



Housing Discrimination

What is housing discrimination?

Housing discrimination is when a landlord gives you different rules, services, or housing opportunities because you are in a “protected characteristic or class.” Protected characteristics and classes are listed below. A “landlord” can be the owner of the building, the property managers, the maintenance workers, or anyone officially working for the landlord. It can also be discrimination if your landlord knows you are getting harassed by neighbors and does not do anything to stop it, even when you ask.

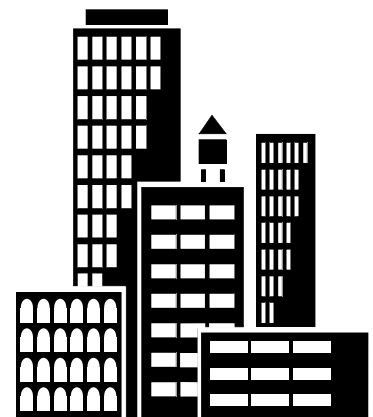
What kinds of discrimination are illegal?

In Minnesota, no one connected to your housing should treat you differently because of these protected characteristics or class:

- Race (*including natural hairstyles*)
- Sex
- Color
- Religion
- Family Status (*having kids or being pregnant*)
- Public Assistance (*MFIP, GA, SSI, etc.*)
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender identity
- Marital Status (*single, married, divorced, separated, or widowed*)
- Disability
- National Origin
- Creed (*beliefs*)

Minneapolis has some others: (*Minneapolis only*)

- Height
- Weight
- Housing status (if you are or have been unhoused)
- Justice-impacted status (if you have a criminal record or history, with some exceptions)
- Subsidized housing participation (if you get a subsidy like Section 8 to help pay for your housing)



What are some things that could be 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.” In Minneapolis, a landlord can’t deny your application just because you get Section 8 or a subsidy.
- 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 enforces rules differently or charges higher rent to 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 at 1(877)-696-6529. Or look for help from other programs at www.lawhelpmn.org/providers-and-clinics.

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:

Minneapolis Civil Rights Department

City Hall - 350 S. Fifth St., Room 239
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Phone: 612-673-3000

Or call 311

Email: civilrights@minneapolismn.gov

Website: Civil Rights - City of Minneapolis

MN Department of Human Rights

Griggs Midway Building
540 Fairview Ave North, Suite 201
St. Paul, Minnesota 55104

Phone: (651) 539-1100

MN Relay: 711 or 1-(800) 627-3529

Discrimination helpline: 1-(833) 454-0148

Email at: info.mdhr@state.mn.us website at: www.mn.gov/mdhr/



Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Minneapolis Field Office
212 Third Ave South, Suite 150
Minneapolis MN 55401

Phone: (612) 370-3000

TTY: 7-1-1 (Not available in all areas)

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Ralph Metcalfe Federal Building
77 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 2600
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

Phone: (800) 669-9777

TTY: (312) 353-7143

For both offices: www.hud.gov. You can only file a complaint with HUD through their website.

Whatever you do, act fast. In most cases, you need to file a complaint within 1 year or file a 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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