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GENERAL NEWS

DOJ Issues Web Accessibility Guidance Under ADA

The Department of Justice's ([DOJ](#)) Civil Rights Division recently [announced](#) that it has [published](#) guidance on web accessibility and the Americans with Disabilities Act ([ADA](#)) describing how state and local governments and businesses open to the public can make sure that their websites are accessible to people with disabilities as required by ADA. The guidance includes the following sections:

- Why Website Accessibility Matters
- Examples of Website Accessibility Barriers
- When the ADA Requires Web Content to be Accessible
- How to Make Web Content Accessible to People with Disabilities
- Web Accessibility for People with Disabilities is a Priority for the Department of Justice
- Resources

The full guidance is available [here](#).

DOJ Files Brief Addressing Discrimination against LEP Housing Applicants

In a [press release](#) last Friday, the Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)) announced that it has filed a statement of interest in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York explaining how policies that exclude rental housing applicants because they do not speak English may violate the [Fair Housing Act](#). The act prohibits housing providers from discriminating against persons seeking housing because of national origin.

The statement of interest was filed as part of a lawsuit brought by a fair housing organization against the owners and managers of apartments in New York. The lawsuit alleges that the defendants violated the Fair Housing Act by refusing to rent apartments to applicants who are limited English proficient (LEP) unless someone who speaks and reads English lives in the unit. The lawsuit further alleges that the defendants refused the applicants' offers to bring their own interpreters to translate lease documents and assist with communications.

The Statement of Interest explains how a restrictive language policy may violate the FHA when it has a disparate impact or is used as a proxy or pretext for discrimination based on national origin or race, as alleged in plaintiff's complaint. It also discusses how the plaintiff's allegations are consistent with the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Guidance on Fair Housing Act Protections for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, which clarifies how restrictive language policies may run afoul of the FHA.

According to the press release, the defendants have moved to have the case dismissed. The fair housing organization opposes that motion, and the Justice Department's statement of interest agrees that dismissal of the complaint would be inappropriate. The motion is now pending before the court.



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