

WHAT PRECAUTIONS CAN RENTERS TAKE?

We all benefit when housing consumers are informed about their rights under fair housing laws. There are very few decisions we make in life that are more important than where we decide to live. It is a very personal decision and there are many factors to consider. As a renter, you should know that many housing providers train their employees and work hard to ensure that their agents comply with fair housing laws. Despite these efforts, not all housing providers are as conscientious and compliant. Unfortunately, unlawful housing discrimination does still occur and it is not always obvious to prospective renters. While there is nothing that renters can do to prevent housing discrimination, there are some steps that you can take to protect yourself in the unfortunate event that illegal discrimination occurs:



- **Keep a Written Record/Take Notes**

Keeping a journal or written record is generally a very good idea when a person is searching for housing, contending with an eviction or non-renewal of a lease, or dealing with harassment or some other discriminatory practice. Keeping track of dates and times of all contacts with housing providers and agents can be very useful should it be needed later to recount the events involving an alleged discriminatory housing practice. Use this Rental Search Log to take notes and to keep track of your housing search.

- **Save Documents**

As you search for housing, it is always a good idea to save receipts, copies of advertisements or listings, rental applications, leases, business cards, correspondence, emails, brochures, and any other materials obtained from a housing provider or agent. These documents might be needed in the future.

- **Obtain Names and Confirm Details**

Once you obtain contact information for an agent, write it down on a Rental Contact Sheet in this Rental Search Log. When you contact a housing provider in person, over the telephone, or even by email, it is always a good idea to offer your name early on in the conversation and ask for the name of the person with whom you are communicating. If you are using a rental subsidy, try to ask about the available housing, its location, and a possible appointment to view the housing before mentioning the subsidy. If the agent or housing provider is unwilling to rent to you or show you the apartment once you have disclosed the subsidy, ask them why.

- **Avoid Confrontation**

If you are turned down for any reason, do not argue with the agent or confront the agent about their conduct. Simply thank the agent for the information, and write a short note that describes what happened to you in your Rental Search Log. Do not accuse the agent of violating fair housing laws or suggest any illegality on their part. Putting agents on notice that they are violating the law may simply make it harder for others to corroborate and document their illegal conduct.