

City of East Lansing One Pager Plus

Fair Housing

What is the Fair Housing Act?

The Fair Housing Act is a law enacted as part of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination of home sales, rentals or financing of dwellings. Under federal law, no person shall be subjected to discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin in the sale, rental or advertising of dwellings, in the provision of brokerage services or in the availability of residential real estate related transactions. Michigan law adds age and marital status protections. East Lansing's City Code further prohibits discrimination based on age, height, weight, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, student status, legal source of income or the use of adaptive devices or aids.

Who potentially conducts acts of discrimination?

Essentially, those in a position to make decisions as to whether a person receives access to housing opportunity could make a discriminatory action. This would include: landlords, homeowners, real estate companies, municipalities, banks or other lending institutions and insurance companies.

What actions are considered to be housing discrimination?

Examples of potential fair housing violations include:

- An agency telling a potential homebuyer or renter that a unit is unavailable to tour, when it is still on the market.
- An agency's inequity in providing different services to different residents.
- An agency's advertisement of housing options to preferred groups of people only.
- An agency's use of advertisement based on renter/buyer characteristics, such as "no students" or "students only" verbiage.
- An agency's refusal to make reasonable accommodations for persons with a disability if the accommodation may be necessary to allow such a person to use and enjoy a dwelling.
- An agency's practice of different qualifying standards for applicants, such as credit histories.
- An agency's action to harass, coerce, intimidate or interfere with anyone exercising or assisting someone else with his/her fair housing rights.
- An agency's refusal to provide a potential homebuyer with information about loan qualifications.
- An agency's change in the terms and conditions of lending for different groups of people.
- An agency's discrimination in appraisal of similar properties.



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Fair Housing (Continued)

Is there special protection if I have a disability?

If you have a disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities, your landlord may not refuse to let you make reasonable modifications to your dwelling or common use areas—at your expense—if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing.

How can I recognize that I have experienced discrimination?

Housing discrimination is not always obvious. These are some of the most frequent answers:

- “Sorry, we just rented the last apartment.”
- “No kids in this building.” or “We aren’t set up for children.”
- “You might feel more comfortable in another neighborhood.”
- “We must have lost your application.”
- “No disability. We only rent to working people.”
- “Your credit isn’t good enough.”
- “Most of the people who live in this building are ‘professionals.’”
- “You can’t build a ramp for access to the building. It won’t look good.”

What can I do if I believe I have a grievance?

If you live within the City limits, contact the Human Resources Department/Human Relations Commission at (517) 319-6893. They will gather information regarding your grievance and attempt to resolve the situation if a case of housing discrimination is established. Complaints can also be mailed to the Human Relations Commission at: 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823.

What information should I provide to the Human Resources Department?

(a) Your name, address and phone number; (b) The name, address and description of the organization; (c) A brief description of how you were discriminated against; (d) The date(s) of the alleged violation; (e) Why you believe the discrimination occurred.

Can I file a fair housing discrimination complaint online?

Yes. Visit the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (www.michigan.gov/mdcr) or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (www.hud.gov.)

Where can I get more information about fair housing?

Visit www.cityofeastlansing.com/fairhousing or call (517) 319-6930.

