

Fair Housing and Gender

A Module for High Schools and Youth Groups

Presented by Fair Housing of Marin



Module Objectives:

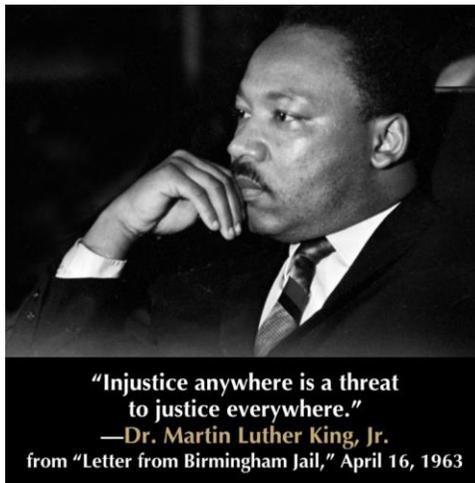
Students will:

- ✚ Engage in a discussion of fair housing and the effects of segregation.
- ✚ Learn about housing discrimination laws, fair housing perspectives, and history of fair housing law.
- ✚ Learn about fair housing laws related to gender.
- ✚ Design a fair housing awareness campaign.

PART ONE

LET'S TALK ABOUT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

INTRODUCTION



Let's Explore

Class Discussion

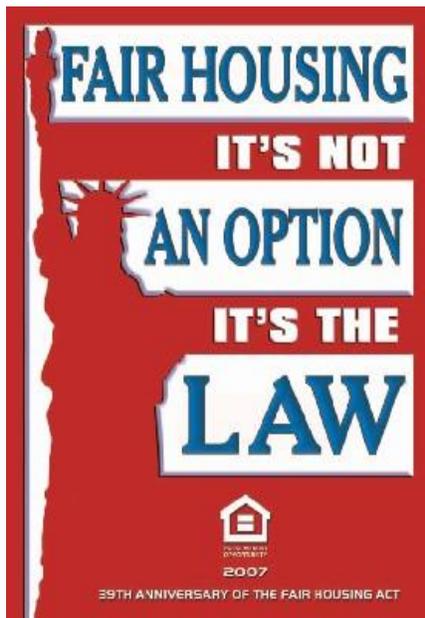
- ✚ What does the word "home" mean to you?
- ✚ What is discrimination?
- ✚ What does housing discrimination look like?
- ✚ Have you heard real stories of discrimination?
- ✚ What is a protected class?
- ✚ What is segregation?
- ✚ What are the effects of segregation?

Perspectives

- ✚ Where you live affects every area of your life, your school, your health options, your employment opportunities, your friendships and neighbors, and your lifestyle. Unfortunately, some people can't choose where they live, due not only to economic reasons but to housing discrimination.
- ✚ Housing equality promotes diversity and integration. Housing discrimination affects our neighborhoods and our communities and promotes segregation, which eventually widens wealth inequality.

THE FACTS

What Are Fair Housing Laws?



The United States is a melting pot with people from different colors, cultures, religions and ethnicities. But for some people of diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, or families with children, it is sometimes difficult to find a place to live due to discrimination.

Fair Housing laws protect your right to live where you choose, and require landlords to treat all tenants and potential tenants equally.

What Are the Protected Classes Covered Under Fair Housing Law?

Fair Housing laws prohibit housing discrimination based on:



- ✚ Race
- ✚ Color
- ✚ Gender
- ✚ Religion
- ✚ National Origin
- ✚ Disability
- ✚ Familial Status (minor children)

The State of California has additional protections based on:

- ✚ Sexual Orientation
- ✚ Source of Income
- ✚ Marital Status
- ✚ Age or other arbitrary reasons

What Activities Are Prohibited?

Based on the fair housing protected classes, it is illegal to:

- ✚ Refuse to rent, lease or sell most types of housing.
- ✚ Represent that housing is not available when it is.
- ✚ Set different terms, conditions or privileges for housing or for use of housing facilities.
- ✚ Provide different levels or quality of housing services.
- ✚ Refuse to make reasonable accommodations or modifications to allow a person with a disability to live in a unit.
- ✚ Refuse to rent to families because they have children, unless the property meets the criteria for senior housing.
- ✚ Enforce rules for some tenants only.
- ✚ Advertise in a discriminatory manner.

Are You Playing The Waiting Game?

"We haven't verified your income." "Your credit check isn't back yet."
Sound familiar? Sounds like discrimination.
Don't be a victim of the "waiting game."

If you suspect unfair housing practices, contact HUD or your local Fair Housing Center. Everyone deserves a fair chance.

NFHA National Fair Housing Alliance
CR Education Fund

FAIR HOUSING IS THE LAW!
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development • 1-800-669-9777 • TDD 1-800-927-9275

Could It Be Discrimination ? ? ?

Clues of Possible Discrimination

Discrimination is not usually blatant. Here are some clues that could indicate housing discrimination:

- ✚ The story you are told in person is different from the information given on the phone.
- ✚ The housing provider says, "It is rented" but the vacancy sign remains up or the newspaper ad continues to appear.
- ✚ You are told, "You wouldn't like it here; why don't you try another apartment complex where you might feel more comfortable?"
- ✚ You are told: "We don't rent to children because the balcony and stairs are unsafe."
- ✚ The provider takes your application and says she will call you after references are checked, but she does not contact you.
- ✚ You are told that you cannot install a wheelchair ramp or other accessibility modifications.
- ✚ You are told, "We don't allow more than 3 people in a two bedroom unit."

PART TWO

LET'S TALK ABOUT
GENDER AND HOUSING

INTRODUCTION



Let's Explore

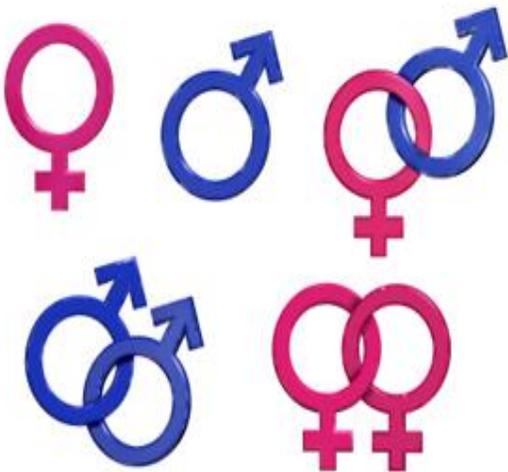
Class Discussion:

- ✚ How do you define gender?
- ✚ How can housing discrimination happen based on gender?
- ✚ What is domestic violence?
- ✚ What is sexual harassment?

Definitions

- ✚ **Gender:** Assigned at birth.
- ✚ **Sexual Orientation:** Who you are attracted to romantically or sexually.
- ✚ **Gender Identity:** A person's internal sense of being male or female not stereotypically associated with the person's assigned sex at birth.
- ✚ **LGBT:** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender.
- ✚ **Sexual Harassment:** Housing providers or neighbors making unwanted sexual advances or entering a tenant's home without notice.

What Does Gender Discrimination Look Like?



- ✚ A landlord refuses to rent to a gay couple or transgender person.
- ✚ A landlord evicts a female tenant who is a victim of domestic violence.
- ✚ A lender refuses to make a mortgage loan to a woman applicant on maternity leave until she returns to work.
- ✚ A maintenance man makes unwelcome comments to a female tenant or touches her without consent.

Did You Know?

- ✚ Recent studies have shown a growing trend towards discrimination in the housing market against those who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, or transgender.
- ✚ Many LGBT youth are kicked out of their homes or leave because of lack of family acceptance of their LGBT identities.

THE FACTS



Fair Housing Law Protections Based on Gender

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

- ✚ Federal law does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in market-rate housing, but California state law does prohibit such discrimination.
- ✚ “The Equal Access Rule” prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital status in all housing that is financed or insured by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Domestic Violence

- ✚ “The Violence Against Women Act” protects survivors of domestic violence who live in federally-subsidized housing. Housing providers can’t deny housing or evict a tenant because she or he is a victim of domestic violence.

Sexual Harassment

- ✚ State and federal laws prohibit housing providers from subjecting tenants to sexual harassment, or retaliating against tenants for refusing sexual advances.

PART THREE

TAKING ACTION



CLASS PROJECTS

Small Group Discussion

Get together with your classmates or friends and discuss the following questions. Write down the main points in your discussion and share them with your class.



- ✚ How can housing discrimination affect your family?
- ✚ What are the community benefits of housing equality?
- ✚ What can we do to help promote diversity in our schools and neighborhoods?
- ✚ How can we help stop gender discrimination, including sexual harassment and domestic violence?
- ✚ How can we bring community awareness of fair housing issues, including gender discrimination?

Fair Housing Awareness Campaign

Fair housing protections are essential to our community well-being, and public awareness is essential. Help us build community awareness in your school and neighborhood.

Addressing General Fair Housing Protections

- ✚ Interview a victim of housing discrimination, write an article, and publish it on social media.
- ✚ Interview a victim of housing discrimination and make a short movie. Publish your movie on social media.
- ✚ Write a Public Service Announcement on housing discrimination and distribute it to your local media outlets.
- ✚ Design an ad or flyer. Distribute the flyer in your school or other groups.
- ✚ Do a short skit for your school or social studies class depicting scenarios of housing discrimination.
- ✚ Write a poem or essay about housing discrimination and how it affects our community and neighborhoods, and share with your class.



Addressing Gender Related Protections

- ✚ Write an article for your school newspaper on gender discrimination.
- ✚ Make a presentation to your school clubs on gender discrimination.
- ✚ Join your school's straight/gay alliance.
- ✚ Describe or write scenarios of possible stories of discrimination based on gender. Share these stories with your school groups.

Other Ideas?

- ✚ Do you have other ideas? Talk to your teacher and fellow students about your idea for a fair housing awareness campaign.

APPENDIX A*

A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

Important Events in the History of Fair Housing Legislation

At the Federal Level

- 1966** ✚ As part of the **Chicago Freedom Movement**, Dr. Martin Luther King presented a list of demands to end discrimination in housing. Dr. King acknowledged this campaign as only “the first step in a 1,000-mile journey.”
- 1968** ✚ **The Fair Housing Act** was signed into law. After Dr. King was assassinated, the national tragedy helped President Lyndon Johnson build congressional support for the passage of the act. The act prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing because of race, color, religion, and national origin. In 1974, sex was added as a protected class.
- 1988** ✚ **The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988** was signed into law, adding protection from discrimination because of disability and familial status. The amendments also strengthened the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s authority to enforce the law.
- 1994** ✚ **The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)** was signed. Since 1994, VAWA's focus has been expanded from domestic violence and sexual assault to also include dating violence and stalking.

At the California State Level

- 1959** ✚ **The Fair Employment Practices Act (FEPA)** was signed, which prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, and ancestry.
- 1963** ✚ The legislature passed the **Rumford Fair Housing Act**, prohibiting housing discrimination in rental properties on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin and ancestry.
- 1980** ✚ The FEPA and the Rumford Fair Housing Act were combined and renamed the **Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA)**, to protect Californians from both employment and housing discrimination. The FEHA provided broader protections than its federal counterparts.
- 1999** ✚ **The California Civil Rights Amendments of 1999** was signed, adding sexual orientation to the categories of discrimination prohibited under the FEHA.



FAIR HOUSING OF MARIN

(415) 457-5025 ♦ TDD: (800) 735-2922

www.fairhousingmarin.com

San Rafael, California

⌘ *Se habla español*

Fair Housing of Marin's mission is to ensure equal housing opportunity and to educate the community on the value of diversity in our neighborhoods.

Contact Fair Housing of Marin (FHOM) if you feel you are experiencing housing discrimination, need help with a reasonable accommodation (for people with disabilities), want to prevent a foreclosure, or need pre-purchase education.

Also, contact FHOM if your group is interested in receiving fair housing education, or participating in the free Poster Contest or Storyteller programs for schools and children's groups.

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****A portion of the content on "Appendix A" was provided by the
National Fair Housing Alliance.***