

TRANSADVOCATE

HUD Launches Trans-Inclusive Fair Housing App

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https://www.transadvocate.com/hud-launches-first-fair-housing-app_n_8811.htm

Abstract

Recently, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) unveiled the first housing discrimination mobile application (app). The app provides a quick and easy way to learn about your housing rights and to file housing discrimination complaints, and inform the housing industry about its responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act. “Having this first fair housing mobile application [...]

Article



Figure 1. The HUD App

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housing rights and to file housing discrimination complaints, and inform the housing industry about its responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act.

“Having this first fair housing mobile application equips people everywhere with the information they need to combat housing discrimination,” said John Trasviña, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. “We are maximizing the latest technology to make the process for filing fair housing complaints faster and easier and arming our fair housing partners with the information they need to understand their fair housing rights and responsibilities.”

Last year, HUD announced an important Equal Access to Housing Rule that states clearly and unequivocally that trans individuals and queer couples have the right to live where they choose. Learn more about the Equal Access to Housing Rule.

Previously, the U.S. Secretary of HUD Shaun Donovan said an estimated one in five transgender Americans have been refused a home or apartment, and more than one in ten have been evicted because of their gender identity or expression. He went on to say that for the Obama Administration, addressing the trans homelessness issue is “not as an issue--but as a priority.”

... transgender people need homeless shelter services. Homeless shelters are designed to be a social safety net for those who need a safe place to stay because they are unable to provide one for themselves. Homeless shelters are also often designed to provide the services people need to get back on their feet. Right now, in many places, transgender people are left to struggle without that needed safety net.

The consequences of not creating safe shelters for transgender people are grim. If shelters are not safe and respectful, many transgender people will avoid them and seek other places to stay. When faced with a shelter that subjects them to disrespect, harassment, or other safety risks, transgender people may be better off out on their own. On top of safety concerns that a transgender person may have, it is important to understand that there is a deep emotional injury that comes with not being accepted or treated with respect by a service provider.

- Transitioning in Our Shelters: A guide for making homeless shelters safe for transgender people

Exacerbating the issue of trans homelessness is the fact that living on the street puts trans individuals at a greater risk for becoming HIV positive. Being excluded from the social safety net that's available to everyone else, the beatings, the rape, the survival sex - all these risk factors are focused upon the homeless trans population and the result is an out-of-control epidemic tearing through an incredibly vulnerable population. The HIV infection rate among the homeless transgender population is more than TWENTY-TWO percent... 22.11%! By comparison, the HIV infection rate in Sub-Saharan Africa is just 5% and world-wide, it's .8%.

UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2010, page 20.

Homeless rates among trans individuals range from a conservative 20% to 49%. [1] The trans community itself has tried various ways - both creative and aggressive - to address the significant homeless problem within the trans population.

For years, the trans community fought for their right to housing. The above video was part of an aggressive and successful advocacy campaign that resulted in Covenant House (a teen homeless

provider) becoming a trans-supportive and affirming Safe Zone [2] youth homeless shelter. For years, Covenant House refused to house transgender people. After some serious targeted and coordinated advocacy, Covenant House is now openly supportive and welcoming of trans kids. Moreover, the Houston GLBT-positive model is being adopted by other Covenant Houses throughout the US, Mexico and Canada.

HUD's new app will help you to both quickly access your federal trans-inclusive housing rights and immediately file a complaint. If you believe you have experienced (or are about to experience) housing discrimination, you should contact HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity for help at (800) 669-9777. You may also file a housing discrimination complaint online.

NOTE: There's no word (yet) when HUD will roll out with an Android version. HUD states that they are, in fact, "working on rolling out an Android version," but they weren't able to give me a specific target date for the roll out.

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