

# HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST VOUCHER HOLDERS IN DC IS ILLEGAL!



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION:

### **1 IS IT ILLEGAL TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST SOMEONE BECAUSE THEY USE A VOUCHER TO PAY THEIR RENT IN WASHINGTON, DC?**

Yes! According to DC's local fair housing law, "source of income" is a protected class. That means it is illegal for a landlord to discriminate against you based on how you pay your rent (as long as it's lawful!).

### **2 WHAT DOES ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS VOUCHER HOLDERS LOOK LIKE?**

Some common examples include:

- Stating "no Section 8 accepted" or "we do not accept voucher holders" in advertisements
- Charging a higher rent or security deposit because you pay with a voucher or subsidy

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

No! Many landlords require applicants to meet a minimum income requirement. Often an applicant must make 3 or 4 times the amount of monthly rent. If you are using a voucher to pay part of or all of your rent, a landlord cannot apply a minimum income requirement to you. (In limited instances, a housing provider may be required to verify an applicant's income due to federal law.)

### **4 CAN LANDLORDS REJECT VOUCHER HOLDERS 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. Additionally, landlords cannot deny you based on:

- Credit score (or the lack of a credit score) or
- Credit issues or late or nonpayment of rent that occurred prior to you receiving your voucher.

### **5 WHAT OTHER LEGAL PROTECTIONS EXIST FOR HOUSING VOUCHER HOLDERS IN WASHINGTON, DC?**

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). The DC Human Rights Act makes it illegal to discriminate on the basis of 12 additional protected classes that are not covered by the Fair Housing Act. 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.

*Last updated September 1, 2022*

## WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I BELIEVE I'VE BEEN 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).

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