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A public service message from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in partnership with the Palm Beach County Office of Equal Opportunity. The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status or disability. Palm Beach County's Fair Housing Ordinance also prohibits discrimination in housing because of age, marital status, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation.



6. How do I report incidents of housing discrimination?

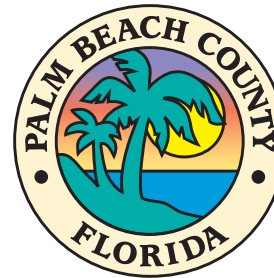
There are several ways you can file a complaint.

If you would like to begin the process of filing a complaint of discrimination, you are encouraged to visit the OEO's website: www.pbcgov.com/equalopportunity to complete the Housing Discrimination Complaint Intake Questionnaire.

Additionally, you may also contact the OEO at: **(561) 355-4884** or **(561) 355-1517 (TTY/TDD)** to begin the process of filing a complaint of discrimination or if you have a disability or you otherwise have difficulty with accessing the website or need a language interpreter.

7. Is OEO assistance available in languages other than English?

Yes. OEO has documents and informational brochures translated into Creole and Spanish. OEO also uses phone interpreter services that allow us to assist people in other languages. Please contact OEO at **(561) 355-4884** or **(561) 355-1517 (TTY/TDD)** to request documents in another language.



**Palm Beach County
Board of County Commissioners**

Office of Equal Opportunity
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Ph: (561) 355-4884 - Fax: (561) 355-4932
www.pbcgov.com/equalopportunity

*"An Equal Opportunity
Affirmative Action Employer"*

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING IS NOT ALLOWED AGAINST IMMIGRANTS



IMMIGRATION STATUS AND HOUSING DISCRIMINATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



1. Does immigration status affect whether a person is covered by Palm Beach County's Fair Housing Ordinance and the Fair Housing Act?

No. Every person in the United States is protected by the Palm Beach County's Fair Housing Ordinance and the Fair Housing Act. A person's immigration status does not affect his or her local or federal fair housing rights or responsibilities. Fair Housing laws in Palm Beach County prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, sexual orientation, age, marital status and gender identity or expression. Such discrimination is illegal regardless of the victim's immigration status.

Examples:

- If a landlord refuses to rent to someone because of a person's religion, that is illegal discrimination regardless of immigration status.
- If a landlord charges a different price or asks for additional identification documents because of a person's national origin, that is illegal discrimination regardless of immigration status.
- If a lender offers different terms on a mortgage to a prospective homebuyer because of the homebuyer's race, that is illegal discrimination regardless of immigration status.

2. Does the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) ask about the immigration status of people who file fair housing complaints?

No, OEO does not ask about immigration status when people file complaints.

3. What is National Origin discrimination?

National origin discrimination is different treatment in housing because of a person's ancestry, ethnicity, birthplace, culture, or language, and it is illegal. This means people cannot be denied housing opportunities because they or their family are from another country, because they have a name or accent associated with a national origin group, because they participate in certain customs associated with a national origin group, or because they are married to or associate with people of a certain national origin.

Examples of potential national origin discrimination include:

- Refusing to rent to persons whose primary language is other than English;
- Offering different rent rates based on ethnicity;
- Steering prospective buyers or renters to or away from certain neighborhoods because of their ancestry; and
- Failing to provide the same level of service or housing amenities because a tenant was born in another country.

4. What can I do if a landlord or neighbor threatens to report me, a family member or friends to ICE if we report housing discrimination to OEO?

It is illegal to coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with a person's exercise or enjoyment of rights granted or protected by fair housing laws. This includes threats to report a person to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) if they report housing discrimination to OEO. OEO does not inquire about immigration status when investigating claims of housing discrimination.

If you have filed or are considering filing a complaint with OEO but are concerned that you or someone in your household will be reported to ICE, please consult ICE's policy on individuals pursuing legitimate civil rights complaints. If you do come into contact with ICE after you have filed an OEO complaint, you should let ICE know that you are pursuing a Fair Housing complaint with OEO. For more information, see the Memorandum issued on June 17, 2011, by ICE Director John Morton "Prosecutorial Discretion: Certain Victims, Witnesses, and Plaintiffs." Available at: <http://www.ice.gov/doclib/secure-communities/pdf/domestic-violence.pdf>

For the most up to date version of this policy, please check <http://www.ice.gov>

5. Can landlords ask for immigration documents?

Landlords are allowed to request documentation and conduct inquiries to determine whether a potential renter meets the criteria for rental, so long as this same procedure is applied to all potential renters. Landlords can ask for identity documents and institute credit checks to ensure ability to pay rent. However, a person's ability to pay rent or fitness as a tenant is not necessarily connected to his or her immigration status.

Procedures to screen potential and existing tenants for citizenship and immigration status may violate fair housing laws' prohibitions on national origin housing discrimination. OEO will investigate complaints alleging that a landlord inquired into a person's immigration status or citizenship to see whether national origin discrimination may have occurred.

Landlords should remember that their policies must be consistent. If they ask for information from one person or group, they must ask for the same information from all applicants and tenants. Potential renters and home buyers cannot be treated differently because of their race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, familial status, sexual orientation, age, marital status and gender identity or expression.