

FAIR HOUSING BASICS - FAIR RENTAL



Fair Housing means the right to live where one chooses, to rent a house or apartment, to own a home – with dignity and without discrimination. The federal Fair Housing Act says that no one can deny housing to people because of their "protected class" (race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status, or disability). State and local laws include additional protected groups, such as marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran/military status, and Section 8 status.

WHO ENFORCES FAIR HOUSING LAWS?

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) enforces the Fair Housing Act. State and local civil rights agencies enforce local fair housing laws.



ADVERTISING:



- Housing providers cannot use any verbal statement or written ad that indicates a preference, limitation, or discrimination based on protected class. For example, an ad cannot say "adults only" or "no disabled." A rental manager cannot say a rental is not available when it actually is.
- Housing providers cannot refuse to negotiate with or rent to anyone because of protected class. For example, a landlord cannot refuse to give an application to someone because he is Hispanic.

FAIR TENANCY RULES: Tenancy rules should be written with all residents in mind and should not single out any one protected class group. For example, instead of "children cannot ride bikes in the parking lot", rules should state "no bicycle riding is allowed in the parking lot."



SIMILAR TREATMENT: Fair housing laws require that housing providers treat applicants and residents fairly. Landlords and managers cannot set special conditions or provide different treatment for some residents due to their protected class. For example, a maintenance worker cannot refuse repairs for Muslim residents.

NO HARASSMENT: Fair housing laws prohibit harassment based on protected class. If someone calls a resident names or treats him badly due to protected class, housing management must do something about it. For example, a manager must stop a gardener from whistling at female residents, or stop a resident from calling another resident racial names.



DISABILITY ACCESS: People with disabilities may need "reasonable accommodations" so that they can live in and enjoy their housing. Housing providers must provide accommodations and allow modifications. For example, a manager should provide a large print lease for a low-vision applicant, or allow a wheelchair user to install a grab bar in his apartment.

Everyone has the right to fair housing. Fair housing is not only the right thing to do – it's the law and it's good business, too. Know your fair housing rights and responsibilities. If discrimination occurs, do something about it!
