



OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410-0500

RECEIVED
APR 27 2009

April 21, 2009

Dora Leong Gallo
Chief Executive Officer
A Community of Friends
3345 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Dear Ms. Gallo:

This letter responds to your recent inquiry submitted to us via email on March 30, 2009 asking whether, under the Fair Housing Act ("Act"), an affordable housing project may restrict housing to veterans only. Please be advised that this office does not render legal opinions with respect to individual properties or specific developments. This letter should be used as general guidance.

According to your inquiry, A Community of Friends is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit affordable housing developer for homeless people with special needs. Together with New Directions, Inc, a social service agency that serves veterans, your organization has secured a 75-year Enhanced Use Lease from the Veterans Administration for two buildings at the Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center to convert into permanent supportive housing for veterans. You asked whether you may restrict the housing to "veterans only."

Housing restricted to veterans is permissible under the Fair Housing Act, so long as the restriction does not operate to exclude a class protected by the Act. Thus, the housing must be offered to any qualified veteran, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability or familial status. 42 U.S.C. §§ 3601-19. There may be HUD program requirements that would not permit the housing to be limited to veterans or which set specific admissions criteria. You may wish to consult the appropriate HUD program offices regarding such issues. In addition, state or local laws may be implicated, and you may wish to consult an attorney about those laws.

If we can provide further assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Pennington
Assistant General Counsel
for Fair Housing Enforcement