

# THE CAMPAIGN FOR ACCESSIBLE HOUSING



RELMAN COLFAX

For decades, the federal Fair Housing Act has required new multifamily developments, including apartment buildings, to be accessible to people with disabilities. Developments receiving government funding must also provide a number of highly accessible units meeting the needs of people with mobility, hearing and vision disabilities. Some developers ignore these requirements entirely or try to excuse their noncompliance by claiming that the apartments miss the legal requirements by “just a few inches.” But wheelchairs can’t get through doors that are just “a few inches” too narrow. The extra “few inches” that federal law requires can be the difference between a wheelchair living in her own apartment instead of a nursing home or other assisted living arrangements.

## IT’S LONG PAST TIME TO DEVELOP THE ACCESSIBLE HOUSING THE LAW REQUIRES!

Relman Colfax works with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and other disability advocates to identify inaccessible housing and seek remediation. Our actions bring real change to people with disabilities seeking a safe, decent place where they can maintain their independence and dignity.

**The problem:** When developers don’t follow accessibility laws, people with disabilities are forced to live in inaccessible housing, are unable to easily leave their homes, and may end up living in nursing homes or on the streets.

**The solution:** Require developers to create the accessible housing the law requires. CILs and other disability advocates encounter this problem every day, know where it is occurring and feel its impact, and can file lawsuits to demand that developers follow the law.

## WE HAVE SHOWN THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE:

- Representing two CILs, Relman Colfax settled a case against the City of Los Angeles in September 2016, requiring the City to develop at least 4,000 units of accessible affordable housing within 10 years.
- Representing a CIL, Relman Colfax recently secured a favorable decision holding that the City of Chicago is responsible for ensuring the accessibility of more than 45,000 units of affordable housing built with City financial assistance. The matter is currently in settlement negotiations.

## WE ENCOURAGE HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY ADVOCATES TO CONTACT US TO HEAR HOW THEY CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.

**About Us:** Relman Colfax PLLC is a national civil rights law firm with a litigation practice focused on combating discrimination. The Firm’s disability rights practice is driven by a commitment to secure the promises of housing choice and community integration embodied in federal disability rights laws. Co-authored by Counsel Tim Lambert and Partner Michael Allen. For more information, contact Tim Lambert.



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