staff
- provide you with additional resources to assist you with understanding and solving your Fair Housing problems

Our services are **free of charge** and available regardless of your income or immigration status.

## Project Sentinel's Service Area

Project Sentinel is able to provide assistance over the phone or at one of our many regional offices. We provide assistance to individuals who experience housing discrimination or own rental housing in the following geographic areas:

Santa Clara County  
San Mateo County  
Stanislaus County  
Sacramento County  
City of West Sacramento  
City of Fremont  
City of Merced

### Contact Project Sentinel for help!

Toll Free: (888) 324-7468  
[www.housing.org](http://www.housing.org)  
[info@housing.org](mailto:info@housing.org)

### To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities:

Email: [scottrell@housing.org](mailto:scottrell@housing.org)  
TTY: 7-1-1

Project Sentinel is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Housing Initiatives Program and local Community Development Block Grants.

*Project Sentinel does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or familial status.*

# Housing Discrimination

*Know Your Rights and Responsibilities*



## Project Sentinel

A NONPROFIT FAIR HOUSING AGENCY



## Know Your Rights

Under federal and state Fair Housing laws, it is illegal for anyone involved with housing—including owners, property managers and staff, real estate agents, HOAs, shelters, banks, and mobile home parks—to:

- refuse to rent or sell a home
- charge higher rent or security deposit
- steer people to or from homes in certain neighborhoods or parts of buildings
- evict a tenant
- apply different rules or criteria, or otherwise treat people differently
- harass or threaten a housing seeker, their friends, and family members

...**BECAUSE OF** one of the following protected characteristics:

**Disability**  
**Familial Status\***  
**Religion**  
**Sex**  
**Race**  
**Color**  
**National Origin**

**Ancestry**  
**Sexual Orientation**  
**Gender Identity & Expression**  
**Marital Status**  
**Source of Income**  
**Age**

*\*Family with children under the age of 18*

...or because of any **arbitrary characteristic** that has no relation to one's ability to be a good tenant or to be financially qualified to buy a home.

It is also illegal for your housing provider to punish you for complaining about discrimination or talking to a Fair Housing agency like Project Sentinel.

Policies that create a greater barrier to housing for some protected groups rather than others without a good business justification may also violate the law. Some examples may be overly restrictive occupancy standards and overly broad criminal background checks.

## Watch for Signs of Housing Discrimination

Some examples of housing discrimination may include:

- the rent or deposit quoted to you is higher than advertised
- the manager says the unit has already been rented but the ad is still posted
- you are told "You wouldn't like it here," or "There's no place for your children to play"
- you're told there are too many people in your family, or you will have to pay more rent for more people
- denying you a rental based on an arrest alone or a ban on applicants with any type of criminal record
- repairs are only made for tenants of one ethnicity or race
- the manager asks about your immigration status
- the owner won't allow you to have an emotional support animal
- the manager won't grant a request related to a disability
- you're told that you don't qualify because your income does not come from a job
- a property employee or neighbor sexually harasses you
- a neighbor harasses you because of your race, religion, or ethnicity
- you're being evicted because you're a victim of domestic violence

## Protect Yourself & Take Action

No matter your situation, there are things you can do to protect yourself if you suspect discrimination.

### If you're looking for housing:

- keep copies of rental or sales ads
- get the name, title, and contact information for whomever you talked to
- take notes when you call or visit a property
- write down any application requirements
- find out the availability of all units on the property
- save e-mails, texts, or voicemails
- ask witnesses for their name and phone number

### If you're having trouble with your property manager or owner:

- immediately write down a description of important events: include times, dates, and witnesses
- keep copies of any notices
- make requests and respond to notices in writing and keep copies
- talk to your neighbors about their experiences
- get the contact information for any neighbors who are moving out

**Most importantly, the best thing you can do is immediately call Project Sentinel for help.**