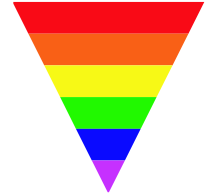




# YOUR RIGHT TO EQUAL HOUSING



## What is Housing Discrimination?

Housing discrimination occurs when the right to equal housing access is denied or when people are treated differently in housing based on a particular characteristic that is protected under the law.

Under the Illinois Human Rights Act, you are entitled to choose where to live and to fully enjoy the use of the facilities of the unit without unlawful discrimination. The Act also prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of real property (including commercial property).

## Types of Discrimination:

The Illinois Department of Human Rights investigates discrimination complaints in the following areas:

- Employment
- Real Estate Transactions
- Financial Credit
- Public Accommodations
- Sexual Harassment in Education

Under the Illinois Human Rights Act, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of the following **protected classes**:

- Race, Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex, Pregnancy
- Ancestry
- Sexual Harassment
- Age (Over 40)
- Marital Status
- Disability
- Military Status

### ● **Sexual Orientation** (including gender-related identity)

- Unfavorable Military Discharge
- Order of Protection Status
- Familial status (children under 18) in real estate transactions
- Arrest record, citizenship status and language (in employment)
- Coercion, intimidation and retaliation are also prohibited

## Who Does the Law Apply To?

In real estate transactions, the law applies to owners, managers, salespersons, brokers, rental agents, or other agents or employees of the owner or the owner's agents. Newspapers and other publications that print discriminatory advertising can also be charged under the Act. Houses, apartments, condominiums, mobile home parks, vacant land, offices, stores and other types of residential and commercial property are covered.

## Prohibited Activity:

The following are examples of housing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity:

- Refusal to engage in a real estate transaction:  
*Refusing to rent or refusing an offer to buy because someone is gay; or taking the property in question off the market so that a gay couple is not able to buy or rent it.*
- Misrepresenting the availability of real property:  
*Lying about the availability of property that is up for inspection, sale, rental, or lease when the property owner finds out the applicant is lesbian.*
- Failure to make property listings available:  
*Failing to tell someone about available property because the real estate agent believes the applicant is transgender.*
- Publication of intent:  
*Publishing or displaying an ad expressing intent to engage in unlawful discrimination, such as saying that children are not allowed or straight couples are preferred.*
- Alteration of terms or conditions in property or real estate transactions:  
*Treating people differently in terms of rent amounts, maintenance services, reasons for termination, etc., because of sexual orientation.*
- Sexual Harassment:  
*Asking for sexual favors as a condition for sale or rental, or engaging in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.*

**(OVER →)**

## **History:**

On December 6, 1979, when Governor James R. Thompson signed the Illinois Human Rights Act into law, it marked the creation of the broadest civil rights coverage for Illinoisans in the history of the state. **The Illinois Human Rights Act**, effective July 1, 1980, states that it is the public policy of Illinois to: "...Promote the public health, welfare and safety by protecting the interest of **all** people in Illinois in maintaining personal dignity, in realizing their full productive capacities, and in furthering their interests, rights and privileges as citizens of this State."

With legislation effective January 1, 2006, Illinois was the 15th state to cover sexual orientation as a protected class, and the 6th to cover gender identity. Sexual orientation was a protected class in Chicago, Cook County, and in a number of municipalities in Illinois when this historic protection was extended to **all** persons in Illinois.

*Under the Illinois Human Rights Act, "sexual orientation" means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or gender-related identity, whether or not traditionally associated with the person's designated sex at birth. "Sexual orientation" does not include a physical or sexual attraction to a minor by an adult.*

## **WHAT IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN TREATED DIFFERENTLY?**

If you suspect that you may have been treated unfairly due to your sexual orientation or gender identity, please call or visit our offices as soon as possible. If you would like to submit a formal complaint or a charge of discrimination, you must do so within 180 days for most types of discrimination, and within one year for housing discrimination allegations.

You will be interviewed and the Department will determine if we can investigate your complaint. If so, the investigator will interview all parties involved, gather all relevant facts and necessary documents, and attempt resolution. When the investigation is complete, all the parties will be notified of the recommended findings.

## **TIPS FOR COMPLAINANTS:**

Get as much information as possible from those you talk to. Include the name(s) of the property owner, manager, sales agent or any other persons involved. Find out the address and size of the property being sold or rented. Take a friend with you who can serve as a witness. Keep a copy of any advertisement, listing, or any other written documents you may receive.

## **WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION:**

**Chicago:** James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph Street, 10-100, Chicago, Illinois 60601; 312-814-6200

**Springfield:** 222 South College, Room 101A, Springfield, Illinois 62704; Telephone: 217-785-5100

**Marion:** 2309 W. Main Street, Marion, Illinois 62959; Telephone: 618-993-7463

**Office Hours:** Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Intake Hours:** Monday – Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (interviews at Springfield and Chicago offices only)

**Housing Inquiries:** 312-814-6229

**Toll-Free:** 800-662-3942

**TTY:** 886-740-3953

**Website:** [www.illinois.gov/dhr](http://www.illinois.gov/dhr) (click on fair housing)

**Housing Email Inquiries:** [IDHR.FairHousing@illinois.gov](mailto:IDHR.FairHousing@illinois.gov)

**General Email Inquiries:** [IDHR.Webmail@illinois.gov](mailto:IDHR.Webmail@illinois.gov)

**For links to the Illinois Human Rights Act, Rules and Regulations, posters, fair housing videos and materials, and intake forms:**

**Visit us online at: [www.illinois.gov/dhr](http://www.illinois.gov/dhr)**

IDHR is accessible to persons with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Illinois Human Rights Act. IDHR provides language assistance to individuals with limited or no English proficiency seeking to file a charge.