

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE DISCRIMINATION:

- The housing provider refuses to show you available housing after learning that you will be using a housing voucher.
- 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 messages 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

(774) 473-8333

<http://www.southcoastfairhousing.org>

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 RECIPIENTS OF
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OR
HOUSING VOUCHERS**



(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.

Housing discrimination affects everyone by limiting housing choice and perpetuating segregation.

The only way to stop discrimination is to report it.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What actions does the law prohibit?

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.

Does fair housing law prohibit discrimination against individuals who receive public assistance or use a housing voucher?

Yes. The Massachusetts fair housing law prohibits discrimination in housing because an individual receives public assistance or uses a housing voucher.

Also, federal and state fair housing laws prohibit housing providers from treating users of housing vouchers differently if the difference in treatment impacts members of one protected class more. For example, if a larger proportion of users of housing vouchers in a region are people of color, then a policy of refusing to rent to individuals using vouchers may result in a significantly disproportionate adverse impact on people of color. This may violate prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

Does this mean that a landlord must rent to or cannot evict any household that receives public assistance?

No. A housing provider has the right to refuse rental

applications or evict tenants based on objective criteria, such as bad tenant history or ability to afford the rent (when taking into account all of an applicant's income or benefits). A housing provider should establish qualification standards and apply them equally to each household.

Is there any type of housing that is exempt from fair housing laws?

In some circumstances, the federal Fair Housing Act exempts owner-occupied buildings with no more than four units and the Massachusetts fair housing law exempts owner-occupied buildings with no more than two units. However, fair housing laws do not provide any exemption when discriminatory statements are made or published, and the Massachusetts fair housing law does not provide any exemption from the prohibition against discrimination on the basis of receipt of public assistance or the use of a housing voucher.

What are the benefits of a housing voucher?

A voucher represents a direct payment from the voucher administrator to the landlord for all or a portion of the tenant's rent. Voucher holders may choose to live in any area, promoting diversity and allowing access to a wider range of schools, jobs and services.

Who is helped by federal rental assistance?

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, approximately one-third of individuals receiving federal rental assistance are adults with children, about one-third are elderly, and the remaining third consists mostly of individuals with disabilities (with and without children).

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

For more information, to schedule a fair housing training, or to file a housing discrimination complaint, call

(774) 473-8333