

## INFORMATION NWFHA NEEDS TO FILE A FAIR HOUSING COMPLAINT

1. Your name and address
2. Name and address of the person(s) or organization your complaint is against
3. The address of the housing involved
4. A summary of the facts that describe the circumstances of the discrimination
5. The date(s) of the alleged violation(s).

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A COMPLAINT IS SENT TO HUD?

- A HUD Intake Specialist will review the complaint to determine whether HUD has jurisdiction to investigate.
- The Intake Specialist may request additional information, or make edits and ask you to re-sign the complaint.
- If HUD accepts the complaint, either a HUD investigator will be assigned, or your complaint may be referred to the WSHRC to conduct an investigation.

## THE INVESTIGATION:

The HUD/WSHRC investigator will usually:

- schedule an interview with you to learn more about your complaint
- interview the Respondent
- ask you to participate in a second interview to respond to information provided by the Respondent (rebuttal)
- ask you for documents (e.g., leases, notices, property records, phone, email, and text records, etc.) witness information, and other evidence about the alleged discrimination
- ask you to provide evidence about your damages, which may be monetary (e.g., relocation costs or increased rent), physical injuries, or emotional distress.

The investigation will take time. Please be patient and keep in touch with NWFHA so we can update you.

## CONCILIATION

During the investigation, HUD may try to resolve the complaint with a written agreement that includes any terms agreed to by both you and Respondent. This is called a Conciliation Agreement, or a Pre-Finding Settlement Agreement. HUD does not decide whether discrimination occurred and the Respondent does not admit any fault. The Complainant receives whatever is agreed to. Such relief can include monetary compensation, as well as agreements from Respondent to do things that will help prevent future discrimination, such as adopting Fair Housing compliant screening and reasonable accommodation policies, posting fair housing signs, and obtaining fair housing training.

## HOW DOES A COMPLAINT END?

If a complaint does not resolve with a conciliation agreement, HUD will decide whether the Complainant has proved the discrimination. If not, the complaint is dismissed with a “No Reasonable Cause” finding. If HUD determines that discrimination did occur, it will issue a “Reasonable Cause” finding, and refer the complaint to the US Dept. of Justice. An administrative hearing may be conducted in front of an Administrative Law Judge, or either party can opt to have the complaint filed in federal Court instead. The DOJ does not represent the Complainant, but may obtain monetary or other remedies for the Complainant. You may also obtain your own attorney who can represent you in the lawsuit.



# How to File a Fair Housing Complaint with HUD



**NORTHWEST  
FAIR HOUSING  
ALLIANCE**

*“Working to ensure equal housing for all”*

**(509) 325-2665  
1-800-200-FAIR (3247)  
www.nwfairhouse.org**

## YOU ARE PROTECTED

The federal **Fair Housing Act** prohibits housing discrimination based on *race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status* (children under 18 in the household) and *disability*

Additionally, the **Washington State Law Against Discrimination** (WLAD, RCW 49.60) prohibits housing discrimination based on *additional protected characteristics*.

### Federal agencies enforce the Fair Housing Act.

The **WA State Human Rights Commission** enforces the WLAD.

**Northwest Fair Housing Alliance** may be able to assist you with filing a fair housing complaint with a federal agency or WSHRC

Contact US Today:

35 W. Main Ave., Suite 250  
Spokane, WA 99201  
Ph: (509) 325-2665 or  
1-800-FAIR (3247)  
FAX:-866-376-6308  
www.nwfairhouse.org

**We may be able to advise you of your options.  
Our services are free.**

## How Can Northwest Fair Housing Alliance Help?

We may be able to assist with:

- Determining if a federal or state agency has jurisdiction to accept and investigate a complaint about what happened to you
- Reviewing and organizing any documents or evidence you have
- Drafting a complaint to file with a govt. agency
- Sending the complaint to a govt. agency
- Acting as your representative during the complaint investigation process
- Helping you to prepare a request for damages and terms for resolution through a conciliation agreement

## IMPORTANT

**Northwest Fair Housing Alliance does not provide legal representation, advice, or services.**

Complaints filed with govt. agencies are investigated administratively by the agency; they are not filed in Court (although, if after investigation the govt. determines that discrimination occurred, either party can opt to have a lawsuit filed in federal Court).

You do not need to use NWFHA's services to file a complaint with HUD. You may contact HUD directly:  
**Ph:** 1 (800) 669-9777 or  
**Website:** <https://www.hud.gov/reporhousingdiscrimination>

You do not have to file a complaint with HUD. You may instead be able to file a lawsuit in Court. You may want to consult with legal counsel to determine whether filing a complaint with HUD or filing a lawsuit is the best option for you.

## WHO CAN FILE A COMPLAINT?

**Anyone who is an aggrieved person** can file a complaint with HUD. An aggrieved person is someone who believes they have been harmed by discrimination, or are about to be harmed. A person who files a complaint is a "**Complainant.**"

## WHO CAN YOU FILE A COMPLAINT AGAINST?

The person or organization that a complaint is filed against is referred to as a "**Respondent**". Respondents can be property owners, property managers and maintenance staff, developers, real state brokers, mortgage lenders, homeowner and condominium associations, insurance agencies, and other tenants or neighbors who interfere with your fair housing rights.

Some housing providers that do not own many dwelling units are exempt from having to comply with fair housing laws. NWFHA can help you to understand if your housing provider is exempt.

## WHEN CAN A COMPLAINT BE FILED?

- **One (1) year** from the date of the last alleged act of discrimination to file an administrative complaint with HUD
- **Two (2) years** from the date of the last alleged act of discrimination to file a civil lawsuit in federal or state court

## DOES IT COST MONEY TO FILE A HUD COMPLAINT?

No. There is **no fee** to file an administrative fair housing complaint with HUD.