

Who is Protected by Fair Housing Laws?

Federal, state, and local fair housing laws protect **all persons** from discrimination based on a variety of protected characteristics. Any unfair or unequal treatment by housing providers or others because of those characteristics is illegal.

What characteristics are protected by different fair housing laws?

The federal **Fair Housing Act** prohibits discrimination based on:

- Race
- Color
- Familial Status
- Religion
- National Origin
- Disability
- Sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity)

The **New York State Human Rights Law** includes all of the federally protected characteristics and also prohibits discrimination based on:

- Age
- Marital Status
- Lawful source of income (including vouchers)
- Military status
- Status as victim of domestic violence, sex offenses, and stalking
- Citizenship or immigration status

(Inquiries into arrest records are also impermissible under New York State Human Rights Law.)

The **New York City Human Rights Law** includes all of the federal and state protected characteristics and also prohibits discrimination based on:

- Lawful occupation
- Height/Weight
- Domestic partnership status

Other counties in the FHJC service area vary in their protections. **Suffolk** and **Dutchess** prohibit discrimination based on the same characteristics as state law. **Westchester** and **Nassau** also ban discrimination covered by state law, except for military status. **Rockland** adds protections for medical/health condition and wage history. **Orange** prohibits discrimination based on genetic information. Contact the FHJC to learn more.

Who must comply with fair housing laws?

Just as everyone is protected by fair housing laws, everyone involved in providing housing is also required to abide by those same laws. This includes landlords, sellers, agents, banks, management companies, operators of facilities, and co-op boards. Lenders, insurance companies, appraisers, and other real estate services must also comply. Other individuals such as neighbors are also precluded from infringing on fair housing rights.

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.