

How do you recognize housing discrimination?

If you are a member of a protected class, it is illegal as a general rule for someone to:

- Refuse to rent to you or sell you housing
- Tell you housing is unavailable when in fact it is available
- Show you apartments or homes only in certain neighborhoods
- Set different terms, conditions, or privileges for sale or rental of a dwelling
- Advertise housing to preferred groups of people only
- Refuse to provide you with information regarding mortgage loans, deny you a mortgage loan, or impose different terms or conditions on a mortgage loan
- Deny you property insurance
- Conduct property appraisals in a discriminatory manner
- Refuse to make reasonable accommodations for persons with a disability if the accommodation may be necessary to afford such a person a reasonable and equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling
- Harass, coerce, intimidate, or interfere with anyone exercising or assisting someone else with his/her fair housing rights
- This list covers most but not all of the discriminatory housing activities which are unlawful.

Examples of behavior that MAY be housing discrimination include:

- You call and get an appointment to look at a house, but when you get there, you are told that the house was just sold.
- You are told that the apartment has been rented, but it is listed in the paper again.
- You are told a higher selling price than what was advertised, or than what you heard others being told.
- You are told that they cannot rent to families with children because the house has lead paint.
- You are given terms of rental or sale which are different than those given to other persons.
- You are directed to or away from certain neighborhoods based on race, national origin, religion, or disability.

What are the benefits of filing a housing discrimination complaint?

If you challenge discriminatory housing practices and your claim is informally settled, or you receive a favorable decision by a court or administrative enforcement agency, you could receive:

- the housing you wanted
- compensation for costs such as temporary housing or moving expenses
- compensation for any emotional damages suffered as a result of the discrimination
- an order prohibiting future discrimination or requiring the owner/agent to rent to other qualified homeseekers who are members of a protected class
- your lawyer's fees paid (some attorneys will take cases with the understanding that they will only be paid if you win the case)
- the satisfaction of knowing that you challenged discrimination and that other people may not go through the pain and frustration you experienced.

Do you believe you were a victim of housing discrimination?

If you believe your rights were violated, be sure to write down the details (example: include the who, what, when, where, why and how) and then take action. Contact the Fair Housing Center of Boston for immediate action or to a service agency. At any point in the process, and particularly if an applicable filing deadline is approaching, you may choose to file a housing discrimination complaint directly in court or with either of these two government agencies which have formal enforcement powers:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) MCAD handles all discrimination complaints that fall under state law as well as violations of the federal Fair Housing Act. Complaints of housing discrimination must be filed with MCAD within 300 days of the most recent violation. For more information contact:

MCAD One Ashburton Place Sixth Floor, Room 601 Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617-994-6000 TTY: 617-994-6196 Website:

www.mass.gov/mcad/

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HUD is the federal agency, which receives and investigates housing discrimination complaints that violate federal law. Complaints must be filed with HUD within one year of the most recent violation. For more information contact:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Federal Building 10 Causeway Street, Room 321 Boston, MA 02222-1092 Tel: 617-565-5308 or 800-827-5005 Fax 617-565-7313 TTY 617-565-5453 Email: Complaints_office_01@hud.gov Website: www.hud.gov

What is the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston?

The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston is a private advocacy organization for victims of housing discrimination. It can assist you with filing a complaint in court or with MCAD or HUD, and may act as an advocate on your behalf. The address and contact information for the Fair Housing Center is:

Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston 59 Temple Place #1105 Boston, MA 02111 Phone: 617-399-0491 TTY users, please call the MA Relay Service at 1-800-439-2370 <http://www.bostonfairhousing.org>