

Assembly Bill No. 725

Passed the Assembly August 15, 2008

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

Passed the Senate August 13, 2008

Secretary of the Senate

This bill was received by the Governor this _____ day
of _____, 2008, at _____ o'clock ____M.

Private Secretary of the Governor

CHAPTER _____

An act to add Section 50455.7 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to housing.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 725, Lieber. Housing: uniform rental housing application.

Existing law requires the California State Housing Plan to include a housing strategy that coordinates housing assistance and activities of state and local agencies.

This bill, on or before April 1, 2009, would require the Department of Housing and Community Development to convene a first meeting of a working group consisting of specified private associations to draft a uniform subsidized affordable housing application, and would require the department to take other specified actions upon the development of a uniform application.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to create a uniform affordable housing rental application, including two formats accessible to people with disabilities, to benefit both of the following:

(a) Low- and moderate-income housing applicants, by allowing them to fill out and copy a single application that they can use to apply for multiple affordable housing opportunities.

(b) Subsidized housing providers, by allowing them to collect all the information that they typically request, including all the information that state and federal funding agencies require them to gather, on a single application.

SEC. 2. Section 50455.7 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

50455.7. (a) (1) On or before April 1, 2009, the department shall convene a first meeting of a working group to draft a uniform subsidized affordable housing application. The department shall invite organizations representing subsidized affordable housing providers, including, but not limited to, the Affordable Housing Management Association of Northern California; the Affordable

Housing Management Association-Pacific Southwest; the Aging Services of California; the Apartment Association, Southern California Cities; the California Apartment Association; the California Association of Realtors; the California Housing Consortium; Housing California; the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California; and the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing.

(2) The working group may organize itself as it chooses and schedule future meetings.

(3) Nothing in this section shall require the department to participate in the working group or to pay the travel or other expenses of any person attending any meeting of the working group.

(b) If the working group develops a draft uniform application, the department shall do each of the following:

(1) Review the draft for compliance with department policy and, if the draft does not comply, return it to the working group to make the necessary changes.

(2) Provide the draft to the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, which shall review the draft for compliance with the fair housing statutes that it enforces, make any necessary changes to the draft, and return the draft to the department.

(3) Add the following statement to the application:

“This uniform application is available in a downloadable text file format and in formats accessible to people with disabilities at [insert the URL of the page on the department’s Internet Web site where the application is posted].”

(4) Provide the completed uniform application to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, which shall do all of the following:

(A) Select a contractor, to be paid an amount not to exceed four thousand dollars (\$4,000), to develop two accessible formats of the uniform application as follows:

(i) One application in plain English, with a large font.

(ii) One application in plain English, with a large font and color illustrations.

(B) Require the contractor to conduct at least one test with a focus group of persons with diverse disabilities.

(C) Review and approve the accessible formats developed by the contractor and provide them to the department.

(5) Post the application in a downloadable text file format, including, but not limited to, in the formats accessible to people with disabilities, on the department's Internet Web site.

(6) Reconvene the working group in the future as necessary to draft revisions in the uniform application to comply with changes in law or in the requirements of federal or state funding agencies.

(c) After the department completes all the requirements of subdivision (b), the department, the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee, and the California Housing Finance Agency shall do each of the following:

(1) Inform current and future recipients of state affordable housing subsidies of the existence of the uniform application, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(A) The accessible formats of the uniform application.

(B) Where the application is located on the Internet Web site.

(C) The goals of the uniform application, as declared in Section 1 of the act that enacts this section.

(2) Award additional points to future funding applicants who agree to distribute and accept the uniform application.

(d) Nothing in this section shall require a housing provider to use the uniform application or shall prevent a housing provider from requesting additional information from rental applicants.

(e) Any requirement of this section relating to the accessible formats shall be inapplicable if the State Council on Developmental Disabilities does not produce the accessible formats because of the financial limitation of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (b).

(f) The department's adoption of the uniform rental housing application and compliance with the other requirements of this section shall not be subject to Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code. Nothing in this section shall authorize the department to adopt or amend any regulation.

Approved _____, 2008

Governor