Dear Landlord,

California law requires landlords to consider and treat all rental housing applicants equally throughout the applicant screening process, regardless of whether the applicant possesses a housing voucher. The laws apply to *all* rental properties and units in the state of California, the only exception being owner-occupied single-family homes where a roomer/boarder is renting a room. Violations of these laws could result in legal action being taken against violating landlords. In fact, discrimination against someone because of their source of income (including whether they receive a housing voucher) is treated in the same way as discrimination based upon characteristics like a person’s race, sex, national origin, or disability would be. Therefore, please be advised of your duties and requirements under California state law, as stated below.

A landlord *must*:

* Equally consider all applicants who have the ability to pay for a rental unit, even if part of that payment will be made through the use of a housing voucher like a “Section 8”/Housing Choice Voucher or another kind of federal, state, or local public assistance or housing subsidy.
* Use only the rental portion to be paid by the applicant when making determinations regarding an applicant’s ability to pay the rent, and not the entire rent amount. In other words, “income standards” must be assessed based upon the prospective tenant’s personal contribution toward the rent, not the total amount of rent the landlord will collect.

A landlord *cannot*:

* Deny a rental unit to an applicant, otherwise falsely represent that it is not available, or terminate a tenant’s tenancy because the applicant/tenant has a housing voucher
* Advertise that housing vouchers will not be accepted for a rental unit. (For instance, a landlord may not advertise a unit for rent but state “No Section 8.”)
* Treat a tenant with a voucher differently or have different rules for tenants with a housing voucher.
* Refuse services, repairs, or improvements to tenants because they have a housing voucher.
* Harass or evict someone in retaliation for opposing the prohibited practices described above.

I urge you to take the aforementioned laws into account as you advertise your rental unit(s), proceed through the rental application process, and lease your unit(s) out to tenants, voucher- and non-voucher-holders alike. Failure to comply with these laws may subject you to legal action.

For further information, please see California Government Code Sections 12927 and 12955.

Sincerely,