

Useful Steps to take if you experience housing discrimination

If you are being harassed in your housing by another tenant, a landlord, a neighbor or some other person due to your national origin, follow these steps:

- Save everything that contains discriminatory statements or shows discriminatory treatment. (Save text messages, emails and voicemails).
- Keep a journal of incidents of discrimination.
- Create a timeline of events including names, dates, addresses, rental terms and any other details about related interactions.
- Make a list of any witnesses and include their contact information (address, phone number and email.)
- Following the incidents, you have one year to file an administrative complaint with HUD or two years to file a lawsuit in court.



Does your housing provider need to provide translation or interpreting?

Not unless they receive federal funds (section 8 vouchers and tax credit properties do not count as federal funds for this requirement). But, they cannot have a policy that requires residents to only speak English.

HOUSING PROVIDERS: DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES

Policies must be consistent. If information is requested from one person or group, the same information should be requested from all applicants and tenants. Potential renters and homebuyers cannot be treated differently because of their **race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual orientation + gender identity), disability or familial status.**

If you think you have been discriminated against in a housing transaction, contact:

Northwest Fair Housing Alliance

35 W Main Ave. Suite 250

Spokane, WA 99201

509-325-2665/ 1-800-200- FAIR (3247)

Fax: 1-866-376-6308

NWFHA can advise you of your options and advocate for you.

Our services are free.



The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported in part by funding under a grant with the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. NWFHA is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication.

January 2025



“Working to ensure equal housing for all”

Fair Housing and National Origin Discrimination



(509)-325-2665

1-800-200-FAIR (3247)

www.nwfairhouse.org

Fair Housing Act

The federal Fair Housing Act “FHA” prohibits discrimination in housing based on a person’s **race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation + gender identity), familial status or disability.**

The WA Law Against Discrimination also prohibits discrimination based on **marital, veteran / military, and Immigration or citizenship status.**

What does National Origin Discrimination mean under the Fair Housing Act?

It is unlawful for a landlord, property manager, or real estate agent, to treat someone differently because of their national origin.

People cannot be denied housing opportunities because they or their family are from another country, have accents associated with their national origin, or have challenges communicating in English.

National origin discrimination involves **different treatment in housing-related transactions because of a person’s ancestry, birthplace, ethnicity, language, or culture.**



Examples of illegal practices based on National Origin:

- Require only USA based forms of identification.
- Request Social security number only for tenants from certain national origins.
- Steer people with certain ethnicity backgrounds to neighborhoods or complexes where they “might feel better”.
- Charge additional rent, deposit or fees based on ethnicity.
- Refuse to rent to persons whose primary language is not English.
- Make discriminatory statement or harass tenants based on their national origin.
- Tell you not to cook ethnic foods because of the smell.
- Enforce rules and regulations for some tenants and not others who have different national origins.
- Do a more rigorous screening process than other applicants of different national origins.
- Advertise “English only”
- Ignore repair requests from people with certain ethnicities.
- Refuse to rent or provide false information about availability based on nationality.

The Fair Housing Act protect you from harassment or threats.

Examples of discrimination include:

- Telling a neighbor, “Go back to your country.”
- Not giving you access to your home, belongings or property amenities.
- Using ethnic slurs or threat to harm you or your family if you do not move out.
- Threats to evict you because you have visitors from a different ethnicity.
- Threatening to call ICE if a tenants complains about the conditions of the dwelling.



What alternative ways can a housing provider screen a tenant if they don't have a social security number?

To establish identity:

- Unexpired Foreign passport
- Unexpired employment authorization card (I-688A or I-688B)
- Unexpired Reentry permit
- Unexpired refugee travel document
- Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)
- INS form I-864 Sponsorship verification
- Citizenship or consulate card
- Certificate of Naturalization
- US Passport
- Resident card
- Military card
- School ID