



## TOP 10 FACTS EVERY HOUSING PROVIDER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FAIR HOUSING

### Fact #1:

Fair housing is the right tenants and homebuyers have to choose where to live and to fully enjoy the use of the facilities in the unit or premises without being discriminated against.

### Fact #2:

There are several laws that prohibit discrimination in housing. In Illinois, the **Illinois Human Rights Act (IHRA)** provides protection from discrimination in commercial and residential real estate transactions.

### Fact #3:

It is against the law to deny someone housing because of the following protected classes:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex (Sexual Harassment)
- National Origin
- Ancestry
- Age (40 and over)
- Marital Status
- Physical and/or Mental Disability
- Military Status
- Unfavorable Military Discharge
- Familial Status
- Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity
- Order of Protection Status (for victims of domestic violence)

### Fact #4:

Houses, apartments, co-ops, condominiums, worker housing, migrant farm worker housing, mobile home parks, vacant land, offices, stores and other types of residential and commercial property are covered under the law.

### Fact #5:

Sales or rental agents, brokers, managers, maintenance personnel, property managers, owners or any other agents or employees of the owner are legally responsible for compliance with Federal/State fair housing laws.

### Fact #6:

It is very important to be aware of the type of actions that can be considered discriminatory under the law when based on a protected class. Some examples include:

- Refusing to engage in a real estate transaction
- Altering the terms or conditions of a real estate transaction
- Refusing to receive or transmit a bona fide offer (such as a bid or security deposit)
- Blockbusting
- Racial Steering
- Misrepresenting or lying about the availability of a property or unit
- Discriminating against families with children under the age of 18
- Charging extra fees for the presence of service or support animals
- Discriminating in advertisements announcing the availability of a unit or home
- Refusing to allow someone to make a reasonable modification based on disability
- Failing to provide a reasonable accommodation based on a disability
- Taking negative actions against someone (retaliation) because they reported a fair housing violation
- Sexually harassing a tenant or real estate client

**Fact #7:**

Under the law, sales or rental agents, and other property personnel are protected from coercion or retaliation for refusing to follow instructions to unlawfully discriminate against a prospective homebuyer or tenant. Incidents of discrimination should be reported in order to avoid any court actions arising from such activity.

**Fact #8:**

Anyone may inquire about filing a charge of discrimination by writing, calling, or visiting the Illinois Department of Human Rights within 1 year of the act of discrimination. A *Complainant Information Sheet* can also be found on [www.illinois.gov/dhr](http://www.illinois.gov/dhr). This form should be completed as soon as possible. There is no fee and no attorney is required.

**Fact #9:**

The Illinois Human Rights Act requires IDHR to conclude all proceedings and make a finding within 100 days of filing a charge, unless it is impracticable to do so. IDHR makes every attempt to complete a timely investigation; if the investigation takes longer than 100 days the parties are notified as to the reason additional time is needed.

**Fact #10:**

Sales and rental agents who comply with the law and welcome all qualified tenants and home seekers can help produce better communities, and are less likely to become respondents in a housing discrimination charge. Some recommendations for housing providers include:

- Get training and stay up to date with do's and don'ts under the law.
- Treat all people the same, without differences in treatment based on their protected class.
- Establish an effective screening process that complies with fair housing law.
- Provide adequate information regarding the necessary qualifications to acquire a property or unit.
- Remind staff that all policies and practices are to be followed and applied evenly across the board.
- Provide accurate information about the property or unit, focusing on describing property amenities, using neutral language, and if using photos ensuring that persons depicted are diverse groups of people.
- Be aware of any exemptions to the law such as senior housing and special provisions for persons with disabilities.
- If a charge is filed against you or your company, handle it with professionalism. IDHR will contact you for your side of the story and will work to resolve the matter between the parties if possible.

For more information on how to file a charge of discrimination in housing, please contact our Fair Housing Intake Investigator at 312-814-6229.

For general questions or to receive training or materials, please contact our Fair Housing Outreach and Education Coordinator at 312-814-6278. You may also reach us via email at: [IDHR.FairHousing@illinois.gov](mailto:IDHR.FairHousing@illinois.gov).

IDHR is accessible to persons with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Illinois Human Rights Act. IDHR provides language assistance to individuals with limited or no English proficiency seeking to file a charge.

Illinois Department of Human Rights  
Chicago: 100 West Randolph St., Suite 10-100, Chicago, IL 60601, Phone: (312) 814-6200  
Springfield: 222 South College Street, Room 101, Springfield, IL 62704, (217) 785-5100  
Marion: 2309 West Main Street, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 993-7463  
TTY (866) 740-3953, Toll Free (800) 662-3942, Housing Line (312) 814-6229  
Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm  
Intake Interviewing: Monday through Thursday  
[www.illinois.gov/dhr](http://www.illinois.gov/dhr)