

# Housing Discrimination Against People With Vouchers Is Illegal In Maryland!



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION:

### 1 IS IT ILLEGAL TO REFUSE TO RENT TO SOMEONE BECAUSE THEY USE A VOUCHER TO PAY THEIR RENT IN MARYLAND?

Yes! It is illegal for a landlord to discriminate against you based on how you pay your rent. This is because source of income is one of the protected identities included in Maryland's fair housing law. Common examples include Housing Choice Vouchers, Rapid Rehousing subsidies, and other rental assistance programs.

### 2 WHAT DOES ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH VOUCHERS LOOK LIKE?

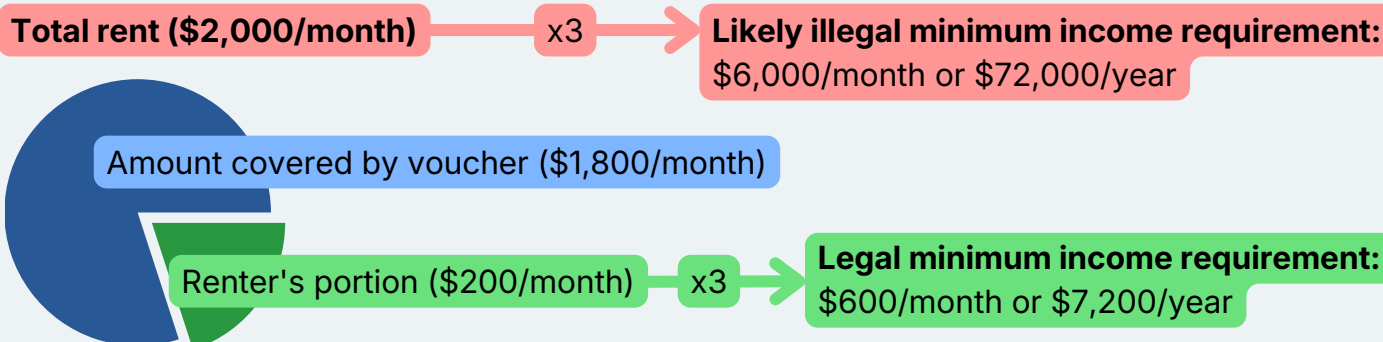
Some common examples include:

- A landlord tells you that they won't accept vouchers;
- An advertisement states "no Section 8 accepted" or "we do not accept vouchers";
- A landlord charges a higher rent or security deposit because you pay with a voucher or subsidy;
- A property manager refuses to fill out and submit the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) packet to your local Housing Authority; or,
- A housing provider has a minimum income requirement that would disqualify any voucher holder's application. For example, requiring applicants to make \$100,000 per year would likely automatically disqualify any applications from voucher holders.

### 3 CAN MINIMUM INCOME REQUIREMENTS APPLY TO VOUCHER HOLDERS?

Many landlords require applicants to meet a minimum income requirement, such as three times the amount of monthly rent. If you are using a voucher to pay part of or all of your rent, a landlord can only require that you meet the income requirement for your portion of rent.

#### EXAMPLE MINIMUM INCOME REQUIREMENT CALCULATIONS FOR A VOUCHER HOLDER:



### 4 CAN LANDLORDS REJECT A VOUCHER HOLDER BASED ON CREDIT?

It depends. If your entire rent is covered by the voucher (i.e. your portion of the monthly rent is \$0), then it is likely illegal for a landlord to deny you based on your credit. If you pay a portion of your monthly rent, then landlords can generally consider your credit score and credit history. However, landlords should consider an applicant's credit on a case-by-case basis to avoid discrimination.

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If you do not have sufficient credit, providers should conduct an individual review of evidence of:

- Your history of paying rent,
- Your history of paying other bills, and/or
- other evidence of your ability to pay rent on time.

### 5 **WHAT OTHER LEGAL PROTECTIONS EXIST FOR HOUSING VOUCHER HOLDERS IN MARYLAND?**

Landlords might discriminate against voucher holders as a way to avoid renting to people based on another characteristic, like familial status or race, which is also illegal.

The federal Fair Housing Act makes it illegal to discriminate against someone in housing based on their race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status (the presence of children in the household under the age of 18). Maryland's state fair housing law makes it illegal to discriminate on the basis of 4 additional protected classes that are not covered by the Fair Housing Act. These include marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and source of income.

### 6 **WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I'M DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN HOUSING?**

You can report possible housing discrimination to the Equal Rights Center by calling 202-234-3062 or emailing [info@equalrightscenter.org](mailto:info@equalrightscenter.org). People who experience housing discrimination in Maryland can also file a complaint with the [Maryland Commission on Civil Rights](#).

### 7 **HOW CAN THE ERC HELP?**



**Civil rights testing:** Trained civil rights testers pose as potential renters, buyers, or borrowers to find out if and how discrimination is occurring.



**Advocacy:** Advocating on your behalf with a housing provider to address possible discrimination.



**Fair housing complaint:** Assisting you with filing a housing discrimination complaint with the [Maryland Commission on Civil Rights](#).

## CONTACT US:



202-234-3062



[info@equalrightscenter.org](mailto:info@equalrightscenter.org)



[equalrightscenter.org](http://equalrightscenter.org)

*The information contained in this publication is not legal advice and should not be construed as such. For legal advice, please contact an attorney.*

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