

# What to Look Out For

Unlawful discrimination in housing can take many forms. Below are some examples that might violate the New York State Human Rights Law. If you think you have experienced discrimination, report it to us.

- A woman finds an apartment that meets her needs and tells the agent she is interested. The agent asks for proof of her immigration status and tells her that the landlord does not want to rent to people that are not United States citizens.
- An Asian man is looking for a home and is only being shown properties in neighborhoods that are predominantly Asian. He asks his real estate agent why this is, and they respond that they thought he would be “more comfortable” in a predominantly Asian neighborhood.
- A tenant with a disability lives in an apartment building with a “no pets” policy. She provides her property manager with a note from her medical provider stating that she needs a service dog. The property manager still tells her she cannot have a dog in the building.
- An apartment listing says “No vouchers accepted.”

## Report Discrimination

If you believe you have experienced discrimination, you can report it to us. If it is under our authority, we will investigate.

Reporting discrimination to the Division of Human Rights is free, and you do not need an attorney to submit a report or file a complaint.

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The easiest way to report discrimination is to **call**:

**844-NYS-DHRI  
(844-697-3471)**

A trained representative will help you with your report.

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You can also report discrimination online at [dhr.ny.gov](https://dhr.ny.gov) or by scanning the QR code below:



Learn more and stay connected:  
[dhr.ny.gov](https://dhr.ny.gov) | [@NYSHumanRights](https://twitter.com/NYSHumanRights)



Division of  
Human Rights

A Basic Guide to  
**Fair Housing**  
Under the New York State  
Human Rights Law



## Housing Discrimination Is Against the Law

Under New York State’s Human Rights Law, housing providers like landlords and real estate salespersons cannot discriminate against housing applicants, tenants, or homeowners in the sale, rental, or leasing of housing.

The Human Rights Law protects against housing discrimination based on the following characteristics:

- Age
- Race or color
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity or expression
- Domestic violence victim status
- Sealed conviction or youthful offense
- Favorably resolved arrest record
- Religion
- Sex
- Military status
- National origin
- Citizenship or immigration status
- Marital status
- Familial status
- Lawful source of income

**If you think you have experienced discrimination, you can report it to us. If it is under our authority, we will investigate.**

**Report discrimination by phone at 844-NYS-DHR1 (844-697-3471) or online at [dhr.ny.gov/report](http://dhr.ny.gov/report).**

The Human Rights Law applies to nearly all housing accommodations, but there are some exceptions, including owner-occupied room-share arrangements.

It is important to remember that in a setting where the State Human Rights Law does not apply, local fair housing laws may offer separate protections.

### What is Prohibited?

The Human Rights Law makes it illegal to discriminate while selling, renting, or leasing housing. A housing provider violates the law if they:

- Refuse to sell, rent, or lease based on a renter or buyer’s protected characteristic.
- Steer customers of a certain race or ethnicity to specific neighborhoods, predatory lending, or biased appraisals.
- Discriminate in the terms, conditions, or privileges of a housing sale, rental, or lease.
- Discriminate in providing facilities or services related to a sale, rental, or lease.
- Print or circulate a statement, advertisement, or publication expressing a limitation, specification, or discrimination in the sale, rental, or leasing of housing.
- Use a housing application expressing any limitation, specification, or discrimination in the sale, rental, or leasing of housing.
- Make any record or inquiry concerning a housing accommodation’s prospective purchase, rental, or lease expressing any limitation, specification, or discrimination.

The Human Rights Law adds additional obligations to real estate brokers, salespeople, and their employees. Specifically, it is against the law for them to:

- Refuse to negotiate the sale, rental, or leasing of housing to certain individuals because of one or more protected characteristics.
- Tell certain people that housing is not available for sale, rental, or lease when it is in fact available.
- Treat a person differently after asking questions about race, citizenship status, language spoken, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics.

### What About Lending and Appraisals?

Yes, for both. For lending, the Human Rights Law prohibits discrimination in both bank and non-bank lending, including real estate lending.

### Retaliation Is Against the Law.

It is against the law to retaliate against someone for filing a complaint of discrimination or for opposing discriminatory practices. Retaliation claims can be filed as separate and independent complaints.

