



Department of Justice

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FILES CONSENT DECREE REGARDING TAMPA, FLORIDA DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION CASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Justice Department today filed a consent decree regarding alleged disability rights violations by several apartment complexes in the Tampa area. The decree resolves allegations that the designers, owners and builders of several large apartment complexes in Tampa - Compton Place at Tampa Palms, The Landings at Cypress Meadows and Sheldon Palms Apartments - discriminated against persons with disabilities by failing to design and construct apartments that are accessible to persons with disabilities as required by the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“The Fair Housing Act requires that multi-family housing be designed and constructed so that persons with disabilities can access and use the premises,” said J. Michael Wiggins, Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. “Through settlement agreements such as this one, we are ensuring that the protections of the Fair Housing Act are fairly enforced.”

The decree, filed in U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, requires the architect and builders who designed and constructed the complexes to take necessary steps to remove barriers at the properties, as well as to help increase the supply of accessible housing in the Tampa area.

In addition, the architects and builders must retrofit the apartment complexes to make them accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes changes to the public exterior portions of the complexes; such as the sidewalks, pools, rental offices, and exercise rooms; as well as to the interior of first-floor apartment units. The estimated cost of the retrofits is between \$2 and \$2.5 million.

“The consent decree announced today guarantees that the citizens of Tampa fully benefit from the protections and rights afforded to them by the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act,” said Paul I. Perez, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida. “This case sends a strong message to builders and designers that this office will act to protect the rights of disabled persons in our community.”

Individuals who believe they may have been harmed by the actions in this case may call the Justice Department's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section at 800-896-7743 extension 995. Additional information is available on HUD's website at www.hud.gov and the Justice Department website at www.usdoj.gov/crt/housing.

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