



What is fair housing?



The law

The federal Fair Housing Act is Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. It prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing, and in other housing related activities on the basis of a protected class:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- National origin
- Sex
- Familial Status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians and pregnant women)
- Disability

West Virginia Fair Housing Law covers two additional classes:

- Ancestry
- Blindness

Examples of housing discrimination:

- Refusing to rent or sell a house based on a protected class, ex. Not renting to families with kids
- Saying a house is unavailable when it is in fact available
- Setting different terms or conditions for a sale or rental or mortgage loan
- Refusing to make a mortgage loan or to provide information on loans
- Showing and/or offering properties only in certain neighborhoods
- Indicating any preference in advertising based on one of the protected classes
- Refusing to grant a reasonable accommodation, ex. a service animal for a person who is blind

Accessible housing for all

Multi-family housing constructed after March 13, 1991 is required to follow these guidelines:

1. Accessible entrance on an accessible route
2. Accessible public and common-use areas
3. Useable doors
4. Accessible route into and through the dwelling unit
5. Accessible light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats, and environmental controls
6. Reinforced walls in bathrooms
7. Usable kitchens and bathrooms

Reasonable Modifications

Multi-family housing built prior to these requirements must allow tenants to make reasonable modifications to units and common areas for accessibility.