

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Have you ever been discriminated against when looking to rent or purchase housing?

As a recipient of federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Armstrong County is responsible to further fair housing. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act prohibits housing discrimination regarding the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, sex, handicap (disability), and familial status (families with children). The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act adds the additional protected classes of age and ancestry.

It is unlawful to refuse to rent, lease, sell, or negotiate housing; to make housing unavailable or deny a dwelling; to set different terms, conditions or privileges for sale, lease, or rental of a dwelling; to provide different housing services for facilities; to falsely deny that housing is available for inspection, sale, lease, or rent; to persuade owners to sell, lease, or rent (blockbusting); to deny anyone access to or membership in a facility or service (such as a multiple listing service) related to the sale, lease, or rental of housing; to refuse to make a mortgage loan or to provide information regarding loans; to impose different terms or conditions on a loan, such as different interest rates, points or fees; to discriminate in appraising property; and to refuse to purchase a loan or set different terms or conditions for purchasing a loan.

It is also illegal for anyone:

- To threaten, coerce, intimidate or interfere with anyone exercising a fair housing right or assisting others who exercise that right; or to advertise or make any statement that indicates a limitation or preference based on race, religion, national origin, sex, handicap (disability), familial status (families with children), age, or ancestry.
- To refuse to make reasonable modifications to a dwelling or common use area at the expense of the physically or mentally disabled person (including hearing, mobility and visual impairments, chronic alcoholism, chronic mental illness, AIDS, AIDS Related Complex, and mental retardation that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such a disability, or are regarded as having such a disability) to use the housing. Where reasonable, the landlord may permit changes if both parties agree to restore the property back to its original condition.
- To refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing, unless a building or community qualifies as housing for older persons; to discriminate based on familial status (families with children; families in which one or more children under 18 live with a parent, a person who has legal custody or the designee of the parent or legal guardian; pregnant women, and anyone securing legal custody of a child under 18).

If you have ever experienced one of the issues above, you may have experienced unlawful discrimination and should contact Kathy A. Heilman, Community Development Coordinator/Fair Housing Officer, Armstrong County Department of Planning and Development, 402 Market Street, Kittanning, PA 16201; Phone: 724.548.3223; FAX: 724.545.7050; TTY: 1.800.654.5984; email: kaheilman@co.armstrong.pa.us; or website: co.armstrong.pa.us.

Fair Housing is the Law and it is your Right.

