



HUD No. 13-069  
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FOR RELEASE  
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### HUD CHARGES PENNSYLVANIA HOMELESS SHELTER WITH DISCRIMINATING AGAINST INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITIES

*City Rescue Mission of New Castle refused to admit blind individual with guide dog*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced today that it is **charging** City Rescue Mission of New Castle (CRM) and one of its employees with refusing to accept a blind man and his guide dog at a homeless shelter in New Castle, PA. HUD's investigation found that CRM denied a reasonable accommodation request to allow the man to keep his dog in the shelter, in violation of the Fair Housing Act.

The **Fair Housing Act** requires housing providers to make reasonable accommodations in their rules, policies, practices, or services when needed to provide persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to use or enjoy a dwelling.

"For many people with disabilities, guide dogs and other assistance animals are necessities, not options," stated John Trasviña, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. "HUD will enforce Fair Housing Act protections to ensure that housing providers grant reasonable accommodation requests."

According to HUD's charge, a blind, homeless individual contacted CRM in order to seek shelter. HUD's charge alleges that a CRM employee informed the man that he could not move into the shelter with his guide dog even after the man said that he could not be without his service animal. When a caseworker from Lawrence County Community Action, an organization that assists low-income people, contacted the shelter and explained that the man needed the guide dog because of his disability, the CRM employee again refused, saying that the dog would have to go elsewhere.

HUD's charge will be heard by a United States Administrative Law Judge unless any party to the charge elects to have the case heard in federal district court. If an administrative law judge finds after a hearing that discrimination has occurred, he may award damages to aggrieved persons for the damages caused them by the discrimination. The judge may also order injunctive relief and other equitable relief to deter further discrimination, as well as payment of attorney fees. In addition, the judge may impose fines in order to vindicate the public interest. If the matter is decided in federal court, the judge may also award punitive damages to aggrieved persons.

Persons who believe they have been denied a reasonable accommodation request may file a complaint by contacting HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at (800) 669-9777 (voice) or (800) 927-9275 (TTY). Housing discrimination complaints may also be filed by going to [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing), or by downloading HUD's free housing discrimination mobile application, which can be accessed through Apple devices, such as the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.