



Commission on Human Rights

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NYC COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS' SETTLEMENTS USE BROKER INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO TACKLE SOURCE OF INCOME DISCRIMINATION

Innovative broker incentive program disrupts source of income discrimination.

NEW YORK— Source of income discrimination is an illegal practice that deprives New Yorkers of access to safe and affordable housing. This violates the New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL) and could look like:

- Advertising “No vouchers accepted” or refusing vouchers;
- Accepting one kind of voucher but not others (e.g. Section 8, but not City FHEPS);
- Refusing or delaying repairs for tenants based on having a voucher.

The NYC Commission on Human Rights (the Commission) works with realtors to embed innovative policies into settlements. These policies seek to halt patterns of discrimination. Previous settlements have mandated “set asides”. This means that a percentage of units are held specifically for tenants with vouchers.

Recent Commission-mediated settlements include broker incentive programs. As part of these programs, brokerages incentivize housing voucher holders by offering monetary bonuses. This benefits brokers who work with and place the highest number of tenants with public sources of income in homes.

Settlements include:

- Nooklyn NYC LLC (Nooklyn), for discriminating against an applicant with a HASA voucher (HIV/AIDS Services Administration).
 - \$10,000 in civil penalties,
 - \$5,000 in damages paid to the applicant who initiated the complaint, and
 - \$3,000 incentive program bonus.
- Bruma Realty for discriminating against an applicant because of her FHEPS (Family Homelessness & Eviction Prevention Supplement) voucher.
 - \$15,000 to the complainant,
 - \$8,000 grant to Bronxworks, and
 - A broker incentive program.

The Commission is proud to address and to prevent source of income discrimination. This includes seeking financial compensation for those who have experienced discrimination. However, lasting change also requires enacting creative policy in settlements that prevent future discrimination.

Companies who were once the agents of discrimination can become the agents of change.

“Source of income discrimination is not only unethical, it’s illegal,” said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. “In my State of the City address, I announced that we are investing over \$22 million in tenant protection programs, including more staff to increase investigation and enforcement against bad landlords who discriminate based on source of income. We will continue to pilot innovative programs to stand up for our city’s tenants, and I applaud the Commission on Human Rights for working every day to stop discrimination in its tracks.”

“Barring voucher holders from housing strips New Yorkers of their right to live, work, and thrive in our City,” said **Annabel Palma, Commissioner and Chair, NYC Commission on Human Rights**. “Housing is a human right, and the Commission will do everything within our mandate to translate that concept into policy and practice.”

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The New York City Commission on Human Rights seeks to prevent discrimination and enforces the New York City Human Rights Law—one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the nation. The Law includes 27 protected classes in housing, employment, and public accommodations. If you have witnessed or experienced discrimination, contact the Commission at 212-416-0197 or www.nyc.gov/reportdiscrimination.