



project sentinel

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MEMORANDUM

To: Renters' Helpline Members and Funders

CC: Cristina Figueroa Cortes, Acting Fair Housing Director-Project Sentinel

From: Nubyaan Scott, Fair Housing Coordinator-Project Sentinel

Date: April 25, 2018

RE: Recent HUD Settlement Update

Project Sentinel successfully resolved a HUD complaint regarding disability discrimination and retaliation against a tenant for asserting her fair housing rights. As a result of the settlement, the housing providers paid the tenant \$9,000 and agreed to change their policies to comply with the Fair Housing Act.

The tenant is a disabled adult with two young children. She and her family resided at an 80-unit privately owned complex in Sacramento County. In 2017, the tenant took on a German Shepherd mix dog as an emotional support animal, and she promptly received a note from her physician which established her disability-related need for the support animal. She made several efforts to provide this documentation to management. Management refused to review it. She also made multiple calls to the corporate management office and was told that the issue should be resolved with on-site management.

After she attempted to provide on-site management with the documentation from her physician, the tenant received a 60 Day Notice To Vacate. She again called the corporate management office in an effort to resolve the issue, and thereafter received a 3 Day Notice To Perform or Quit, citing very minor lease violations. When she asked on-site management for clarification on the issues listed in the notice, their responses indicated that it was retaliation for calling the corporate office. Pregnant at the time, the tenant focused her efforts on

finding a new home for her family. However, they were displaced for several weeks before finding another apartment at a significantly higher cost.

The tenant filed a HUD complaint shortly before leaving the property in question, and later contacted the Renters' Helpline in an effort to learn how to advocate for herself during the administrative complaint process. Project Sentinel reviewed her documents, determined that they produced evidence of discrimination, and represented her during the administrative complaint process. Project Sentinel conducted several witness interviews to further support the tenant's discrimination claim and negotiated on her behalf. In February 2018, Project Sentinel helped the tenant reach a final settlement resolving her concerns.

In addition to the payment to their former tenant, the housing providers agreed to do the following: (1) provide a 3-hour fair housing training for on-site management, (2) create a written reasonable accommodation and reasonable modification policy, (3) implement updated house rules related to supervision rules for children, and (4) to allow HUD to monitor the property's compliance with the agreement for a 2-year period.