

FACT SHEET: YOUR FAIR HOUSING RIGHTS



Fair Housing Center
of West Michigan

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What is fair housing?

Fair housing is the right to choose housing free from unlawful discrimination. Federal, state and local fair housing laws protect people from discrimination in housing transactions such as rentals, sales, lending, appraisals, and insurance. Specifically, the federal Fair Housing Act and Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act protect against housing discrimination based on the following protected classes:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex, including Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation
- National origin
- Familial status
- Disability
- Marital status
- Age

Some communities in west Michigan also protect people from discrimination in housing based on their source of income or other protected classes. Visit www.fhcwm.org/laws to learn more.

Housing discrimination sometimes happens blatantly, but is more often difficult to recognize or fully identify. If you feel like you had a housing experience where you were possibly treated differently than someone else because of a protected class, it may be housing discrimination. If you are a homeseeker looking for information on your fair housing rights, the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan (FHCWM) can help!

What We Do

Our advocacy and enforcement programs serve to assist individuals in reporting housing discrimination; investigate, mediate and resolve allegations of housing discrimination; remove systemic barriers to housing choice; and ensure the protection of fair housing choice. We also assist with reasonable accommodation (accessible assigned parking) and modification (ramps, grab bars) requests for persons with disabilities.

About the Fair Housing Center

The FHCWM is a private, non-profit fair housing organization that provides comprehensive fair housing services, including education, outreach, research, advocacy and enforcement. The FHCWM is the front door to housing choice, ensuring that everyone in our community has equal opportunity to choose housing that's right for them. Through education, research and advocacy, we prevent housing discrimination, remove barriers that allow it to persist, and restore housing choice when discrimination happens.

Our Service Area

We currently serve 12 counties in western Michigan: Allegan, Grand Traverse, Ionia, Isabella, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola and Ottawa.

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE DISCRIMINATION, IF BASED ON A PROTECTED CLASS

- Refusing to rent or sell an apartment or a home to you or your family
- The housing is advertised for preferred groups of people only (i.e. "perfect for empty nesters")
- Being restricted to a certain neighborhood or specific floor of an apartment complex
- A refusal to work with you because you request a sign language interpreter or need some other reasonable accommodation, such as meeting in a wheelchair-accessible location
- Being told the housing is not available, even though it is listed or has a sign
- Being told you won't be safe, neighbors won't want you there, or the neighborhood is not 'right' for you
- Terms, conditions, or availability change between phone contact and an in-person visit
- A refusal to provide information about the housing or make a loan to a qualified applicant