



For Immediate Release
March 12, 2007

Contact: Robyn Ziegler
312-814-3118
877-844-5461 (TTY)
rzeigler@atg.state.il.us

**LISA MADIGAN AND NEW LENOX TOWNSHIP REACH
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT ENSURING ACCESSIBLE HOUSING
FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND ELDERLY**

Chicago - Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that she has reached a settlement with New Lenox Township regarding a recently constructed housing complex for senior citizens. The agreement resolves the Attorney General's investigation stemming from a complaint alleging that the Township designed and constructed a housing facility that fails to meet the accessibility requirements of State and Federal laws.

"This settlement agreement illustrates that we are determined to enforce laws that protect the rights of disabled individuals to accessible housing," said Madigan. "This is especially important in housing that is designated for individuals over the age of 55."

Under the terms of the agreement, New Lenox Township, which owns the complex, has made all of the facility's common areas accessible to people with disabilities as required by State and Federal law. In addition, each individual dwelling unit will be modified to meet accessibility requirements. Two of the 24 units have already been modified. The Township will complete the modifications of the remaining units, either at the request of current tenants or during the period between tenants when the current tenants move out. The agreement also requires New Lenox to pay fines and penalties of \$5,000.

"Today's agreement should serve as notice to public and private entities that when you build housing, even when you do so as a public service, you must comply with State and Federal laws requiring that housing be accessible and available to people with disabilities," said Madigan.

The Attorney General praised New Lenox Township for its cooperation throughout the investigation, which made the filing of a lawsuit and the imposition of more extensive fines and damages unnecessary.

Various Federal and State agencies, as well as community groups and the Disability Rights Bureau of the Attorney General's office provide free technical assistance to help businesses comply with State and Federal disability rights laws. The Attorney General urged building owners, designers, developers and builders to seek help if they do not know or understand the applicable statutes and regulations governing accessibility in housing.

“If you are building or managing multi-family housing in Illinois, there is no excuse for failing to take advantage of these resources to ensure that your facility is in compliance with State and Federal laws,” she said.

Last year, the Attorney General's Disability Rights Bureau responded to more than 1,500 requests for information related to disability issues. The Disability Rights Bureau enforces the State and Federal laws that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in almost every area of life by investigating complaints and resolving violations through out of court negotiations and if necessary, litigation. In addition, the Disability Rights Bureau provides advocacy, information and referral services to people with disabilities.

The New Lenox Township case was handled by Assistant Attorney General Leah Wade of the Disability Rights Bureau under the supervision of Disability Rights Bureau Chief Joseph Russo.

-30-

[Return to March 2007 Press Releases](#)