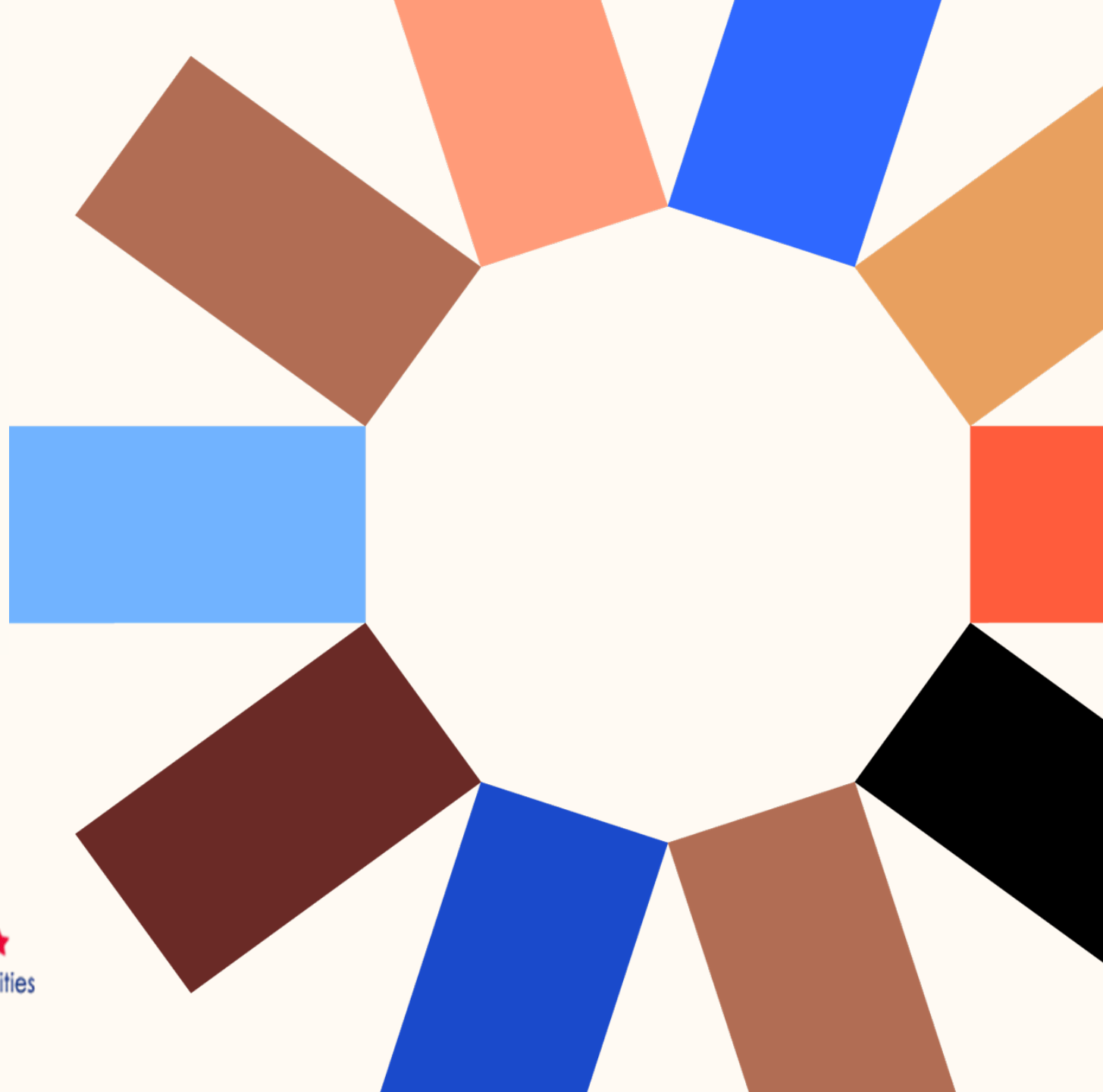


The Kelsey

Plain Language Leasing Project

The
Kelsey



The Kelsey | Plain Language Leasing Project



Housing forms are often written at a 15th-grade reading level, so many residents do not understand their rights or responsibilities about housing and rental rules

The Kelsey | Plain Language

Plain language is writing that helps the reader understand documents as quickly, easily, and completely as possible

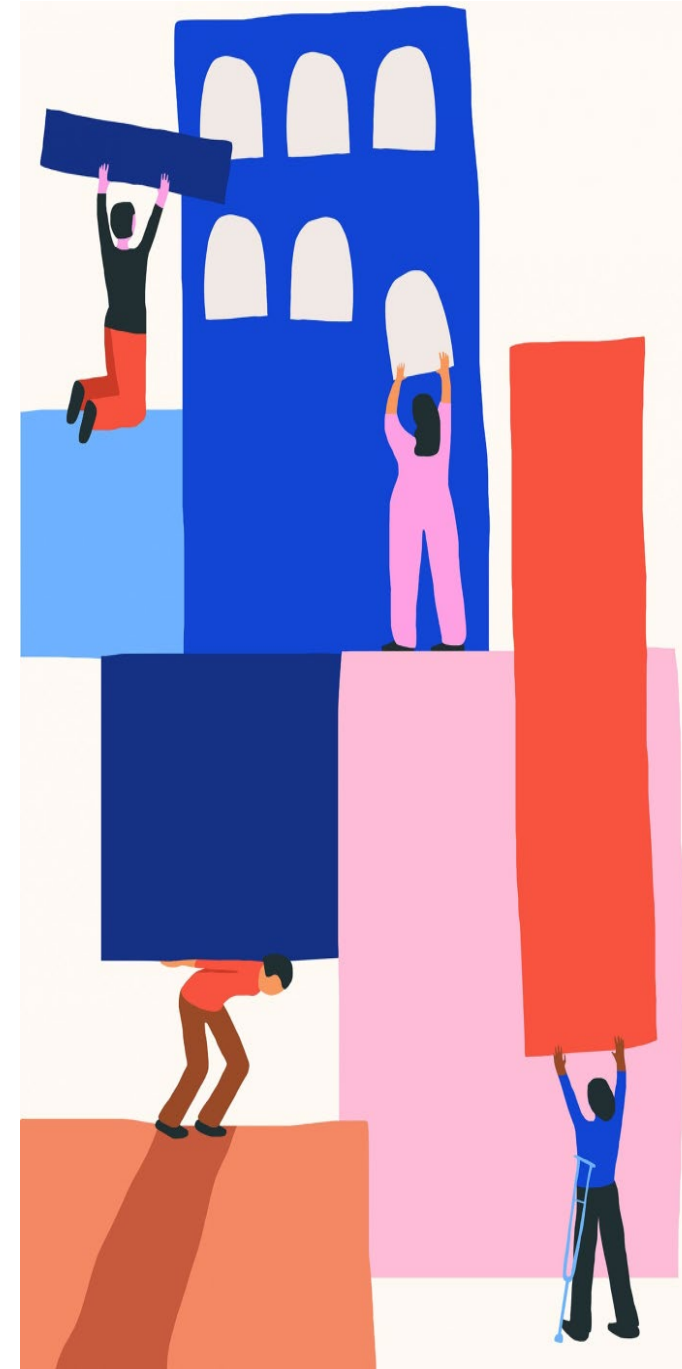
It has been used by many other government programs - but
not with housing

The Kelsey



The Kelsey: Collaborative Efforts

The Kelsey brought together a team of professionals to review, simplify, and make sure six (6) commonly used, affordable housing documents had the same legal protections as non-plain language documents.



The Kelsey | Collaborative Partners

❖ **Disability Rights California DRC**

❖ **Mercy Housing California**

(a large affordable housing developer)

❖ **John Stewart Company**

(largest affordable housing property manager in California)

❖ **Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN)**

(for plain language review and understanding)



The Kelsey | Advocacy Letter (Example)

Dear Property Management,

I am currently a resident in Unit _____ and have a suggestion that can benefit all of us in the community.

I have found that leasing documents written in plain language are easier to understand. I propose that you consider using plain language in the leasing documents to make them clearer for everyone.

You can find examples and resources at www.Plain Language Leasing.org to get started on this valuable improvement.

The Kelsey | Plain Language: Example

Document Name	Purpose	Text Sample	Translation Sample
Lease Agreement	Describes rental arrangement between landlord and resident	Security Deposit: We may apply the deposit after you vacate the premises to repair any loss or damage caused by you or your guests to the Dwelling Unit or the Property other than normal wear and tear.	Plain Language: When you move out, if you do not owe rent or money for damages, beyond normal wear and tear, we will send you the entire security deposit back in 21 days.

The Kelsey | Deliverables

Plain Language translations of commonly used leasing forms:



- Lease Agreement
- Community Guidelines
- Complaint Process
- Reasonable Accommodation & Modification
- CTCAC - Good Cause
- CTCAC - Add On

The Kelsey | Outputs & Deliverables



5 Trainings for property managers, developers, future residents of affordable housing (targeting people with I/DD), and residential service providers - how to use the forms



Additional trainings and videos in plain language on:
[How to Apply for Affordable Housing](#)



Free-to-use forms and documents available for download at: [Plain Language Leasing.org](https://PlainLanguageLeasing.org)

The Kelsey Outcomes

The Kelsey presented on the project at 2 national housing conferences

The Kelsey website had more than 200 downloads of open-source documents

The Kelsey | Impacts



Strong positive feedback from stakeholders, including people with I/DD

By end of 2025, the Kelsey's plain language documents will be used for 300+ units of housing for people with disabilities

The Kelsey | Barriers and Lessons Learned

Translating legal language
into plain language takes a
LOT of time

Plain language and
accessible documents
create shared respect
between the landlord and
resident



The Kelsey | Barriers and Lessons Learned (Cont.)

People who fund affordable housing have no interest in changing something that doesn't affect them; it's important for residents to advocate for fully accessible documents

Federal leasing documents made through HUD are the most complicated leasing documents, even though there is a federal mandate to use plain language; advocacy is needed to encourage all levels of government to adopt the use of plain language documents.

Questions?

Thank you.

The Kelsey

