

# What is the Fair Housing Act?



The **Fair Housing Act (FHA)** is a U.S. law enacted in 1968. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), “fair housing” means the right to choose your housing free from discrimination. The FHA strives to ensure that no one is discriminated against in housing dealings based on someone’s protected classes such as family status, race, religion, disability, national origin, sex, or color.

Under the FHA, it is **ILLEGAL** for a real estate agent, property manager, property owner, or landlord to treat individuals differently because of their national origin.

If a housing provider treats refugees differently, it may constitute national origin discrimination.

## What might discrimination based on national origin look like?

It is when a real estate agent, property manager, proper owner, or landlord:

- Discourages or recommends specific communities or housing units based on a prospective tenant’s origin (*HUD Steering*)
- Refuses to rent to a prospective applicant because they are a refugee OR because they do not speak English, or speak with an accent
- Increases rent or charges a higher security deposit because the tenant is a refugee

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## How to File a Complaint

Housing discrimination is illegal, and if a refugee has been discriminated against, they have the legal right to file a fair housing complaint. They can file a housing charge of discrimination by:

- Calling HUD at **(800) 669-9777**
- Send an email to [Complaintoffice05@hud.org](mailto:Complaintoffice05@hud.org) (*HUD Fair Housing Filing a Complaint*)

## Additional Resources

- [Refugees and Fair Housing Law - What Every Provider Should Know](#)
- [Stop the Hate Fair Housing Laws Protect Immigrants, Refugees, and People of All Religious Faith. FACT SHEET](#)

### Sources

- *File a complaint – Main Page*. HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). (n.d.). Retrieved April 26, 2022, from [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/online-complaint](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/online-complaint)
- *Examples of housing discrimination*. HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). (n.d.). Retrieved April 26, 2022, from [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/examples\\_housing\\_discrimination](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/examples_housing_discrimination)
- *Refugees and fair housing law – what every provider should know*. Fair Housing Forum. (n.d.). Retrieved April 26, 2022, from <https://fairhousingforum.org/providers/refugees-and-fair-housing-law-what-every-provider-should-know-today>