

# **FAIR HOUSING – YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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**The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 prohibits discrimination in housing based on:**

**Race or Color  
Religion  
Sex  
Handicap  
Familial Status  
National Origin**

## **WHAT HOUSING IS COVERED?**

The Fair Housing Act covers most housing. Under some circumstances, the Act exempts owner-occupied buildings with no more than four units, single family housing sold or rented without the use of a broker, and housing operated by organizations and private clubs that limit occupancy to members.

## **WHAT IS PROHIBITED?**

In the sale, rental, or financing of housing, no one may take any of the following actions based on race, color, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin of the person seeking housing:

- Refuse to rent or sell available housing;
- Advertise or make any statement that indicates a limitation or preference based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin (this prohibition against discriminatory advertising applies to single family and owner-occupied housing that is otherwise exempt from the Fair Housing Act);
- Falsely state that housing is not available for inspection, sale, or rental;
- Set different terms, conditions, or privileges for sale or rental of a dwelling;
- Provide different housing services or facilities;
- For profit, persuade owners to sell or rent (Blockbusting); or
- Deny anyone access to or membership in a facility or service related to the sale or rental of housing.

## **AGE OR FAMILIAL STATUS**

Unless a building or community qualifies as housing for older persons, it may not discriminate against families in which one or more children under the age of 18 years of age live with:

- A parent;
- A parent who has legal custody of the the child(ren);
- A person designated by the parent or legal custodian of the child(ren); or
- Familial status protection also applies to pregnant women and anyone securing legal custody of a child under 18 years of age.

## **PROTECTION FOR THE DISABLED**

If tenant or member of their household:

- Has a physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- Has a record of such disability; or
- Is regarded as having such a disability.

### **A Landlord May Not. . .**

- Refuse to let the tenant make reasonable modifications to the dwelling or common use areas, at the tenant's expense, if necessary for the handicapped person to use the housing.
- Refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, if necessary, for the handicapped person to use the housing.

*Example:* A building with a "no pets" policy, must allow a visually impaired tenant keep a guard dog.

*Example:* A rental complex that offers ample, unassigned parking must honor a request from a mobility-impaired tenant for a reserved parking space near the tenant's apartment.

## **FAIR HOUSING DO'S AND DON'TS**

### **Do Not. . .**

- Ask illegal questions about an applicant's marital status or their religious practices.
- Advertise indicating a preference for specific age, religion, race, etc.
- Set different fees, charges, or security deposit amounts for different tenants in comparable units.
- Steer applicants to other landlords or neighborhoods.

### **Do. . .**

- Treat each applicant equally. Be consistent in the information you request and the application approval process.
- Use a printed application form to ask for financial information, names, and ages of household members, previous rental references, or credit references.
- Document contacts with applicants and tenants in writing.
- Keep a written copy of your policies and procedures on applications and occupancy.
- Educate and train people working for you about Fair Housing laws and practices.
- Display the Equal Housing Opportunity logo in advertising and in your place of business.

## **IF YOU SUSPECT UNFAIR HOUSING PRACTICES . . .**

- Contact the Department of Housing Development Fair Housing Hotline  
1-800-669-9777  
TDD 1-800-927-9275

***EVERYONE DESERVES A FAIR CHANCE.***

**Washington County Community Services is dedicated to promoting fair housing equal opportunity for all residents of Washington County.**