

HAVE YOU BEEN DENIED HOUSING?

Note: Information provided by the Community Alliance of Tenants is for general educational use only. It is not a substitute for the advice of an attorney.

If you are denied subsidized housing you may have a right to a hearing. Call your local Legal Aid office. In Multnomah County the number is 503-224-4086.

In Oregon, Fair Housing Law protects all tenants against discrimination by landlords on the basis of **race, religion, color, national origin, mental or physical disability, marital status** (if you are married or divorced), and **source of income**.

Some cities also protect tenants from discrimination on the basis of their **age, gender identity and sexual orientation**.

Most tenants are protected against discrimination on the basis of their sex and their family status (if they have kids). Landlords who rent out space within their home **and** share living space with their tenants can discriminate against tenants because of their sex or because they have kids. **Only landlords who rent out and share common space in their home with tenants can do this!**

Call the **Fair Housing Council of Oregon** at 1-800-424-3247 if you feel you have been illegally discriminated against.

If a landlord denied you housing after you paid a screening fee, there are a few things you should know:

- 1. In order for a landlord to charge you a screening fee, they need to give the tenant:**
 - a. a written screening criteria (what the landlord requires in order for you to be able to live there)
 - b. written notice of how much the screening fee is
 - c. a written description of how the screening process works
 - d. written notice of your rights to dispute any incorrect information
- 2. The landlord also has to give a good-faith estimate of how many units of similar size are available** (including units they might own or manage in nearby areas) and **the number of applications the landlord has already accepted.**

If the landlord failed to comply with the above and didn't rent to you **OR** didn't do the screening and didn't refund your money within a reasonable time (probably 30 days) **you can sue for \$100 dollars and the screening fee.**

Many landlords use rental-reporting agencies to screen tenants. A landlord must tell you if you are denied because of this kind of report and s/he must give you the name and address of the reporting agency. If you are denied housing:

1) Ask the landlord if s/he used one of these agencies, and if so, which one (The landlord has to tell you).

2) Write to the agency and ask them for a copy of the report they have on you. Keep a copy of the request for your records. The report should be free if a landlord has requested a report on you within the last 30 days. Otherwise, the agency may charge you a fee. You can ask the agency about the policy on fees. If you think the landlord used a rental-reporting agency but s/he denies doing so, try contact the agencies listed below.

3) When you get the report, you have the right to request that it be changed if it is wrong. You will need to give the agency proof that the report is wrong. You can also ask the agency to re-investigate the information if you think it's not true. If you don't have proof that the report is wrong, you can ask that your 100-word explanation be added to your report.

4) If you are denied housing because of your credit report, or if your credit report has negatively impacted your rental situation in anyway (for example, if your landlord asks for a bigger deposit because of your credit history) either the landlord or the screening agency must give you the name and the address of the credit reporting agency they used. You are entitled to a free copy as long as you request it within 60 days of the denial, and you have the right to dispute any incorrect charges AND add a 100-word statement to the report.

5) If you need information from the **Multnomah County Court** go to the courthouse at 1021 SW 4th Ave, Room 210. You can also try to call 503-248-3022 from 8:30 am - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

RENTAL REPORTING AGENCIES

National Tenants
Network
525 SW First
Lake Oswego, OR 97034
503-635-1118

Background
Investigations
PO Box 2228
Lake Oswego, OR 97035
503-639-6000