



## **Fair Housing Rights: Source of Income Protection**

By Kevin Bibiano

Many people are familiar with the Fair Housing Act, a federal law that prohibits housing discrimination based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, or disability. Lesser known is California's Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), which goes even further to protect tenants.

One key FEHA protection is Source of Income (SOI). Under California housing law, source of income refers to any lawful, verifiable income used to pay rent. This includes wages/salary from a job, Social Security benefits, disability benefits, child support, veterans' benefits, retirement income, and housing subsidies such as Section 8 vouchers.

Though landlords may still apply standard screening criteria, such as credit history or proof of sufficient income, SOI protection means that landlords cannot refuse to rent to someone or apply different rental standards to tenants simply because of where their income comes from. Some examples of illegal SOI discrimination tactics include:

- Refusing to rent to someone because they use a housing voucher
- Advertising a unit with phrases like "No Section 8" or "No vouchers."
- Requiring voucher holders to meet higher income standards than other applicants
- Charging extra deposits or fees because part of the rent is paid through a housing assistance program
- Refusing to complete the required paperwork for a housing subsidy

Landlords also cannot falsely claim a unit is unavailable or delay applicant responses simply because their rent will be paid through government assistance, disability benefits, or other verified income.

If you believe you have been a victim of SOI discrimination or any other housing discrimination, call CSA San Diego County at (619) 444-5700. We are an HUD-approved nonprofit organization dedicated to eradicating housing discrimination. You may also visit our website at [www.c4sa.org](http://www.c4sa.org) or stop by one of our satellite offices in Oceanside.

### **Monday - Wednesday**

Chavez Resource Center  
605 San Diego Street  
Oceanside, CA 92058

### **Thursday - Friday**

Libby Lake Resource Center  
4700 North River Road  
Oceanside, CA 92057