

# WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN HOUSING

The sale and purchase of a home is one of the most significant events that any person will experience in their lifetime. It is more than the simple purchase of housing, for it includes the hopes, dreams, aspirations, and economic destiny of those involved.

## THE LAW

### Civil Rights Act of 1866

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 prohibits all racial discrimination in the sale or rental of property.

### Fair Housing Act

The Fair Housing Act declares a national policy of fair housing throughout the United States. The law makes illegal any discrimination in the sale, lease or rental of housing, or making housing otherwise unavailable, because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

### Americans with Disabilities Act

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against the disabled in places of public accommodations and commercial facilities.

### Equal Credit Opportunity Act

The Equal Credit Opportunity Act makes discrimination unlawful with respect to any aspect of a credit application on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age or because all or part of the applicant's income derives from any public assistance program.

### State and Local Laws

State and Local laws often provide broader coverage and prohibit discrimination based on additional classes not covered by federal law.

## THE RESPONSIBILITIES

The home seller, the home seeker, and the real estate professional all have rights and responsibilities under the law.

### For the Home Seller

You should know that as a home seller or landlord you have a responsibility and a requirement under the law not to discriminate in the sale, rental and financing of property on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin. You cannot instruct the licensed broker or salesperson acting as your agent to convey for you any limitations in the sale or rental, because the real estate professional is also bound by law not to discriminate. Under the law, a home seller or landlord cannot establish discriminatory terms or conditions in the purchase or rental; deny that housing is available or advertise that the property is available only to persons of a certain race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

### For the Home Seeker

You have the right to expect that housing will be available to you without discrimination or other limitations based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

This includes the right to expect:

- housing in your price range made available to you without discrimination
- equal professional service
- the opportunity to consider a broad range of housing choices
- no discriminatory limitations on communities or locations of housing
- no discrimination in the financing, appraising or insuring of housing
- reasonable accommodations in rules, practices and procedures for persons with disabilities
- non-discriminatory terms and conditions for the sale, rental, financing, or insuring of a dwelling
- to be free from harassment or intimidation for exercising your fair housing rights.

### For the Real Estate Professional

As a home seller or home seeker, you should know that the term REALTOR® identifies a licensed professional in real estate who is a member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. Not all licensed real estate brokers and salespersons are members of the National Association, and only those who are can identify themselves as REALTORS®. They conduct their business and activities in accordance with a strict Code of Ethics. As agents in a real estate transaction, licensed brokers or salespersons are prohibited by law from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin. A request from the home seller or landlord to act in a discriminatory manner in the sale, lease or rental cannot legally be fulfilled by the real estate professional.

## DEED AND PROPERTY COVENANTS OR RESTRICTIONS OF RECORD

During the history of our country, some persons have placed restrictions on property based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin. Generally, these restrictions are void and unenforceable, with limited exceptions for particular types of religious housing and housing for older persons. The publication of these void restrictions may convey a message that the restrictions continue to be valid. Any time a sales associate or broker is asked to provide a copy of the covenants or restrictions of record relating to the use of a property the following message should be included:

*These documents may contain restrictions or covenants based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin. Such restrictions or covenants generally are void and unenforceable as violations of fair housing laws.*

*Be assured that all property is marketed and made available without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin. Should you have any questions regarding such restrictions, please contact your attorney.*