

Los Angeles U.S. News

LA paying \$200M to settle lawsuit over disabled housing

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<https://apnews.com/cbec85e8cec447beaa8425fd3da5d927>

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles agreed Tuesday to spend at least \$200 million over a decade to provide thousands of apartments for people with disabilities.

The City Council voted 12-0 to settle a federal lawsuit by several advocacy groups. They alleged the city's redevelopment agency violated anti-discrimination laws by paying for affordable housing projects that weren't accessible to those who use wheelchairs or have other disabilities.

For example, some apartments advertised as wheelchair accessible had doorways, kitchens and bathrooms that were not, the lawsuit said.

Los Angeles did not acknowledge any wrongdoing under the settlement. However, it agreed to spend at least \$20 million annually over 10 years to create or remodel publicly funded housing to ensure that 4,000 units are accessible to the disabled.

Officials will have to investigate hundreds of buildings to determine whether each has the required number of units accessible to the disabled. It was not clear how many do not meet the requirements.

"Until we actually go in and evaluate every unit and make that determination, we really can't tell you," City Administrative Officer Miguel Santana, who helped negotiate the deal, told the Los Angeles Times (<http://lat.ms/2c9yADJ>).

Los Angeles "stands for inclusiveness and access for all," Mayor Eric Garcetti said in a statement. "If we have fallen short of that commitment, we need to fix it as quickly as possible."

With the settlement, "we are working to meet the needs of our disabled community now and for decades to come," he said.

The settlement also calls for Los Angeles to pay \$4.5 million to the groups that sued, up to \$20 million in attorney's fees and up to \$1 million in court costs.

Last year, Los Angeles agreed to pay \$1.3 billion to settle a lawsuit alleging that broken sidewalks impaired the disabled. The city agreed to set aside money for repairs over three decades.