

DISABILITY

If you are a person with a disability, whether visible or invisible (mental, physical, or emotional), a potential or current housing provider

may not ask about the nature or severity of your disabilities, nor may anyone in the housing transaction ask about the disabilities of your family members, visitors, acquaintances, or friends.

If a tenant's disabilities require an exception to a policy/rule or a change to a structural element in order to use and enjoy the dwelling, the tenant may

make a **reasonable accommodation request** (rule/policy) or a **reasonable modification request** (structural) of the housing provider.

For example, in a complex with first-come-first-serve parking, a person with mobility disabilities may ask for a reserved parking space. Generally with accommodations, there is little to no cost involved. However, with modifications (installing a grab bar, ramp, etc.) the tenant will usually pay for the cost of the modification (unless in HUD-subsidized housing).

AGE

In Michigan, anyone 18 years or older may sign a contract such as a lease. Legally emancipated minors are also permitted to sign a lease. Although it is not illegal in most municipalities to deny housing to an individual because they are a student, be aware that "student status" discrimination is often a cover-up for illegal age discrimination*. For example, landlords who state a "no undergraduates" policy may in fact make exceptions for older, non-traditional students.

* Student status is protected in the Cities of Ann Arbor, East Lansing, Lansing, and Ypsilanti.



MARITAL STATUS

Housing providers in Michigan are prohibited from denying rentals or making different terms or conditions for tenants because a person is single, partnered, married, widowed, separated, or divorced. If you hear something like "Sorry, we would like to rent to you, but we'd like a nice, professional, married couple in our home," call the FHC.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION & GENDER IDENTITY

Federal laws do not explicitly prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. However, it is still possible that members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) community may be protected under the Act. In some instances, the tenant may be able to bring a claim that they were discriminated against based upon sex. Any LGBTQ tenant living in HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing is also protected by the Equal Access Rule.



The Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan serves Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw Counties.

If you think your rights have been violated, please contact us at 877-979-3247 or info@fhcmichigan.org. We can advise you of your options and advocate for you. Our services are free.

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Fair Housing Rights



**FAIR HOUSING CENTER
OF SOUTHEAST & MID MICHIGAN**

(877) 979-3247
www.fhcmichigan.org
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Fair Housing: It's Your Right!

FEDERAL

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- National Origin
- Familial Status (minors in the household)
- Sex (including sexual harassment)
- Disability

MICHIGAN

- Age
- Marital Status



As a tenant, the federal Fair Housing Act (FHA) provides you protection, equal opportunity, and the right to discrimination-free housing on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, sex, and disability. In Michigan, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) gives you additional housing protections for age and marital status, and the Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act (PDCRA) enhances disability-based protections.

These laws cover all housing transactions, including but not limited to: your housing search, application and screening, the rental agreement, obtaining renter's insurance, the terms and conditions of your tenancy, lease renewal, termination of tenancy, and the vacating process. If you pass the landlord's screening criteria*, you should be free to choose the housing that best suits you and/or your family.



*Per HUD Rule, blanket denials based on criminal background are illegal; applications should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

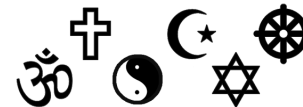
RACE AND COLOR



Illustration by iStockphoto.com/Robert Hill
A Project of the American Anthropological Association

Being denied housing because of your race or color, restricted to certain areas of an apartment complex, or steered to neighborhoods for "people more like you" is housing discrimination. If you are told over the phone that an apartment is available, but when you show up in person to see the unit it is suddenly no longer available, you may have an allegation of housing discrimination. Statements like, "I just rented the last unit," "I lost your application," or "Your credit isn't perfect," may be signs of discrimination. Once you are in housing, failure to make repairs, unequal use of the property/amenities, evictions, or harassment could be motivated by your race or color.

RELIGION AND NATIONAL ORIGIN



It is illegal for a landlord to ask you to identify your religion. You cannot be forced to choose an apartment near other people who are from the same country, speak the same language as you, or are of the same religion. A landlord cannot ask you to remove your head scarf, hijab, burka, keffiyeh, kippah, other religious clothing, or other religious symbols; or evict, threaten, or harass you because of your religion, your immigration status, or your refugee status. If you see anything in writing or hear statements that could be perceived as the housing provider preferring, encouraging, or discouraging "types" of people from applying, contact the FHC.

FAMILIAL STATUS (minors in the household)

The Fair Housing Act makes it illegal for housing providers to discriminate against prospective or current renters who have children, are expecting a child, or are adopting or fostering children as members of their household.

Contact us if you hear statements like: "No kids toys in the hallway," "We aren't set up for children," "Brother and sister can't share a bedroom," "The unit isn't safe for children," "We keep kids on the first floor," "We only allow one person per/bedroom plus one," or "We cater to students, you wouldn't be happy here."



Finally, housing that is specifically labeled for "Seniors Only" (55+, 62+) must meet very specific guidelines to qualify as exempt from this law. A private landlord who advertises for "adults only" or "active senior community" without meeting all of the guidelines violates the Fair Housing Act.

SEX

Under the Fair Housing Act, a potential or current housing provider is prohibited from treating a renter differently because of their sex. It is also illegal to sexually harass, make sexual advances toward, or ask for sexual favors from tenants in exchange for housing, amenities (appliance upgrades, a parking space, etc.), or tenant services (such as getting repairs made, the utilities maintained, or having a lease renewed).