



Sonoma County Community Development Commission
Sonoma County Housing Authority
1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-4107

*Members of the
Commission*

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Executive Director

SECTION 504 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) and Sonoma County Housing Authority (PHA) has adopted a grievance procedure for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Section 504 states, in part, that no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Issues that are grievable include, but are not limited to:

- A denial of a Reasonable Accommodation and/or Reasonable Modification
- The inadequacy of an accommodation/modification
- The inaccessibility of a program or activity due to disability, or
- Discrimination or harassment based on disability

All such complaints should be addressed to the attention of the Community Development Commission, Section 504 Coordinator, or his/her designee, 1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. Phone (707) 565-7500 or TDD (707) 565-7555

Procedures for Filing a Grievance

A grievance shall be made in writing to the Section 504 Coordinator or his/her designee unless the individual's disability prevents him or her from filing a written grievance, in which case alternative means of filing a grievance shall be allowed as a Reasonable Accommodation (e.g., personal interview, tape recording, email, etc.). The grievance form may be obtained at the office of the Community Development Commission located at:

1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 565-7501 or TDD (707) 565-7555

At a minimum, the grievance form shall contain the following:

- Name, address and phone number of the person filing the grievance
- Description of the nature of the grievance, and



- Why you believe this constitutes discrimination.

Grievance forms shall be submitted to the Section 504 Coordinator or his/her designee within 14 business days of the date the person filing the grievance became aware of the alleged discriminatory action.

Procedures for Grievance Resolution

Within 14 business days of receiving the grievance, the 504 Coordinator or his/her designee shall contact the claimant to discuss the grievance and possible resolutions. If the Section 504 Coordinator /designee and the claimant cannot agree upon a satisfactory resolution, the formal hearing process will begin.

A formal hearing shall be scheduled by a Hearing Officer. The location and time of the hearing shall be jointly agreed upon by all parties involved. A written notification of the date, time, place and procedures governing the hearing shall be sent to the claimant. Every effort shall be made to hold the hearing at a location fully accessible to persons with physical impairments. If the claimant seeking relief under this process needs a Reasonable Accommodation to fully participate in the hearing, i.e. sign language interpreter, reader, etc., the CDC must be notified within 14 business days of the scheduled hearing date and such services shall be provided at no cost by the household filing the grievance.

All hearings shall be conducted by an impartial Hearing Officer. The designated Hearing Officer shall be a person other than the person(s) identified in the grievance, or a subordinate of such person. The claimant or his or her representative shall have the opportunity to examine before the start of the hearing all relevant materials. The claimant has the right to present any and all pertinent documentation or evidence and cross-examine any witnesses. The claimant shall have the right to secure aid in representation from attorneys, health professionals, or any other person beneficial to the presentation of the case. The hearing shall be held privately unless the claimant requests a public hearing. The Hearing Officer's decision shall be based upon the merits of the evidence presented by the claimant and the CDC representative(s) at the hearing.

Within 14 calendar days following the date of the hearing, the Hearing Officer shall mail a written notification of the decision to the claimant. If requested by the claimant as a Reasonable Accommodation, the decision shall be provided in an accessible format (e.g., large print, audio tape, Braille, etc.).

The determination shall include the Hearing Officer's findings, conclusions and recommendations for any proposed resolution of the matter.

Other Remedies

The right of an individual with a disability to a prompt and equitable resolution of the grievance shall not be delayed by the individual's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of a disability complaint with a responsible federal or state agency. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to an individual's pursuit of other remedies.

Individuals with a disability have a right to file with:

- San Francisco Regional Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1 Sansome Street, Suite 1200
San Francisco, California 94104-4430
(415) 489-6524 or 1-800-347-3739 (Voice)
(415) 436-6594 (TTY)
https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/online-complaint
- California Department of Fair Employment and Housing
Department of Fair Employment & Housing 2218 Kausen Drive, Suite 100
Elk Grove, CA 95758 (800) 884-1684 (Voice)
(800) 700-2320 (TTY)
www.dfeh.ca.gov/complaint.asp

Reasonable Accommodation

The Section 504 Coordinator, or his/her designee will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided Reasonable Accommodations if needed to participate in the grievance process. Such arrangements may include, but are not limited to, providing interpreters for the hearing impaired, providing taped cassettes of materials for the visually impaired, or assuring a barrier-free location for the mobility impaired.

Retention of Records

The CDC shall maintain files and records of all grievances filed under this grievance procedure.

Confidentiality

To the extent possible, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation of a complaint of unlawful discrimination.