

Fair Housing Protections

Religion & Sex/Gender



The Fair Housing Act (FHA) is a federal law that protects people from discrimination in housing, including renting, buying, financing, or advertising a home.

Under the FHA, it is illegal to treat anyone unfairly because of their religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

Religion

Everyone has the right to housing, no matter what they believe, or don't believe.

The law protects people from discrimination based on religious faith, practice, clothing, or symbols.

Examples of Religious Discrimination:

- Refusing to rent to someone because they wear a hijab, turban, or yarmulke
- Making negative comments about a tenant's faith or telling them they "wouldn't fit in"
- Allowing decorations for some holidays but not others
- Denying the use of shared spaces for religious gathering while allowing secular ones

What the Law Allows:

Religious groups may limit non-commercial housing (like a church-owned house) to members of their own faith. All other landlords and housing providers must treat everyone equally, regardless of religion. Tenants can display religious items like a statue or cross if similar decorations are allowed. Neutral building rules, such as safety or quiet hours, must apply equally to everyone.

Sex and Gender

The law also protects people from unfair treatment based on sex, which includes sexual harassment, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

Examples include:

- Refusing to rent or sell because of someone's gender or gender identity
- Treating survivors of domestic violence unfairly
- Making unwanted sexual comments or touching a tenant
- Asking for sexual favors in exchange for rent, repairs, or avoiding eviction

These behaviors are illegal and considered sexual harassment in housing.

- **"Quid Pro Quo" Harassment:** when a landlord demands sex or sexual favors for housing benefits
- **Hostile Environment:** repeated sexual behavior that makes a home feel unsafe

Harassment can come from anyone, including a landlord, maintenance worker, or neighbor, and can happen to people of any gender. Retaliation for reporting discrimination is also illegal.

Fair housing means equal opportunity for everyone, regardless of faith, gender, or identity, to live with dignity and without fear of discrimination.



JUSTICE FAIRNESS HOPE
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