

THE FAIR HOUSING ACT

The Fair Housing Act is a federal law that prohibits discrimination in all types of housing transactions based on disability, among other protected classes.

Enacted in 1968, the Act makes it illegal to discriminate against any person in the sale, rental or financing of housing and other housing-related activities based on their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or familial status. The Act applies to a broad range of persons and entities, including but not limited to property owners, landlords, housing managers, public housing agencies, real estate agents, brokerage service agencies and banks.

The Act was amended in 1988 to [include protections for people with disabilities](#). It defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities. Those covered by the law may not discriminate against applicants or residents because of their disability or the disability of anyone associated with them. They are also prohibited from treating persons with disabilities less favorably than others because of their disability.

The *Fair Housing Act* is enforced by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) and the U.S. Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)). It provides a baseline for anti-discrimination protections. Some states (including New York State) and localities have their own fair housing laws that provide additional protections and cover more categories of individuals.

