

FAIR HOUSING: HARASSMENT

It is illegal to discriminate in housing based on federal, and all applicable state and local protected classes.

Federal:

- race
- color
- sex
- national origin
- religion
- familial status
- disability

Maryland:

- gender identity
- marital status
- military status
- sexual orientation
- source of income

Anne Arundel County:

- age
- ancestry
- citizenship
- creed
- marital status
- occupation
- sexual orientation
- source of income
- gender identity or expression

TYPES OF HARASSMENT

**QUID PRO QUO
HARASSMENT**

Quid pro quo, or “this for that” harassment occurs when someone makes an unwelcome request or demand, and compliance becomes a condition for buying, renting, or accessing housing.¹

**HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT
HARASSMENT**

Hostile environment harassment occurs when severe or pervasive unwelcome behavior interferes with a person’s ability to use, sell or rent their housing.¹

EXAMPLES OF HARASSMENT

**SEXUAL
HARASSMENT**

A property manager agrees to lower rent for an applicant in exchange for sending suggestive photographs.

**RELIGIOUS
HARASSMENT**

A tenant makes negative comments about his neighbor’s religion or the religious clothing they wear.

**NATIONAL ORIGIN
HARASSMENT**

A landlord demands his tenants speak English whenever he hears them speaking a language other than English.

¹24 CFR Part 100 “Quid Pro Quo and Hostile Environment Harassment and Liability for Discriminatory Housing Practices Under the Fair Housing Act”

WHO CAN BE HELD RESPONSIBLE?

Any person involved in providing housing or involved in a real-estate-related transaction can be held responsible for harassment. This may include landlords, building managers, real estate agents, and maintenance technicians. A housing provider may be held responsible for staff members who commit harassment.

BEST PRACTICES

- Have a written anti-harassment policy that is easily accessible to all employees and includes processes to report harassment and a commitment to no-retaliation
- Educate all employees, agents, staff, residents, and contractors
- Consider all reports seriously
- Document actions taken to prevent harassment
- Enforce policies and establish sanctions against anyone who engages in quid pro quo or hostile environment harassment

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [HUD: Questions and Answers on Sexual Harassment under the FHA, 2008](#)
- [HUD Final Rule: Quid Pro Quo and Hostile Environment Harassment and Liability for Discriminatory Housing Practices under the FHA, 2016](#)
- [HUD Fact Sheet Addressing Harassment for Property Owners and Managers](#)
- [HUD Fact Sheet Addressing Shared Ancestry Discrimination](#)
- [ERC: Sexual Harassment and Fair Housing Toolkit](#)
- [ERC: Combating Sexual Harassment in Housing Requires Prioritizing the Safety of Survivors](#)
- [ERC: Sexual Harassment and Fair Housing \(Youtube Video\)](#)

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I BELIEVE I'VE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN HOUSING?

You can report housing discrimination to the ERC by calling 202-234-3062 or emailing info@equalrightscenter.org. You can also file a complaint directly with HUD on their [website](#) or with the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights on their [website](#).

HOW CAN THE ERC HELP?



Civil rights testing

Trained civil rights testers pose as persons seeking housing to find out if and how discrimination is occurring.



Fair housing complaint

Assisting you with filing a housing discrimination complaint with HUD or the appropriate state/local agency.



Reasonable accommodations & modifications

Assisting people with disabilities with requesting reasonable accommodations or modifications.



Advocacy

Advocating on your behalf (ie. requesting a policy change) with a housing provider to address possible discrimination.