



Fair Housing & Your Home Search

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discriminatory practices when buying and selling homes, renting properties, getting a mortgage, or seeking housing assistance.

The law covers most types of housing. Landlords, property managers, builders, and real estate agents have different compliance guidelines.

The law prohibits housing discrimination based on seven protected classes:

- Race
- National origin
- Color
- Familial status
- Sex
- Disability
- Religion

Agents cannot engage in any discriminatory behavior based on one of these protected classes. For example, a buyer's rep cannot steer you toward or away from a particular area, relying on race-based assumptions about where you want to live.



How does this affect your home search?

Many homebuyers want and expect their buyer's rep to help them make good choices. Buyers know that real estate agents are intimately familiar with various neighborhoods.

It's only logical that you'd be interested in your agent's professional advice.

However, Fair Housing laws make some topics off-limits. For example, your buyer's rep isn't allowed to answer questions like:

- Who lives here?
- Is the neighborhood safe?
- How are the schools?

Instead of sharing personal opinions, buyer's reps are instructed to suggest helpful resources so clients can do their research and draw their own conclusions.

For example, what makes you feel safe in a neighborhood? Some people will look at local crime rates, whereas others will use various subjective factors—factors that might overlap with one of the protected classes.

Under Fair Housing, it is unlawful for an agent to engage in any conduct that is discriminatory towards any of the seven protected classes.

Your buyer's rep can suggest the best websites and other helpful resources. But you get to form your own opinion about whether a home or a neighborhood is desirable.



It's a buyer's choice.

A real estate professional should show you any home in any neighborhood that fits your needs, your preferences, and your budget.

Your agent should never make assumptions about where you want to live or express their personal opinions.

On the other hand, you are allowed to rule out specific neighborhoods or properties based on any factor that is important to you.

Do your research and communicate your neighborhood preferences to your buyer's rep.

Ultimately, Fair Housing laws are designed to help all buyers achieve the dream of homeownership on their own terms.

The Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR®) designation is awarded by the Real Estate Buyer's Agent Council (REBAC), a subsidiary of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR).

To learn more about REBAC and access various home buyer resources, please visit [REBAC.net](https://www.rebac.net).

