

Common Forms Of Discrimination

Misrepresenting the Availability of Housing: A landlord, owner, or real estate agent tells you that the housing is unavailable, when in fact it has not been rented or sold.

Steering: A real estate agent, landlord, or owner offers you housing only in neighborhoods with people who have the same race, ethnicity, or religion as you.

Refusal to Rent or Sell: A landlord or real estate agent refuses to rent or sell to you because you are a member of one of the protected groups listed on the first page of this brochure.

Discrimination in Terms or Conditions: People in one of the protected groups listed on the first page of this brochure are given terms or rules that are different from those given to others.

Discriminatory Advertising: Any written statement or any oral statement that indicates preferences or limitations for certain people. That includes any ad or brochure that is created by the owner of the property or by someone working on his or her behalf.

Use of Threats, Intimidation, or Coercion: Someone attempts to prevent a person in one of the protected groups from renting or buying a house in a neighborhood by suggesting the person will not be safe or that neighbors do not want the person to move in.

The Fair Housing Initiatives Program does not limit itself to people who have already experienced discrimination. We work to educate everyone about their rights and responsibilities under the fair housing laws and to bring communities together to strengthen the fight against discrimination.

We serve the community in many ways by:

- Conducting educational workshops on fair housing issues
- Investigating claims of housing discrimination
- Providing free legal assistance to the victims of discrimination
- Working closely with city governments and housing providers on fair housing issues
- Educating everyone about their rights and responsibilities

For more information, contact:

Massachusetts Fair Housing Center

57 Suffolk Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

Phone/TTY: 413-539-9796
Fax: 413-787-1797
www.massfairhousing.com



HAP, Inc.

322 Main Street, Suite 1
Springfield, MA 01105-2403

Phone: 413-233-1609
Toll Free: 800-332-9667
TTY: 413-233-1699
Fax: 413-787-1797
www.haphousing.org

The Fair Housing Initiatives Program

Have You Found Closed Doors When Looking for Housing?

*Fighting Discrimination
Opening Doors*



Prepared under a grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

Housing Discrimination is Illegal

Housing Discrimination is illegal under both state and federal law. It is always against the law to deny anyone housing based on:

- **Race**

In almost all instances, it is also against the law to deny anyone housing based on:

- **Color**
- **Sex**
- **National Origin**
- **Religion**
- **Presence of Children in the Household**
- **Disability**
- **Marital Status**
- **Age**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Military or Veteran Status**
- **Ancestry**
- **Public Assistance**
- **Housing subsidies or rental assistance**
- **The presence of lead paint if a child under six lives in the household**
- **Genetic information**

The Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) provides education, outreach and counseling to both consumers and providers of housing under a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It can also provide free legal services for anyone who has been illegally denied housing.

Local Services

Local services under the Fair Housing Initiatives Program are jointly provided by:

The Massachusetts Fair Housing Center

(formerly the Housing Discrimination Project) which has been working to end both subtle and blatant forms of discrimination in Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Berkshire, and Worcester counties since 1989.

and

HAP, Inc.

The Region's Housing Partnership

which has been providing a wide range of housing services to the people of Hampden and Hampshire counties since 1972. In addition to serving as the lead agency for the FHIP project, it provides education and support to tenants, landlords, homeowners and homebuyers. HAP oversees rental assistance programs, develops and rents residential properties, and operates a shelter for families in transition.

Always report any incident of discrimination

If you or someone you know has experienced housing discrimination call a FHIP member agency now. We will:

- **Listen to your story and collect important information**
- **Provide individual counseling**
- **Thoroughly investigate the complaint**
- **Review the results of the investigation with you and help make decisions about what to do next**

If there is evidence of discrimination, we will help you file a complaint with the proper agency or refer you to a trained attorney to file a lawsuit. Our services are provided free of charge.

If the case is resolved in your favor, you may be awarded money for any damages you suffered. It may also be possible for you to move into the housing you were denied.

If you need information or training on how to comply with fair housing laws, call a FHIP member agency now. We will:

- **Provide individual counseling**
- **Educate you and your staff about what the fair housing laws mean to you**
- **Provide guidance in resolving compliance issues**