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DFEH Settles Housing Discrimination Case Against Los Angeles Property Manager

Applicant with developmental disability to receive \$7,500 after property manager rejected his rental application and refused to approve a corporate cosigner as a reasonable accommodation

Sacramento – The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has reached a settlement in a housing discrimination case with respondent Fred Leeds Property Management, Inc. (“Fred Leeds Properties”) involving a rental applicant with a developmental disability, who alleged that his application was denied because of his disability.

In July 2017, the complainant filed complaints for housing discrimination and violations of the Unruh Civil Rights Act alleging that Fred Leeds Properties discriminated against him on the basis of his disability when it rejected his application because he did not meet the minimum income threshold. Although complainant and his representatives explained that he was unable to meet the income standard because of his disability, and requested as a reasonable accommodation that Brilliant Corners, a non-profit providing housing services to those with disabilities, be approved as complainant’s cosigner, Fred Leeds Properties rejected his application and denied the reasonable accommodation request.

After DFEH found cause to believe a violation of the Fair Employment and Housing Act had occurred, the parties engaged in mediation, resulting in a settlement in which Fred Leeds Properties will pay complainant \$7,500.

“The duty for housing providers to provide reasonable accommodation extends to all phases of the housing process, including applications,” said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. “When accommodating an applicant or tenant, housing providers may be required to alter their policies, including allowing a corporate—not simply an individual—cosigner when an applicant’s disability hinders their ability to meet a minimum income standard.”

In addition to a monetary settlement, respondent property management company—which had no written reasonable accommodation policy at the time—has agreed to develop, implement and distribute a policy to reasonably accommodate applicants and tenants with disabilities; provide an annual report regarding requests for reasonable accommodation for three years; participate in annual fair housing training for its leasing agents for three years; and post DFEH fair housing posters at its leasing office and online.

Gregory J. Mann, Senior Staff Counsel, represented the DFEH in this proceeding.

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The DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California’s civil rights laws. The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit the DFEH’s web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

