



Religion and Reasonable Accommodations

The Fair Housing Act does not require housing providers to “reasonably accommodate” religious beliefs, observances, or practices. In other words, applicants or tenants cannot ask housing providers to modify housing terms due to their religious beliefs/practices.

If you believe you are a victim of housing discrimination, contact us at the telephone number below for assistance. Our staff will discuss the situation with you and help you decide what to do next.

When necessary, our staff can assist you in filing a complaint with the Arkansas Fair Housing Commission, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or other administrative or judicial bodies.



Contact Us

Jason Auer, Fair Housing Director
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714 S. Main St.
Jonesboro, AR 72401
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Helpline: 1-800-9LAW-AID
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A Fair Housing Guide for Religious Discrimination

LEGAL AID OF ARKANSAS
FAIR HOUSING PROJECT



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Religious Discrimination in Housing

The Fair Housing Act gives persons, regardless of religious background, specific protection.

Although the Act does not define religion, a housing provider cannot discriminate against any faith/belief system. This means that they cannot apply different housing terms, deny applications, or steer individuals to certain neighborhoods and buildings because of their religion.

Additionally, a housing provider cannot make disparaging comments about the appearance or practices of a religious group.

Exception

Religious organizations can give preference to its members in the sale, rental, or occupancy of non-commercial housing, as long as membership in the religion is not restricted on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

Examples of Housing Covered by Exception

- Housing in a monastery
- Housing facility for religious workers
- A retirement community that provides housing only for former religious workers

Commonly Asked Questions

Can a property owner or manager use an ad that targets only Christians?

- No. A property owner or manager cannot use advertising statements that give the impression that a certain religious group is preferred, such as “conveniently located near XYZ Church.”

Can a property owner or manager ask about an applicant or tenant’s religion?

- No. A property owner or manager cannot question applicants or tenants about their religious beliefs.

Can a property owner or manager refuse to rent to someone who does not believe in God?

- No. A property owner or manager cannot differentiate based on an applicant’s religion or lack of religion.

Can a property owner or manager rent out apartments only to people of his/her own faith?

- No. A property owner or manager cannot impose his/her own religious beliefs on renters nor can the housing provider treat applicants of his/her own faith differently from people of other faiths.

Commonly Asked Questions

Can a property owner or manager be held liable for the actions of other tenants?

- Yes. A property owner or manager may be held liable if he/she fails to investigate or take appropriate action to protect a resident from religious harassment by other tenants.

Can a property owner or manager prohibit certain religious decorations during holidays?

- No. For instance, a property owner or manager cannot permit outdoor displays of Christmas decorations while refusing to allow residents of other religions to decorate in celebration of their religious holidays.

Can a property owner or manager restrict the use of apartment facilities to certain religious groups?

- No. For instance, a property owner or manager cannot permit Christian groups to use community rooms while refusing to allow residents of other religions to use the space.