

FAIR HOUSING: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

PROTECTED CLASSES

Under federal law, it is illegal to discriminate based on:

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Disability
- Familial Status (including pregnant women and anyone securing legal custody of a child under 18)

In Palm Beach County, additional protected classes are:

- Age
- Marital Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity & Expression

WHAT IS PROHIBITED?

No one may take any of the following actions based on any of the protected classes:

- Refuse to rent, sell or negotiate for housing
- Deny housing or otherwise make housing unavailable
- Falsely claim that housing is not available for inspection, sale or rental
- Set different terms, conditions or privileges for the sale or rental of housing, or for services or facilities related to housing
- Provide different housing services or facilities
- Advertise or make any statement indicating a limitation or preference based on any of the protected classes.
- Threaten, coerce, intimidate or interfere with anyone exercising a fair housing right or assisting others who exercise that right.
- Persuade an owner to sell or rent housing based on the entry of members of a protected class into a neighborhood ("blockbusting").
- Deny access to or membership in a facility or service (such as multiple listing service) related to the sale or rental of housing.

ARE THERE EXCEPTIONS?

Yes. The following are excluded from the Fair Housing Act:

- An owner-occupied dwelling of no more than 4 units as long as the owner does not use an agent.
- Housing for older persons (55+) may prohibit children.
- Religious organizations and private clubs may limit non-commercial lodging to members, unless the religion's membership is restricted by race, color or national origin.
- Sales by an owner of 3 or fewer single-family homes, as long as the owner does not use a broker or agent; does not discriminatorily advertise; has not sold a home in the previous 24 months; and is not in the business of selling or leasing dwellings.

IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY

If you have a mental or physical impairment that affects one or more major life activities, then a landlord or community association may NOT:

- Refuse to let you make reasonable modifications to the dwelling or common areas, at your expense, if necessary for you to use and enjoy the housing.
- Refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, practices, policies or services, if necessary, for you to use and enjoy the housing.

In buildings that were ready for first occupancy after March 13, 1991, and have an elevator and four or more units:

- Public and common areas must be accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Doors and hallways must be wide enough for wheelchairs.
- All units must have an accessible route into and through the unit; accessible light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls; reinforced bathroom walls to allow later installation of grab bars; and kitchens and bathrooms that can be used by people in wheelchairs.
- If a building with four or more units has no elevator and was ready for first occupancy after March 13, 1991, these standards apply to ground floor units only.

These building requirements do not replace any more stringent standards in State or local law.

WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP

Report violations of the Fair Housing Act by contacting the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County's Fair Housing Unit at (561) 655-8944 or the Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Housing Complaint Hotline at 1-800-669-9777.

