



The month of April is a designated time to celebrate the advancements of equal access to housing regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, military status, ancestry, disability and familial status. This April marks the 54th Anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act and its promise of equal housing for all Americans.

The Fair Housing Act makes it illegal to discriminate in housing-related activities including apartment and home rentals, real estate sales, homeowner's insurance and mortgage lending. Showing a difference in treatment because there are children in the family, because of the color of a person's skin, or refusing to allow persons with disabilities to keep assistance animals is discriminatory.

Discrimination in housing and lending comes in all types of forms, some quite subtle. It doesn't always mean having a door slammed in your face or a prejudiced remark directed your way. Unsuspecting home seekers may be politely turned away from the housing of their choice, even though they are qualified. National studies still show that minorities, families with children, and persons with disabilities, still face an alarming amount of discrimination while renting, buying, or financing housing.

According to the National Fair Housing Alliance, 4 million instances of housing discrimination are estimated to take place each year across the nation. The actual numbers reported are smaller because housing discrimination often goes undetected and unreported. Many do not recognize housing discrimination because it is subtle and can be disguised by discriminatory pricing, terms, false information, and other factors that influence housing choice. It is estimated that less than one percent of housing discrimination complaints are actually reported.

While much has been accomplished since the passage of the law, more work remains in our struggle to achieve equality and racial justice. If you believe you may be a victim of housing discrimination or want more information about the fair housing law, contact the Fair Housing Department at (330) 451-7775.