

## **West Penn Rural Fair Housing Initiative**

Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services and its partner Legal Services Organizations are available to provide information concerning a person's rights under the Federal Fair Housing Act. If you believe you are the victim of discrimination in housing, contact us at 877-725-4472 for assistance. When necessary, our staff can assist you in filing a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or other appropriate administrative or judicial bodies.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against in a housing situation, please contact us at the phone number listed. You will have the opportunity to request a Fair Housing Claim Kit, receive general information, or speak with an attorney. Additionally, a housing counselor will discuss the situation with you and help you to decide what to do next. Your response to us will be kept confidential.

***Southwestern Pennsylvania  
Legal Services, Inc.***

***West Penn Rural Fair Housing  
Initiative***

***10 West Cherry Avenue  
Washington, PA 15301  
877-725-4472***



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**YOUR RIGHTS TO FAIR  
HOUSING**

***Housing  
Discrimination***

***Southwestern Pennsylvania  
Legal Services, Inc.***

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Rural Fair Housing Initiative***

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## Housing Discrimination

The Federal Fair Housing Act prohibits the denial of housing to a person based upon the person's membership in one or more of the classes protected under the Act. The protected classes are:

- ◆ Race
- ◆ Color
- ◆ Religion
- ◆ National Origin
- ◆ Sex
- ◆ Familial Status
- ◆ Disability

### What is Prohibited?

It is illegal to discriminate against a person in the provision of housing because of a person's membership in a protected class in the following situations:

- ◆ The sale or rental of most housing;
- ◆ The terms, conditions, privileges of sale or rental, or provision of services or facilities in connection with the sale or rental of most housing;
- ◆ The advertising of a sale or rental of housing;
- ◆ The representation of the availability of housing for rental or sale;
- ◆ The provision of reasonable modification to a dwelling for persons with a disability, at their expense, when necessary for the full use and enjoyment of the dwelling;

- ◆ The provision of reasonable accommodation to the rules, policies, practices or services when necessary to provide persons with a disability the equal opportunity to use and enjoy the dwelling;
- ◆ The financing or refinancing of housing; and
- ◆ The provision of real estate brokerage services.
- ◆ Additionally, it is illegal to coerce, intimidate, threaten or interfere with a person in the exercise or enjoyment of rights provided or protected by the Fair Housing Act or because a person aided others to enjoy rights provided or protected by the Act.

### Examples of Discrimination

**False Denial of Availability:** Advising that there are no available units, when, in fact, there are, if the denial is based on protected class.

"Sorry, we just rented the last unit."

**Refusal to Deal:** Refusing to rent, sell, or even negotiate, with a person because of class membership.

"We don't sell to Jews." or "We don't rent to families with children."

**Discriminatory Terms and Conditions and Provision of Services or Facilities:** Giving less favorable terms in sales or rental agreements because of class membership.

"The rent is \$200 higher for persons with a disability or persons with friends with a disability."

**Discriminatory Advertising:** Indicating any preference, limitation or discrimination because of class membership.

"No African Americans need apply."

**Financial Discrimination:** Denying any type of home loan for discriminatory reasons by lenders, including banks, savings and loan associations, insurance companies, and others, or giving less favorable loan terms because of class membership.

"Minorities must not be charged higher interest on loans than similar white homeowners."

**Blockbusting:** Persuading a homeowner to sell by stating or implying that minority homeowners moving into the area will cause the property values to decline.

"Why don't you let me sell your house? After all, with minority neighbors moving in, if you don't sell soon, your property value will go down."

**Refusal to permit a Reasonable Modification to the Unit at the Expense of the Person with a disability, in order that the person may have full enjoyment of the unit.**

"You may not install grab bars in the bathroom."

**Denial of a Reasonable Accommodation to the Rules and Regulations of Rental in Order that the person with a disability may have equal opportunity to use and fully enjoy their unit.**

"It is against the rules to have another person live with you, even though there is enough room and the person is necessary to help you with your health needs."

