

April is Fair Housing Month!

April has been designated [Fair Housing Month](#) by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to commemorate the anniversary of the Fair Housing Act and increase public awareness of fair housing rights. As Mental Health Advocacy Services (MHAS) celebrates Fair Housing Month, we invite you to get involved by learning more about fair housing rights and sharing this information with others.

How You Can Get Involved in Fair Housing Month:

1. Attend Our Next Fair Housing Workshop

Register for one of our upcoming Fair Housing workshops! Free workshops will be held via Zoom on [April 7, 2022 \(English\)](#) and [April 28, 2022 \(English and Spanish\)](#).

Register for April 7 at bit.ly/mhas-0407 or April 28 at bit.ly/mhas-0428.

Topics will include:

- Who is protected by fair housing laws?
- How is “disability” defined?
- What actions are considered illegal discrimination?
- What makes an accommodation “reasonable?”
- How can reasonable accommodations be requested?
- How can I file a complaint?

2. Schedule a Fair Housing Workshop for Your Group

If you would like to schedule a Zoom training session for your group or organization, contact fairhousing@mhas-la.org to check availability. MHAS attorneys are scheduling workshops in Los Angeles County through June 30, 2022.

3. Join Our Email List and Visit the Fair Housing Tip of the Month Archives

[Join our email list](#) for the Fair Housing Tip of the Month, and view our [archive](#) of tips from prior months. Here are a few recent tips:

- [Fair Housing Protections for Tenants with Limited English Proficiency](#)
- [Reasonable Accommodation to Provide Tenants Additional Time to Address Hoarding Issues](#)
- [The Interactive Process after a Tenant with a Disability Makes a Request for Reasonable Accommodation](#)
- [Denial of Housing Applications Based on Past Criminal Record Due to Disability](#)

4. Know Your Rights!

Take a few minutes to review some basic concepts of fair housing laws and how they protect people with disabilities:

➤ **Who is protected by fair housing laws?**

Federal fair housing laws prohibit discrimination based on: race, religion, national origin, color, sex, physical and mental disability, and family status. In California, there are additional prohibitions for discrimination based on: age, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, source of income, marital status, immigration status, citizenship, primary language, and military or veteran status.

➤ **Who must follow fair housing laws?**

Fair housing laws must be followed by nearly everyone who provides housing, including organizations that deal with home ownership. Fair housing laws apply to private landlords, public housing authorities, mobile home parks, nursing homes, transitional housing, homeless shelters, sober living homes, condominium complexes, homeowners' associations, mortgage providers, and more!

➤ **What are my rights under fair housing laws as a person with a disability?**

You are entitled to use and enjoy your housing just like everyone else without being subject to discrimination. Discrimination could be intentional, like a landlord refusing to accept Section 8 tenants, or it could be a policy that has a disparate impact on people with disabilities, like a strict no-pets policy with no exceptions for emotional support animals.

While we typically take the “fair” in “fair housing” to mean that everyone should be treated the same, when it comes to people with physical and mental health disabilities, sometimes it may be necessary to treat them differently so they can use and enjoy their housing in the same way as people who don't have those disabilities. For example, a person who uses a wheelchair should not be expected to have to use the stairs like everyone else.

If you have a disability, you are entitled to ask for exceptions to rules or policies that will allow you to use and enjoy your housing. We call these exceptions “reasonable accommodations.” An accommodation is reasonable as long as it is necessary due to the disability and will not be an undue burden for the housing provider, constitute a fundamental alteration of the housing provider's services, pose a direct threat to others, or cause substantial damage to property. Common reasonable accommodation requests include extra time to cure a lease violation, paying rent later in the month when disability checks arrive, or being allowed to have an emotional support or service animal in a building with a no-pets policy.

If your landlord denies or fails to respond to a reasonable accommodation request, you can file a fair housing complaint with a local fair housing agency, the California Department of Fair

Employment and Housing (DFEH), or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

To file a complaint with HUD, call 800-669-9777, or visit www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/complaint-process

To file a complaint with DFEH, call 800-884-1684, or visit www.dfeh.ca.gov/complaint-process/file-a-complaint/

5. Learn More about Fair Housing in California

Visit the [California Department of Fair Employment and Housing \(DFEH\)](#) for these fact sheets and other fair housing resources:

- [Know Your Top Fair Housing Rights](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Fact Sheet](#)
- [Fair Housing and Criminal History Fact Sheet](#)

For more information, contact:

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(213) 389-2077
For California Relay Service TTY: (800) 735-2929
www.mhas-la.org

Mental Health Advocacy Services is a nonprofit organization protecting and advancing the legal rights of people with mental health disabilities.

Disclaimer: This publication is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. If you have a legal question, please contact Mental Health Advocacy Services, your local fair housing organization, or another attorney of your choice.

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