



## Housing Discrimination

### What kinds of discrimination are illegal?

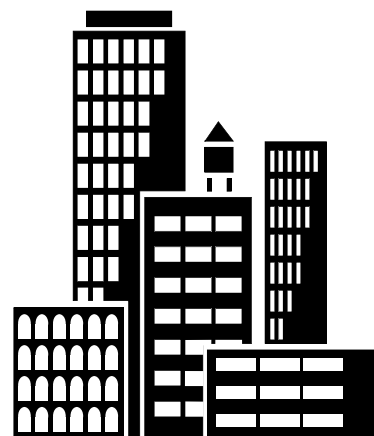
In Minnesota, no one connected to your housing should treat you differently because of:

- Race
- Sex
- Color
- Religion
- Family Status (having kids or being pregnant)
- Public Assistance (MFIP, GA, SSI, etc.)
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender identity
- Marital Status (being single or divorced)
- Disability
- National Origin
- Age (St. Paul only)
- Creed (beliefs)

### What are signs of possible discrimination?

#### Application Denials

- When you call on the phone, the apartment is available. But when the landlord sees the color of your skin, it is “already rented.”
- The landlord says “no MFIP” or “no emergency assistance.”
- You get turned down because you have a disability, even though your disability would not keep you from following the lease. See our fact sheet [Reasonable Accommodations: Do You Need Your Landlord to Make a Change Because of Your Disability?](#)
- The landlord says “no kids,” but it is not a seniors-only building.
- The apartment manager treats the people who apply differently. For example, they tell people who get MFIP they need an income of 3 times the rent, but they don’t tell that to people who don’t get public benefits.
- Your application is never processed because of your religion.



## Different Treatment

- The caretaker makes repairs for white tenants before Latino tenants.
- The manager punishes lease violations more strictly when they are made by people of color.
- The landlord won't make a simple change in the rules to let a person with a disability live there successfully. For example, allowing a companion animal. See our fact sheet [Can I Keep a Pet?](#)
- A townhome association refuses to let you install a ramp for your wheelchair. See our fact sheet [Reasonable Accommodations](#).
- There are special rules for children or the manager only rents first floor apartments to families with children.



## Harassment

- The caretaker pressures you to date him, and lets himself into your apartment. See our fact sheet [Sexual Harassment in Housing](#).
- The security guard treats your visitors differently because they are American Indian.
- The neighbors try to force you out of the neighborhood with racial insults or threats.

## What can I do about it?

If you are turned down for an apartment and you suspect discrimination, call the numbers below for help right away.

You can also have someone you know call the landlord and apply, and see how the landlord treats that person. For example: if you suspect discrimination based on race, see if a person of another race gets treated better. Keep notes on what happened each time and who you and your friend each talked to.

If you are being treated badly or harassed where you live, write a letter to the owner. Keep a copy of it and of any evidence of the discrimination. Try to have witnesses who have seen or heard it and keep their contact information. Write down notes every time something happens. If you are in danger, call for help.

## Lawsuits and Agency Complaints

You can start a lawsuit to stop the discrimination and sometimes get money damages. If you need quick action to get an apartment you were denied, to stop harassment, or to avoid an eviction, a lawsuit may be your best bet. If you have a low income, call your legal aid office.



**If you have a low income, call:**

**The Housing Discrimination Law Project (612) 334-5970**

**Or**

**Housing Equality Law Project (651) 222-4731**

You can also look for help from government agencies that enforce housing discrimination laws. They investigate at no charge to you. If they find discrimination, they will see if an agreement can be reached. If no agreement is reached, the agency may file a case against the person who discriminated against you. These agencies are:

### **MN Department of Human Rights**

Freeman Building  
625 Robert St North  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Phone: (651) 539-1100 or 1(800) 657-3704  
TTY: (651) 296-1283

### **MN Department of Human Rights – St Cloud**

City Hall  
400 Second St South  
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Phone: (320) 650-3133

[www.mn.gov/mdhr/](http://www.mn.gov/mdhr/)

### **Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507  
Phone: (800) 765-9372

[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

**Whatever you do, act fast. In most cases, you need to file a complaint or lawsuit within 1 or sometimes 2 years.**

***Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.***

*Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.*

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