



New York City Comptroller
Scott M. Stringer

NEWS

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PR15-12-115

December 2, 2015

Contact: Eric Sumberg, (212) 669-3535, esumberg@comptroller.nyc.gov

**COMPTROLLER STRINGER CALLS ON CITY COMMISSION ON
HUMAN RIGHTS TO INVESTIGATE HOUSING DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST HOMELESS NEW YORKERS**

*Rental Advertisements that state “NO VOUCHERS” effectively bar
homeless from rentals, in violation of City Human Rights Law*

(New York, NY) – New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer today exposed potential evidence of housing discrimination on the popular Craigslist web site, and called on New York City’s Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) to provide the Comptroller’s Office with information on how it investigates ‘source-of-income’ discrimination, as well as to disclose what steps it has taken to protect tenants.

“These ads suggest ‘no voucher holders need apply,’ echoing generations of discrimination against New Yorker’s most vulnerable citizens,” Comptroller Stringer said. “In the most diverse City in the world, it is unconscionable that unscrupulous landlords can get away with using modern communications to turn back the clock on fair treatment. Today, I am calling on the City’s Commission on Human Rights to redouble its efforts to eliminate these discriminatory practices and disclose what it has done to proactively find, stop and punish those who have broken the law.”

In a [letter](#) sent on Tuesday to Carmelyn Malalis, the Chair and Commissioner of New York City’s Commission on Human Rights, Comptroller Stringer cited several web postings in which landlords indicated that vouchers or rental assistance, such as the recently-enacted Living in Communities (LINC) program to help homeless individuals and families move out of shelters and into stable housing, were unacceptable forms of payment. These postings are in violation of the City’s Human Rights Law, which bar discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, creed, age, national origin, alienage or citizenship status, gender, sexual orientation,

disability, marital status or status as a victim of domestic violence, and, since 2008, “any lawful source of income”.

In addition to requesting CCHR investigate these postings, Comptroller Stringer also asked for comprehensive data on the number of “lawful source of income” discrimination inquiries, cases, investigations, and settlements the Commission has undertaken since FY 2011, and asked for specific information on how CCHR works with the Department of Homeless Services to educate LINC program participants on their rights.

As a means to help proactively find instances of discrimination, Comptroller Stringer recommended that CCHR explore using technologies that can automatically scan real estate listings to flag potentially illegal conduct. Similar technology allows Google to flag content on YouTube that potentially violates copyright law.

“The Commission on Human Rights has a mandate to uncover and investigate discrimination and must do all within its power to enforce our City’s laws,” Stringer said. “With 58,000 people staying in our shelters every night, it is imperative that we use every tool to get New Yorkers into long-term housing.”

To read the letter, click [here](#).