

# City of Abilene Fair Housing Commitment

The City of Abilene is committed to promoting, through fair and lawful procedures, the opportunity for each person to obtain housing without regard to his/her race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or familial status. This commitment is grounded upon a recognition of the right of every person to have access to adequate housing of his/her own choice without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or familial status.



## Fair Housing Act – The Facts

The Fair Housing Act protects individuals from discrimination in purchasing and renting housing. The following guidelines are set by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development in determining what is considered discrimination (HUD 1260 FHEO April 1993).

### **The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of:**

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians; pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18)
- Disability

The Fair Housing Act covers most housing. In some circumstances, the Act exempts owner-occupied buildings with no more than four units, single-family housing sold or rented without the use of a broker and housing operated by organizations and private clubs that limit occupancy to members.

### **Sale and rental of housing - No one may take any of the following actions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap:**

- Refuse to rent or sell housing
- Refuse to negotiation for housing
- Make housing unavailable
- Deny a dwelling
- Set different terms, conditions, or privileges for sale or rental of a dwelling
- Provide different housing services or facilities
- Falsely deny that housing is available for inspection, sale, or rental
- For profit, persuade owner to sell or rent (blockbusting)
- Deny anyone access to or membership in a facility or service (such as a multiple listing service) related to the sale or rental of housing.

## **Mortgage lending – No one may take any of the following actions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap:**

- Refuse to make a mortgage loan
- Refuse to provide information regarding loans
- Impose different terms or conditions on a loan
- Discriminate in appraising property
- Refuse to purchase a loan
- Set different terms or conditions for purchasing a loan.

## **In addition - It is illegal for anyone to:**

- Threaten, coerce, intimidate or interfere with anyone exercising a fair housing right or assisting others who exercise that right
- Advertise or make any statement that indicates a limitation or preference based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or handicap. This prohibition against discriminatory advertising applies to single-family and owner-occupied housing that is otherwise exempt from the Fair Housing Act.

## **If you or someone associated with you:**

- Have a physical or mental disability (including hearing, mobility and visual impairments, chronic alcoholism, chronic mental illness, AIDS, AIDS Related Complex or mental retardation) that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Have a record of such a disability or
- Are regarded as having such a disability...

## **Your landlord may not:**

- Refuse to let you make reasonable modifications to your dwelling or common use areas, at your expense, if necessary for the handicapped person to use the housing. (Where reasonable, the landlord may permit changes only if you agree to restore the property to its original condition when you move).
- Refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services if necessary for the handicapped person to use the housing.

## **However, housing need not be made available to a person who is a direct threat to the health or safety of others or who currently uses illegal drugs.**

If you believe that you have been discriminated against under these Fair Housing guidelines, you can request an investigation. The first step is to contact the City of Abilene Fair Housing Officer. Sandy Bowen is the current Fair Housing Officer. If you want to submit a complaint, you need to provide the Fair Housing Officer with the following information:

- Your name and address
  - The name and address of the person your complaint is against
  - The address or other identification of the housing involved
  - A short description of the alleged violation (the event that caused you to believe your rights were violated)
  - The date(s) of the alleged violation
- The Fair Housing Officer is responsible for hearing discrimination claims and determining what steps must be taken to resolve the situation. To file a claim, write a letter including the above information and send to:

City of Abilene  
Office of Neighborhood Services  
Attention: Fair Housing Officer  
PO Box 60, Abilene, Texas 79604-0060

Or Contact:  
Sandy Bowen  
325-676-6383  
[Sandy.bowen@abilenetx.com](mailto:Sandy.bowen@abilenetx.com)

If you prefer, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development can assist with housing discrimination issues. If you think your rights have been violated, the Housing Discrimination Complaint Form is available for you to download, complete and return or complete online and submit at [www.hud.gov/complaints/housediscrim.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/complaints/housediscrim.cfm) or you may contact HUD directly:

HUD Fair Housing Enforcement Center  
801 Cherry Street – 27<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 2905  
Fort Worth, Texas 76113-2905  
817-978-5900  
1-800-669-9777  
TTY (817) 978-5595 (toll-free TTY 1-800-927-9275)

**Other local and state resources:**

Taylor County Eviction Court, 301 Oak, Abilene, TX 79602  
Justice of the Peace – Pct 1  
Place 1 325-674-1338  
Place 2 325-674-1267

Big Country Apartment Association  
P.O. Box 7236, Abilene, TX 79608  
325-695-7431

Legal Aid of Northwest Texas, 500 Chestnut – Ste 901, Abilene, TX 79602  
325-677-8591  
[www.lanwt.org/](http://www.lanwt.org/)

Texas Tenant Advisor  
[www.texastenant.org](http://www.texastenant.org)

Texas Apartment Association  
([www.taa.org](http://www.taa.org))

Texas Commission on Human Rights  
P.O. Box 13006, Austin, TX 78711-3006  
1-888-452-4778

