Do you suspect you've experienced housing discrimination in the greater Washington, DC area?

THE ERC MAY BE ABLE TO HELP BY:

Conducting civil rights testing: Trained civil rights testers pose as potential tenants or buyers to find out if and how discrimination is occurring.

Assisting with filing a housing discrimination complaint with HUD or state/local agencies.

Submitting reasonable accommodation and modification requests: Helping to draft and/or submit reasonable accommodation or modification requests to housing providers on behalf of individuals with disabilities.

Providing referrals to other local resources.

The Equal Rights Center (ERC) is a civil rights organization that identifies and seeks to eliminate unlawful and unfair discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations in its home community of greater Washington DC and nationwide.

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PROTECTED CLASS

The Fair Housing Act and many state & local laws prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of your membership in a protected class. The federal Fair Housing Act protects against housing discrimination on the basis of your race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, and familial status. In Maryland, there are additional statewide protections for marital status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. In Virginia, elderliness (55+) is protected.

Locally Protected Classes

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- National Origin
- Sex
- Disability
- Marital Status
- Age
- Personal Appearance
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity or expression
- Family responsibilities
- Political affiliation
- Matriculation
- Familial Status
- Source of Income
- Place of residence or business
- Status as a victim of an intra-family offense
- Sexual Orientation
- Ancestry
- Marital Status
- Age
- Occupation
- Political Opinion
- Personal Appearance
- Source of Income
- Military Status
- Source of Income
- Age & Marital Status
- Ancestry & Blindness
- Marital Status
- Marital Status & Sexual Orientation

One of the most effective ways to find out whether housing discrimination has happened is through civil rights testing, or mystery shopping for housing. The ERC is a leading expert in civil rights testing and may be able to assist you by conducting an investigation if you think you have experienced housing discrimination.

TESTER 1

- Apartment is no longer available.

TESTER 2

- Apartment is available. Would you like to take a look?

A housing provider charges you a fee for your assistance animal, or requires you provide some sort of certification stating that the animal has received specific training.

An agent makes discouraging comments about families with children or indicates that there are specific rules that only apply to kids.

You make an appointment to view an available property and when you arrive, an agent tells you that it’s no longer available.

A housing provider tells you they think you would prefer to live in a different location, or ignores other reasonable preferences you’ve stated.

You’re discouraged from applying for an apartment or home loan even though you qualify for it financially.

A housing provider tells you that they do not accept housing vouchers, or that they have policies like income requirements that prevent any voucher holder from living there (in Washington, DC and Montgomery, Frederick, and Howard Counties in Maryland).

A housing provider makes derogatory comments about you, your neighbors, or residents in a neighborhood you’re interested in living in based on your/their membership in a protected class.

IF ANY OF THESE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU, CONSIDER REPORTING YOUR EXPERIENCES TO THE ERC AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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