

Fair Housing

Fair Housing is the right of all people to be free from discrimination in the rental, sale, financing or insuring of housing. It is illegal under the Fair Housing laws to refuse to rent or sell, to treat differently, or to otherwise prevent individuals from buying or renting any home in the neighborhood of their choice because of their membership in a protected class. SouthCoast Fair Housing, the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development help those who have been harmed by housing discrimination, and work to provide fair housing opportunities for all.

IT IS ILLEGAL under the Federal Fair Housing Act to refuse or prevent someone from obtaining housing based on their membership in the following protected classes:

- Race: *Racial Identity; Black, White, Asian, Native American, Alaskan or Hawaii Native, Pacific Islander, etc.*
- Color: *Color of one's skin*
- Religion: *Religious beliefs or practices*
- National Origin: *Country where the individual or their ancestors were born*
- Sex: *Includes sexual harassment and may include sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.*
- Disability: *Any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment*
- Familial Status: *Presence of minor children or pregnant women in the household*

ADDITIONALLY, IT IS ILLEGAL under Rhode Island law to refuse or prevent someone from obtaining housing based on their membership in the following protected classes:

- Age
- Gender Identity: *One's innermost concept of Self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither*
- Gender Expression: *External manifestation of one's gender identity*
- Marital Status: *Single, married, divorced, widowed*
- Military Status: *Veteran or current member of the armed forces*
- Sexual Orientation
- Status as Victim of Domestic Abuse

WHO THE LAW APPLIES TO: Any owner who sells, rents, leases, or manages a housing accommodation, or any agent of such owner. Exemptions may apply for housing providers who live at the property they are offering.

Housing discrimination isn't always obvious. Look for these indications of possible discrimination:

- Were you told on the phone that a unit was available, but later told in person that it was already rented?
- Were you told that the area was "not suitable for kids"?
- Were you quoted a price higher than what was listed in the advertisement?

-Did the housing provider stop communication/fail to return communications after you gave information about your children, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability?

-Did the housing provider comment or ask about your accent or ability to communicate, or say that they can only conduct business with English speakers?

If you feel you have experienced housing discrimination, you may contact the following organizations:

SouthCoast Fair Housing:

1005 Main St, Suite 1210

Pawtucket, RI 02860

(401) 285-2550

TTY - Call RI Relay at 800-745-555

www.southcoastfairhousing.org

Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights

180 Westminster Street

Providence, RI 02903

(401) 222-2661

TTY (401) 222-2664

www.ricmr.ri.gov

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Boston Regional Office of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity (FHEO)

(617) 994-8300

(800) 827-5005

TTY (800) 877-8339

www.hud.gov/fairhousing