

Fair Housing Update

California Reaffirms Protections for Emotional Support Animals in Housing

The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) has issued a legal alert reaffirming that state protections for people who rely on emotional support animals in housing remain in effect following a recent change in federal enforcement guidance.

In May, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) changed how it handles housing discrimination complaints involving assistance animals. Under the new guidance, HUD generally will not pursue civil charges involving emotional support animals unless the animal is individually trained to perform work or tasks related to a person's disability. Service animals, such as guide or signal dogs, are specifically trained to perform disability-related tasks.

The change at the federal level does not alter California law. Protections under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act remain in place. Housing providers must continue to consider reasonable accommodations that give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to use and enjoy their housing. For assistance animals, these may include exceptions to no-pet policies, pet fees or breed restrictions.

Californians who believe they have experienced housing discrimination can file a complaint with CRD. More information is available in the [department's legal alert](#), and CRD will host a [webinar](#) on these protections on **August 12 at 11 a.m. PT.**

