

# FAIR HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATIONS

# Renters: Know Your Rights!

You **cannot** be denied or evicted from housing because of your...

Race, ethnicity, or national origin

Disability

Religion

Family status

Gender identity or sexual orientation

If this happens to you, call Eviction Right to Counsel.

## What is the Fair Housing Act?



The Fair Housing Act is a federal law that **protects renters from discrimination**. It makes it **illegal** for landlords to discriminate against tenants based on **race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, religion, family status, gender identity, or sexual orientation**.

**It IS legal to prioritize renting to people experiencing homelessness!**

Most housing is covered by the Fair Housing Act, but there are some specific situations that aren't.

Types of housing **not** covered include:

- Owner-occupied properties with 4 or less units
- Single-family housing rented without a broker
- Housing run by organizations for their members

## What's illegal under the Fair Housing Act?

Based on the categories mentioned above, your landlord **cannot**:

- **refuse to rent** to you
- **refuse to let you apply** or **deny your application** for housing
- set **different rules or costs** for you than other tenants
- **tell you that housing isn't available** when it is
- try to **persuade** you to rent certain properties, or to not rent others



They **can** do these things for reasons **not related to discrimination**, though. For example, if you have a low credit score, they can reject your application or try to convince you to rent a cheaper property.

If you think your landlord is violating the Fair Housing Act, call **ERTC** or the **Tennessee Fair Housing Council** at (615) 874-2344. You can also file a complaint at [hud.gov/fairhousing/fileacomplaint](https://www.hud.gov/fairhousing/fileacomplaint).



(833) 837-HOME



(615) 701-7957



(615) 988-6460



## What are reasonable accommodations and modifications?

**Reasonable accommodations** are changes in rules or services that help tenants with disabilities access and use their home. Some examples could be:

- Letting you **pay rent on the 15<sup>th</sup> instead of the 1<sup>st</sup>**, because your Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) check doesn't come until the 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Allowing you to **keep your emotional support animal or service animal without a fee**, even though the property has a no pet policy or a pet fee.



**Reasonable modifications** are physical changes to the property itself that make it easier to access or use. If it costs **money** to install a reasonable modification, the **tenant** is usually responsible for paying for it and for removing it when they move out. Some examples might look like:

- **Installing grab bars** in your shower or **railings** on your staircase to help with your mobility-related disability.
- **Installing a ramp** at your front door to allow you to enter the property in your wheelchair.

Housing providers **can** suggest different accommodations, but they **cannot** reject your request unless it is unreasonable or unnecessary.

**If your landlord rejects your request for a reasonable accommodation or modification, call Eviction Right to Counsel.**

## How do I request a reasonable accommodation or modification?

The best way to request a reasonable accommodation or modification is to **write a letter** to your property manager explaining what change you need made.

If your disability is not obvious, your property manager is allowed to request **proof** of your disability, but they should **not** need your medical records or detailed information. That proof could come from a **medical provider, a service agency, or another third party** that knows about your disability.

**If you need help requesting a reasonable accommodation or modification, call ERTC or the Fair Housing Council.**