

What Conduct Is Prohibited by Fair Housing Laws?

Housing providers are prohibited from engaging in housing discrimination. See our fact sheet *Types of Housing and Types of Entities Covered by Fair Housing Laws*.

Discrimination is differential treatment based on a protected characteristic such as race, sex/gender, disability, or lawful source of income. See our fact sheet *Who is Protected by Fair Housing Laws* for a complete list.

Some discriminatory acts are blatant and obvious, but housing discrimination can be subtle and difficult to detect. Discrimination takes many forms and can occur at all stages of housing transactions. It is important to understand conduct prohibited by fair housing laws, as not all housing concerns result from discrimination. Here is a partial list of practices prohibited by fair housing laws if based on a protected characteristic:

General

- Applying or enforcing any policies in a discriminatory manner
- Adopting any policies that discriminate, or have the effect of discriminating

Housing Search

- Lying about the availability of housing for rent or for sale
- Steering a home-seeker to or from a certain neighborhood, building, or area of a building
- Advertising or making any statement that indicates a preference, limitation, or discrimination

Qualifying/Negotiating

- Varying qualification requirements for applicants with different protected characteristics, including income level, credit score, and approval procedures
- Requiring terms or conditions that are less favorable than those offered to others, such as different rents, sales prices, or amenities
- Refusing to negotiate regarding housing, or otherwise making housing unavailable

Real Estate-Related Transactions

- Refusing to make a loan, purchase a loan, or insure a property
- Requiring different terms conditions, or privileges in lending or insuring
- Considering a homeowner's protected characteristics when conducting appraisals

Current Residents

- Denying or providing inferior levels of services or facilities
- Persuading, or trying to persuade, a homeowner to sell by suggesting that people with a particular protected characteristic are about to move into the neighborhood

Harassment/Intimidation

- Harassing any person
- Threatening, coercing, intimidating, interfering with, or retaliating against someone for asserting fair housing rights

Regarding Disability

- Refusing to provide reasonable accommodations as exception to rules, policies, practices, or services when requested by persons with disabilities
- Refusing to allow reasonable structural modifications when requested by persons with disabilities
- Designing and constructing new multifamily housing after 1991 that is inaccessible

Where can I learn more?

If you think you are experiencing any form of housing discrimination, contact the FHJC. We will help sort out the facts and provide you with information about your rights and options under fair housing laws. You can also contact us – anonymously if you prefer – if you know about housing discrimination that is happening to others. Our counseling and investigative services are provided for free, regardless of income.