



What is Fair Housing?

Fair housing is the right to equal opportunity in housing. The Federal Fair Housing Law is Title 8 of the [Civil Rights Act](#) and states that it is illegal to discriminate in the rental, sale or financing of housing. **Fair Housing** is your right to choose where you live free from **discrimination**.

How do people discriminate?

There are a number of ways that people discriminate. Fair housing laws recognize that people sometimes make decisions and limit other people's opportunity because they are making assumptions about them based on what they look like, what kind of accent they have, because they are poor, receive food stamps or because they have children. People who are looking for a place to live should only be judged on their qualifications (ability to pay, rental history etc...) not on the color of their skin, race, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability or public assistance.

What is Illegal?

The following actions, if taken because of a person's protected category, are unlawful according to fair housing law: refuse to rent or sell; refuse to consider for rental or sale; otherwise make unavailable or deny a dwelling; provide different services; treat people differently or subject them to harassment; say a dwelling is unavailable when it is, in fact

available; make print or publish a notice, statement or advertisement which indicates any preference, limitation or discrimination; coerce, intimidate, threaten or interfere with any person in housing or for filing or supporting a discrimination charge; discriminate in the making or purchasing of loans, or in the selling, brokering, or appraising or real estate; pressure people to sell their home because the neighborhood is “changing” ([block busting](#)). These are all categories protected under that law.

How does it Work?

The [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) and the [Maine Human Rights Commission](#) are charged with enforcing Fair Housing. HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO), one of the country’s largest civil rights agencies receives complaints, and works with local housing agencies as well as local nonprofit housing advocates to enforce the law. The Maine Human Rights Commission, the state agency, is responsible for administering and enforcing Maine’s fair housing laws.

How does Auburn play a role in Fair Housing?

The Auburn City Council has adopted the Analysis of the Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. The Cities of Auburn and Lewiston have identified impediments to fair housing choice and developed strategies to overcome the impediments. This report includes a review of Fair Housing laws, local policies that affect housing, a market overview of each city, housing occupancy, home mortgage data, population, discrimination data, recommendations, and strategies. The strategies include a five-year schedule of activities that will be carried out by the four partners in this effort, the Community Development Departments and the Housing Authorities of both cities.