CITIZENSHIP AND IMMMIGRATION STATUS

WASHINGTON LAW AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

RCW 49.60

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Washington State Human Rights Commission

• Enforces the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, RCW 49.60

• Prohibits discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodation, credit and insurance on the basis of protected class

• This agency investigates and resolves complaints of discrimination

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- Covered entities, such as housing providers, cannot discriminate against someone because of that person's citizenship status
- Covered entities cannot give preference to someone because of that person's citizenship status
 - Treat everyone the same regardless if the person is a native-born US citizen, a naturalized citizen, are not a citizen, or are in the process of becoming a citizen
- Covered entities cannot discriminate against a person because of that person's immigration status
- Covered entities cannot give preference to someone because of that person's immigration status
 - Treat everyone the same regardless if the person is an immigrant, if they were born in the U.S, if they intend to become a citizen or permanent resident, or if they intend to return to their country of origin.

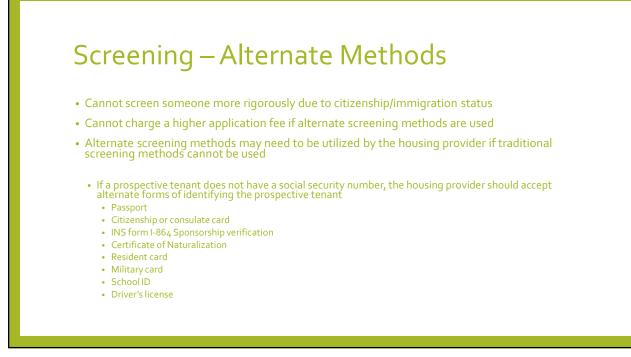
Enforcement

- Enforcement based on citizenship and immigration status will be similar to enforcement based on national origin, which was a protected class for many years prior to 2020
 - The WSHRC had treated citizenship and immigration status as under the umbrella of national origin
 - The new law clarifies that citizenship and immigration status are protected
 - Covered entities should not see big changes to enforcement; the same people will still be protected under the law in the same manner
 - We have come across a few situations in the employment area in which the person's immigration status has been a factor, but not their national origin, but have not come had any such complaints in the area of housing (yet)



Obligations of Housing Providers

- Cannot deny housing to an otherwise qualified tenant
- Cannot require a higher security deposit or rent
- Cannot demand cash payments
- Cannot treat a person, their family, or their roommates differently
- Cannot threaten to call ICE if a tenant complains about conditions of the dwelling
- Cannot refuse to make repair and cannot delay repairs
- Must take action if they become aware that a person is being harassed by another tenant due to citizenship or immigration status (or any other protected class)







Ouestions? Please email your questions to policy@hum.wa.gov

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