

Fair Housing Clearinghouse for Will County

The State of Illinois prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, familial status, marital status, physical or mental handicap, military status, sexual orientation, or unfavorable discharge from military service. (775 ILCS 5) Illinois Human Rights Act

WHO IS PROTECTED?

It is unlawful to discriminate against a person based upon:

Race or Color

It is considered discrimination to state a preference of a race of an applicant. It is also discriminatory to describe the race of current occupants (for example: "African-American neighborhood," "lots of Hispanic families," etc.)

National Origin

It is considered discrimination to state a preference of a national origin of an applicant. It is also discriminatory to describe the national origin of current occupants (for example: "Polish neighborhood," "lots of Mexican families," etc.)

Religion

It is considered discrimination to state a preference of a religion of an applicant. It is also discriminatory to describe the religion of current occupants (for example: "Catholic neighborhood," "Jewish family neighborhood," etc.)

Sex

It is considered discrimination to state a preference of a sex of an applicant.

Disability

Federal law defines "handicap" as any "physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities, a record of having such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment." With certain exceptions, a landlord cannot legally ask whether you have a "handicap," or its nature or severity.

Familial Status

- Discriminate against families with children
- Discourage families with children from renting a unit
- Steer families with children to a particular area of an apartment complex
- Establish rules, regulations, or policies that discriminate against or have a disparate impact on families with children
- Discriminate against pregnant women

- Discriminate against anyone in process of securing legal custody of a child under age 18

Please note the prohibitions on advertising a preference above may not apply to shared housing situations.

THAT'S ILLEGAL!

It is unlawful to discriminate in the sale or rental of residential or commercial property. A few examples of such discrimination are:

- Altering the terms, conditions, or privileges of or within the transaction
- Refusing to receive or accept a legitimate offer
- Misrepresenting that property is not available for rental or sale
- Altering the application process with the purpose to make the unit more difficult to secure (example: A landlord only requests credit checks from minorities or parents with children.)
- Refuse to rent or sell housing based on membership to a protected class
- Discriminate in the privileges, services or facilities provided at the apartment building or complex (example: not allowing a person with a disability to use the swimming pool)
- Including different terms, conditions, or privileges for sale or rental of a dwelling
- Refusing to enter into a sales listing agreement; or refusing access to or membership in a service (example: Multiple Listing Service or MLS), related to the sale or rental of housing
- Steering minorities to certain neighborhoods and directing others away from those neighborhoods
- Making sexual advances or demands upon a tenant; offering different terms or conditions based upon an exchange of sexual favors
- Refuse to make a mortgage loan not based on ability to repay loan; or imposing different terms or conditions on a loan
- Refusing a home loan, insurance and/or offer unfavorable terms (for said loan or insurance) to persons living in a minority neighborhood (redlining)

HAVE YOU BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST?

Generally, the fair housing laws cover most kinds of housing transactions, including rentals. However, the law does not apply to certain landlords, who are considered “exempt.” One such exemption applies to buildings the owner lives in, if there are four apartments or less in the building. Also, when an organization or private club provides housing, it can lawfully limit occupancy to its members only. Furthermore, housing that is designated as housing strictly for older persons can refuse to rent to families with children.

Therefore, in most cases, it is illegal to make any statement when selling or renting a property, which indicates a limitation or preference, based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, familial status, marital status, physical or mental handicap, military status, and/or sexual orientation.

[Courtesy Illinois Legal Aid website](#)

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

South Suburban Housing Center (SSHC) is a regional fair housing organization serving the south Chicago metropolitan area, including Will County. South Suburban Housing Center (SSHC) is the action agency which promotes, educates, and fosters diversity by working to eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation in the housing market.

To file a fair housing complaint, contact SSHC and they will lead you through the process; help you determine the details of your complaint and provide the assistance to file that complaint.

For more information or to speak with a SSHC staff person call them directly 708-957-4674.

To access a Fair Housing Discrimination form ...

[English Version](#)

[Spanish Version](#)

FAQ -- FAIR HOUSING IN WILL COUNTY

Why do we have Fair housing Activities in Will County?

Fair Housing is not only the “right” thing to do, but Fair Housing is also a statutory regulation from the federal government. Will County receives approximately \$3 million annual in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME (HUD) funds for its municipalities and citizens. Fair Housing activities at the local municipal level are a part of HUD’s obligation and therefore our obligation, under Section 808 of the Federal Fair Housing Act.

What do CDBG and HOME funds exactly do in Will County?

Municipalities depend on CDBG and HOME funds to improve living conditions and/or solve problems they otherwise could not afford to correct.

The municipalities of Will County must “affirmatively further Fair Housing”. What’s that?

Fair Housing is a federal law in the United States. However, since Will County receives federal funding, Will County must go beyond simply acknowledging the law and assume an obligation to further Fair Housing. That means Will County must prove it is furthering Fair Housing by taking tangible actions.

1. Analyze and eliminate housing discrimination in the jurisdiction
2. Promote Fair Housing choice for all Will County citizens
3. Provide opportunities for housing for all Will County citizens

4. Promote housing that is structurally accessible to, and usable by, all persons, particularly persons with disabilities.
5. Foster compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of the Federal Fair Housing Act.

How does Will County help its citizens with Fair Housing?

The Will County Executive has directed the Community Development Division of the Will County Land Use Department to be the primary liaison to HUD to work with all Will County municipalities to comply with the regulatory requirements and further Fair Housing locally.

Will County has prepared this Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing to satisfy the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

LOCAL LINKS & CONTACT INFORMATION

[Illinois Human Rights Commission](#)

[Illinois Dept. Human Rights Part 2300 Housing Discrimination](#)

[Illinois Department of Human Rights \(IDHR\)](#)

[Illinois Legal Aid](#)

[Department of Housing and Urban Development - Illinois](#)