

## ***Fair Housing Tip of the Month***

### **Tip #7 – Third-Party Rent Payments**

***“Two months ago, I lost my job because of a nervous breakdown. I have been connected with a non-profit agency to get mental health services and case management. This agency will pay rent to my landlord for 9 months to allow me to get stable and get back on my feet. But my landlord refuses to accept rent from a third party, saying he will only take rent payments from me. The agency will only pay the rent if it makes payment directly to the landlord. What can I do?”***

**The law says:** Landlords must make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, when such accommodations may be necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. Requesting that a landlord make an exception to his or her regular practice of not accepting rent payments from a third party would be a reasonable accommodation, if it is necessary and related to the tenant’s disability.

**What to do:** Request a reasonable accommodation from your landlord to allow this third-party payment of your rent by the agency. You will want to have a letter from your treating professional verifying your disability and explaining the need to allow the third-party rent payment. Your landlord may not ask for your diagnosis or ask to see your medical records to verify your disability.

If your landlord refuses to consider your request for reasonable accommodation or refuses to engage in an interactive process, you can file a complaint with a local fair housing agency, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH), or the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

To file a complaint with HUD, call [800-669-9777](tel:800-669-9777), or visit [https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/complaint-process](https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/complaint-process)

To file a complaint with DFEH, call [800-884-1684](tel:800-884-1684), or visit <http://www.dfeh.ca.gov/complaint-process/complaint-forms/>

Fair housing laws prohibit discrimination in housing based on the following characteristics: Race, religion, national origin, color, sex, marital status\*, ancestry\*, familial status, disability, sexual orientation\*, source of income.\*

\*Indicates a prohibited basis for discrimination in California, but not under federal law.

***Disclaimer: The Fair Housing Tip of the Month program is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. If you have a legal question, please contact MHAS, your local fair housing council or another attorney of your choice.***

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