KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: Discrimination in Housing

What is fair housing?
The right of all people to live where they choose, to have access to housing (seek, purchase, sell, lease or rent) and enjoy the full use of their homes without unlawful discrimination, interference, coercion, threats, or intimidation by owners, landlords, real estate agents, or any other persons

What is prohibited?
* Refusing to sell or rent, negotiate for sale or rental, or otherwise making unavailable or denying a dwelling because of a protected characteristic
* Imposing different terms, conditions, privileges, or services because of a person’s protected characteristic (Ex. denying a family with children use of common areas in an apartment building)
* Lying about the availability of a dwelling because of a person's protected characteristic
* Discriminatory statements and advertisements
* Retaliating against someone exercising their fair housing rights

Protected groups:

**Nationwide**
- Race
- Color
- National origin (includes ancestry)
- Religion
- Sex
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Disability (physical and mental)
- Familial status (families with children, including pregnant women)

**Illinois**
- *All groups to the left, plus:*
- Age (40 and over)
- Marital status
- Unfavorable military discharge
- Military Status
- Order of Protection status

**Cook County**
- *All groups to the left, plus:*
- Housing status
- Source of income (including use of vouchers)
- Parental status
- Criminal record (details below)

In **Cook County**, landlords may not deny a housing application due to an applicant's arrest record, juvenile conviction, or convictions from more than three years ago. For convictions from the last three years, landlords may only deny an applicant if the landlord concludes the conviction shows the applicant poses a risk to the personal safety or property of others. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please contact us.

What additional protections are there for persons with disabilities?
People with disabilities have the right to request reasonable accommodations and/or modifications. A reasonable accommodation is a change in a housing provider’s rule, policy, or practice that is necessary to allow a person with a disability the equal opportunity to use and enjoy their dwelling (ex. a reserved accessible parking space, emotional support animal). A reasonable modification is a change to the physical makeup of the building/unit (ex. adding support bars in a bathroom). A landlord must permit the modification, but is not required to pay for it in most cases (except in publicly subsidized buildings).

For further assistance, call Legal Aid Chicago at 312-423-5909
You can also apply for help online at illinoislegalaid.org