

FAIR HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE IN RECOVERY

Both the federal and Massachusetts fair housing laws prohibit discrimination in housing because of a disability. The definition of disability includes people who are in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction. The law does not protect current illegal users of a controlled substance. If a person is denied housing because of fears or stereotypes about people in recovery, the housing provider is engaging in unlawful behavior and is violating the fair housing laws.

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE DISCRIMINATION:

- The housing provider refuses to sell, rent or show available housing after learning that you are a member of a protected class.
- Statements are made that the dwelling would not be suitable for you, or that the neighbors do not want you there.
- The availability changes between a phone contact and an in-person visit.

WHEN LOOKING FOR HOUSING, SAVE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- Date and time of all contacts
- Name of the person and/or company with whom you spoke
- Address of the property, including unit number
- Information about all units offered to you
- Details about any statements made to you related to your protected status (i.e., questions about the ages of your children or source of income)

REMEMBER: Save all emails and text message sent to or received from a housing provider!

Fair Housing is Your Right!

For more information or to file a housing discrimination complaint contact:



257 Union Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

<http://www.southcoastfairhousing.org>

(774) 473-8333

To contact us via TTY,
call MassRelay using your TTY
at 711 or 800-439-2370
(or 866-930-9252 for Spanish)
and provide our phone number.

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SouthCoast Fair Housing, Inc. is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication.

FAIR HOUSING FOR INDIVIDUALS IN RECOVERY FROM DRUG OR ALCOHOL ADDICTION



(774) 473-8333



HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IS ILLEGAL

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing-related transactions because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or familial status. The Massachusetts Fair Housing statute also prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, marital status, receipt of public assistance or housing subsidy, genetic identity, and gender identity.

Fair housing laws apply to a wide variety of housing transactions, including rentals, sales, home mortgages, appraisals and homeowners insurance. Landlords, real estate agents, lenders, insurance companies, and condominium, cooperative and homeowner's associations must not discriminate because of one's membership in a protected class.



WHAT THE LAW PROHIBITS

The law prohibits actions such as denying housing, limiting access to housing, discouraging homeseekers, making or publishing discriminatory statements, or creating different rules, fees or standards because of one's membership in a protected class.

Landlords, owners, and other housing providers cannot discriminate against someone searching for housing because they believe the person is in recovery or because, in fact, the person is in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction.

EXAMPLES OF UNLAWFUL ACTIVITY

Landlords and other housing providers cannot:

- ▶ refuse to rent or sell to a person who was once addicted to a controlled substance but is not a current user;
- ▶ ask for more information than would be asked of any other potential tenant;
- ▶ ask about medical treatment or whether the person is able to live independently;
- ▶ impose different terms and conditions because an individual or group is in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction.

ARE ALL HOUSING PROVIDERS COVERED BY THESE LAWS?

No. In Massachusetts, landlords renting owner-occupied two-family houses are exempt from this law. However, there may be other laws that apply to a particular landlord.

GROUP HOMES OR SOBER HOUSES

Group homes or sober houses for people in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction are protected from discrimination by the state and federal fair housing laws.

Cities, towns, zoning boards, boards of health, or others involved in city or town government cannot:

- ▶ refuse to grant an occupancy permit to a group home or sober house *solely* because it will house people in recovery;
- ▶ subject the group home or sober house to health or fire inspections more frequently than housing for individuals or families;
- ▶ require the group home or sober house to comply with "single room occupancy" zoning, fire, or occupancy standards.

City and town governments **must** treat group homes or sober houses for individuals recovering from addiction the same way they would treat single family residences.

SouthCoast Fair Housing, Inc. (SCFH) is a private, non-profit organization established in 2012 to eradicate housing discrimination throughout southeastern Massachusetts. Through education, investigation, and enforcement activities, SCFH works to ensure that all individuals have equal housing opportunities.

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