



NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE, INC.

What is the Fair Housing Act?

The Fair Housing Act of 1974 declares a national policy of fair housing throughout the U.S. The law makes it illegal to discriminate in the sale, lease, or rental of housing, or to make housing unavailable-because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

Together with the Civil Rights Act of 1966, the 14th Amendment, the American with Disabilities Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and state and local laws, the Fair Housing Act offers comprehensive protection to the consumer.

How am I affected by it?

You can expect equal treatment and access to all properties by landlords, agents, brokers, Realtors, and home sellers. Dwellings provided by a web site are also available on an equal opportunity basis. Under the law, if you believe you have not received fair consideration or treatment, you can file a housing discrimination claim with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

For the home seller or landlord

A home seller or landlord cannot establish discriminatory terms or conditions in the purchase or rental; deny that housing is available; or advertise that property is available only to persons of a certain race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

For the home seeker or renter

You have the right to expect that housing will be available to you without discrimination or other limitations bases on your race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

This includes the right to expect the following:

- ***Housing in your price range available to you without discrimination***
- ***Equal professional service***
- ***The opportunity to consider a broad range of housing choices***
- ***No discriminatory limitations on communities or location of housing***
- ***No discrimination in the financing, appraising, or insuring of housing***
- ***Reasonable accommodations in rules, practices, and procedures for persons with disabilities***
- ***Asking about physical disability and selecting unit type.***
- ***Non-discriminatory terms and conditions for the sale, rental, financing, or insuring of a dwelling; and***

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- **To be free from harassment or intimidations for exercising your fair housing rights.**

What kinds of questions or actions are discriminatory?

All these actions are discriminatory if they are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin:

- ***Misrepresenting the availability of a unit***
- ***Discriminating in the application or the eviction policies***
- ***Advertising of a preference for certain kinds of tenants or homebuyers***
- ***Limiting the use of common facilities to tenants or guests***
- ***Applying more burdensome rental criteria***
- ***Steering tenants or home seekers towards certain kinds of housing***
- ***Asking about physical disability and selecting unit type.***

Are there special protections for disabled tenants or home buyers?

According to Nolo.com's article "Housing Rights of Disabled Tenants," landlords are not allowed to ask whether you have a disability or illness, or ask to see medical records. Even if it is obvious that you are disabled-for example, you use a wheelchair or wear a hearing aid-it is illegal to inquire how severely you are disabled. In other words, your landlord's actions and questions cannot be designed to treat you differently than other tenants.

For example, if there are two units for rent-one on the ground floor and one three stories up-the landlord must show both units to an applicant with a wheelchair, however reasonable he thinks it would be for the person to consider only the ground floor unit.

In addition, landlords must accommodate the needs of disable tenants, at the landlord's expense. As a disabled tenant, you may expect your landlord to reasonably adjust rules or services in order to give you an equal opportunity to use and enjoy your dwelling unit or a common space. Accomodations can include such things as a closed-in, spacious parking space for a tenant who uses a wheelchair. Landlords must also allow disabled tenants to make reasonable modifications of their living unit or common areas at their expense if needed to be comfortable and safe in the unit, according to Nolo.com.

How do I file a Fair Housing Complaint?

To file a fair housing complaint, call toll-free at (800) 699-9777 or (800) 543-8294 (TDD). Or visit HUD on the Internet at <http://www.hud.gov/complaints/housediscrim.cfm> to fill out a discrimination claim online

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