What Are My Rights As A Tenant?

Do you need answers to questions such as:

- Can a landlord refuse to rent to me because I have children?
- Can I ask my landlord to install a ramp for my wheelchair?
- Can a landlord refuse to rent to me because I have AIDS?
- I'm looking for a home to purchase and the realtor is discouraging me from looking in Hampden. Is that legal?
- I was turned town from renting an apartment because the landlord said he doesn't rent to women with tattoos. Is that legal?

BNI investigates housing discrimination and informs tenants and landlords of their rights and responsibilities.

Housing discrimination issues are addressed through community education, investigation of complaints to uncover discriminatory practices, and enforcement through referral to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Maryland Commission on Human Relations, or litigation.

If you or somebody you know has been a *victim of housing discrimination*, contact BNI today.

BNI

For More Information, Contact Us (410)243-4400

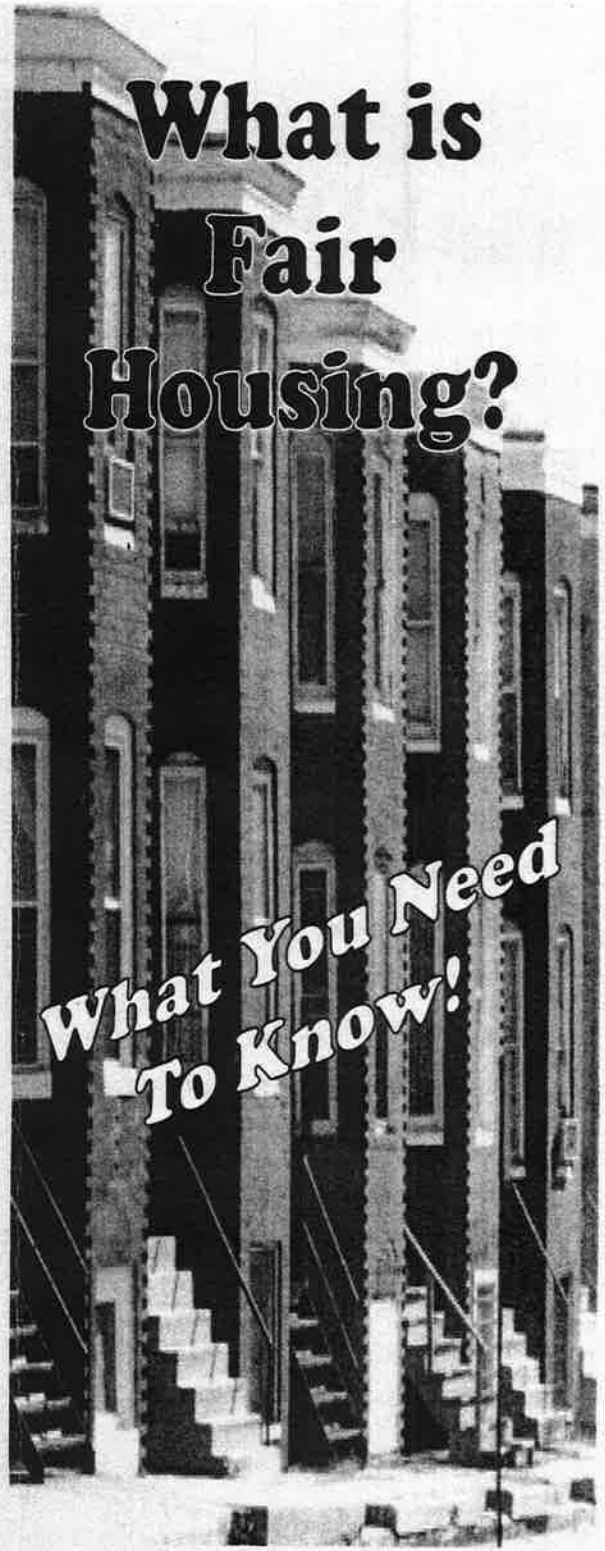
BALTIMORE NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.

www.bni-maryland.org

BNI
2217 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

Revised and reprinted with permission from the Los Angeles Housing Rights Center

What is Fair Housing?



What You Need To Know!

What Is Fair Housing?

Fair Housing means that you have the right to live where you choose without discrimination based on your personal characteristics. Fair housing laws protect your rights; they also enable fair housing organizations and governmental agencies to help you enforce your rights.

Do you know if you have been the victim of illegal housing discrimination? Housing discrimination can take many forms and many are subtle. Some examples of illegal discrimination in housing include:

- Refusing to rent a second-floor unit to a family with children.
- Applying different rent or mortgage interest rates based on an applicant's race, gender, or other protected category.
- Refusing to rent to a person who uses a wheelchair because it would be "inconvenient."
- Making repairs for tenants of one race or nationality, but not for others.

What Happens After I Make A Complaint?

BNI will investigate your complaint to determine if illegal discrimination may have occurred. BNI may conduct tests and surveys, interview witnesses, and gather documents. If evidence of discrimination is found, we will assist you in taking steps to achieve your goals, which may include conciliation (working with the housing provider to remedy the problem), referral to a government agency, including the Maryland Commission on Human Relations or the US Department of Housing and Urban Development or (in limited cases) litigation.

Why Should I Report Housing Discrimination?

BECAUSE...

- Many acts of discrimination can only be investigated if someone reports them.
- You have protection under the law against intimidation or harassment because you exercise your right to report discrimination under the fair housing laws.
- Reporting discrimination is the first step to stopping it in your community.

Civil rights laws promote a just and fair society. In the long run, a fair society is a better place for everyone to live in — renters, property owners, and home seekers. The laws that protect another person today may be the laws that will protect you tomorrow.

FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Gender
- National Origin
- Familial Status
  (* Families with children under18)
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Marital Status
- Age
- Or other Arbitrary Basis