

## 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.*

 Project Sentinel  projectsentinel  @ProjSentinel

# Housing Discrimination

## Against Families with Children



## 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:

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Ancestry</b>
<b>Familial Status*</b>	<b>Sexual</b>
<b>Religion</b>	<b>Orientation</b>
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Gender Identity &amp;</b>
<b>Race</b>	<b>Expression</b>
<b>Color</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>
<b>National Origin</b>	<b>Source of Income</b>
	<b>Age</b>

\*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.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is protected from familial status discrimination?

Anyone who has a child under age 18 living in their home is protected from familial status discrimination. Pregnant women and families in the process of getting custody of a foster or adoptive child are also protected.

### Do children have the right to play outside?

Generally, children should be allowed to play outside and use all common areas. However, a property may have *reasonable* safety rules that apply to all residents. For example, it would be reasonable to tell residents they cannot use a busy parking lot for bicycle riding. An unreasonable rule would be to tell children they can't play on the grass.

### Can housing providers require parents to supervise children at all times?

Generally, supervision rules are not permitted except in *very* limited circumstances. Parents should generally be allowed to decide the extent of supervision their children require. However, California law permits a housing provider to require all persons under the age of 14 to be supervised by an adult at the pool.

### Can a tenant be punished for their child's noise?

While a housing provider must balance the rights of all tenants, children are allowed to make a reasonable amount of noise for their age and activity. For example, a family should not be punished because a newborn cries in the middle of the night, or because a young child screams and laughs when playing after school.

### What about senior properties?

Qualified senior properties may legally refuse to rent to families with children. These properties will usually advertise that they are for persons aged 55 or over, or persons aged 62 or over, and must comply with certain rules before they may refuse to rent to families.

### Can families with children be limited to first floor apartments?

No. Families with children should be allowed to live in any unit, whether it is located on the second floor, near a pool, or next to a group of tenants without children.

### Can a housing provider tell someone their family has too many people?

In some cases, this may be discrimination. The general rule is that a housing provider should allow 2 people per bedroom, plus an additional person. For example, 3 people should be allowed to occupy a 1-bedroom unit, and 5 people should be allowed to occupy a 2-bedroom unit.

### Can a housing provider charge more rent for more people?

Charging more per person can often unfairly punish families with children. Charging rent based on the number of people in a household is usually only okay where the additional rent is directly related to the increased cost of utilities caused by additional tenants. However, this is case dependent.