

Fair Housing Tips While Looking for a Home

As a renter or homebuyer, you are protected against discrimination based on your race, gender, sexual orientation, source of income, disability, and more. When searching for a new home, you should take these important steps to protect yourself against housing discrimination by landlords, sellers, agents, banks, management companies, operators of facilities, co-op boards, or other housing providers:

Save notes and documents

- Write down the names and contact information of any housing providers or agents you speak with.
- Save emails, texts, receipts, rental applications, copies of advertisements, and any other information that may be helpful.
- Keep a journal to write down any issues you face. The FHJC's Rental Search Log is available in English and Spanish to help you track the details of your search.
- Ask for a copy of any written policy documents, if available. The more information you have in writing, the better.

Create a timeline

- Track the dates and times of when you speak to housing providers or agents.
- Keep track of whether the housing provider's behavior changed over time.

Follow up, but avoid confrontation

- If you aren't sure why you were denied housing, ask why.
- You don't need to directly accuse the housing provider of violating fair housing law. Instead, focus on gathering your evidence to prove any illegal behavior.

Tracking Source of Income Discrimination

Discrimination based on source of income, such as using a housing voucher, is illegal in New York. It's important to understand the timeline of your case to determine if you are experiencing source of income discrimination. For example, if you are using a housing voucher, try to gather information about the available housing before mentioning your voucher. Keep notes about when you shared information about the voucher, and how the housing provider's responses might have changed.

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.