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RELATED TO

[Fair Housing Law\(/fair-housing-law\)](/fair-housing-law/)

Overview of fair housing law

State and federal law prohibit discrimination in the sale and rental of housing by property owners, landlords, property managers, mortgage lenders, and real estate agents. Learn more about your rights and responsibilities under fair housing law.

In Massachusetts, it is unlawful for a housing provider to discriminate against a current or prospective tenant based on:

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Familial Status (i.e. children)
- Disability
- Source of Income (e.g. a Section 8 voucher)

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- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Age
- Marital Status
- Veteran or Active Military Status
- Genetic Information

Examples of fair housing violations

Examples of unlawful practices include:

- Refusing to rent you, or charging you higher rent or other fees, based on one of these protected characteristics.
- Steering you away from particular properties or rental units based on one of these protected characteristics.
- Refusing to rent to you because you rely on public assistance (for example, a Section 8 voucher).
- Failing or refusing to make reasonable accommodations for tenants with disabilities, including exceptions to policies (for example, a "no pets" policy) or reasonable physical modifications (grab bars or wheelchair ramps, for example).
- Harassing you, whether based on gender or any protected characteristic listed above. [More information about harassment in housing is listed here.](#)

[\(/files/documents/2018/04/11/Advisory%20on%20Harassment%20in%20Housing.pdf\)](/files/documents/2018/04/11/Advisory%20on%20Harassment%20in%20Housing.pdf)

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- Refusing to give you a mortgage, or charging you higher fees, based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.
- Threatening to report you to immigration authorities so that you or your family members will be afraid to exercise any of your rights under the law.
- Refusing to rent to a pregnant woman or a family with young children, or evicting families, because a property contains lead paint. [For more information about lead paint and discrimination, click here.](#)
[\(/files/documents/2018/04/09/Lead%20Paint%20Advisory%20%28April%202018%29.pdf\)](/files/documents/2018/04/09/Lead%20Paint%20Advisory%20%28April%202018%29.pdf)
- Retaliating against you if you report discrimination.

File a complaint

If you have been denied housing, charged a higher amount of rent or fees, subjected to harassment, or otherwise treated unfairly by a housing provider because of one of the characteristics listed above, you should [file a complaint with the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division](#)[\(/how-to/file-a-civil-rights-complaint\)](/how-to/file-a-civil-rights-complaint) or the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

Additional Resources

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination

[\(/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination\)](/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination)

Feedback

CONTACT

Attorney General's Civil Rights Division

Phone

Civil Rights (617) 963-2917(tel:6179632917)

Disability Rights (617) 963-2939(tel:6179632939)

TTY (617) 727-4765(tel:6177274765)

Online

[File a civil rights complaint \(/how-to/file-a-civil-rights-complaint\)](/how-to/file-a-civil-rights-complaint)

[more contact info](#) ➤

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[The Attorney General's Guide to Landlord and Tenant Rights \(/guides/the-attorney-generals-guide-to-landlord-and-tenant-rights\)](/guides/the-attorney-generals-guide-to-landlord-and-tenant-rights)

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