

The Federal Fair Housing Act

prohibits discrimination in housing based on these protected classes:

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Disability
- Familial status (households with children under 18)

The Illinois Human Rights Act

provides additional protections:

- Ancestry
- Marital status
- Age (+40)
- Military status
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Order of Protection status
- Unfavorable military discharge
- Pregnancy
- Arrest Record
- Source of Income

Many seniors face housing discrimination on a continual basis, but because they are unfamiliar with the law they might not know what they experienced is illegal.

Under the Fair Housing Act, nursing homes and supportive living facilities are subject to federal and/or local fair housing law. It is especially important that both nursing homes and supportive living facilities do not discriminate against potential clients during the application process or residents living within the facility.

HOPE Fair Housing Center

Founded in 1968, HOPE Fair Housing Center is the oldest and largest fair housing center in Illinois. HOPE works to create greater housing opportunities for all, and accomplishes this through education, outreach, enforcement, training, and advocacy.

HOPE Fair Housing Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and **does not charge for its services**



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HOPE Fair Housing Center



Fair Housing for Older Adults

Federal and local laws include special protections from discrimination in housing for older adults. These laws also provide methods of increasing accessibility so that all people have equal opportunity to housing.

THE FAIR HOUSING ACT HAS SPECIAL PROTECTIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS

If you think you may be a victim of housing discrimination:

- **Contact** HOPE Fair Housing Center.
- **Document** meetings and phone calls with landlords, property managers, real estate agents, loan officers, and insurance agents.
- **Save** all receipts, copies of applications, business cards, and other documents.

When appropriate, HOPE can:

- Investigate potential discrimination
- Advocate on your behalf with a housing provider
- Assist in filling a Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) complaint
- Help conciliate your case with the offending party
- Refer your case to attorneys that are experts in fair housing litigation

Legitimate reasons for someone not to rent or sell a dwelling include insufficient income and/or poor credit history. Whatever policies are in place must be applied to ALL applicants and/or residents.

No Illegal Inquiries

A housing provider or landlord **cannot** ask if an individual is capable of independent living.

A housing provider or landlord **cannot** ask for diagnosis, treatment, medical records, or medications.

Minor changes can be crucial for allowing occupants to enjoy the full use of their homes. Some examples of common accommodations or modifications that HOPE can help with include:

- Accessible parking spaces
- Allowing service animals
- Oral reminders to pay rent
- Outdoor or indoor ramps
- Bathroom grab bars
- Railings on staircases
- Reduction in force needed to open doors
- Chair lift additions

Everyone is protected against discrimination based on the protected classes in regard to selling, renting, zoning, buying, financing, and insuring a home.

Reasonable Accommodations are changes in rules, policies, practices, or services that allow a person with additional proven needs to use and enjoy their housing. Such accommodations must be granted, unless the landlord or housing provider can show a legitimate business reason for denial. Some examples of accommodations include:

- A request to put off eviction and obtain mental health treatment for a mental disability that causes a tenant to engage in behavior which violates their lease.
- A request of delayed rent payments for a tenant that relies on SSDI income and receives their SSDI checks after the first of the month.

Reasonable Modifications require landlords or housing providers to allow reasonable modifications to the structure of the existing premises at the **tenant's** expense, unless the unit is HUD-subsidized.

- Modifications must remain reasonable. For example, building a ramp is reasonable, but installing an elevator is not.
- Modification requests cannot be denied on the basis of aesthetics.