



Renting a Home

Your Right to Fair Housing

Renting a Home: Your Right to Fair Housing

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The Fair Housing Act is a federal law that makes it illegal to discriminate in the rental of a dwelling based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status and handicap or disability. Family status includes families with children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal guardians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under the age of 18.

The law prohibits a landlord from refusing reasonable modifications to your rental unit or common use areas at your expense, if necessary for a disabled person in the household. The landlord may permit some changes if you agree to restore the property to its original condition when you move. Also, a landlord cannot refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing.

The Fair Housing Act covers most housing. In some circumstances, the act exempts owner-occupied buildings with no more than four units, single-family housing rented without the use of a broker, and housing operated by organizations and private clubs that limit occupancy to members.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers and enforces the law. The Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) investigates complaints filed with HUD. You can file a complaint online (HUD Web site), by calling HUD toll-free at

1-800-669-9777, or by printing and mailing an online form to HUD at this address:

Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Room 5204
451 Seventh St. SW
Washington, DC 20410-2000

Another option is to send a letter to a HUD regional office. In the letter, include your name and address, the name and address of the person your complaint is about, the address of the house or apartment you were trying to rent, the date when the incident occurred, and a short description of what happened. Send your letter to this address:

Fort Worth Regional Office of FHEO
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development
801 Cherry Street, 27th Floor
P.O. Box 2905
Fort Worth, Texas 76113-2905

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This resource is one in a series on Renting a Home which include:

Deciding to Rent

Advantages and Disadvantages of Renting
Who Will Live There? More About Roommates
What Can You Afford?
What Do You Want?

Finding a Home to Rent

Finding a Rental Unit
Comparing Rental Units
Renting a House
Renting With an Option to Buy

The Rental Process

The Rental Application
Your Right to Fair Housing
Rental Contracts

Legal Aspects of Renting in New Mexico

Regulation of Rental Contracts
New Mexico Rental Law
Military Personnel

Moving Into Your Rented Home

Renters Insurance
Verifying the Condition of the Rental Unit

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