

The Lawrence Human Relations Commission and Human Relations Division is a civil rights enforcement agency.

It investigates complaints from persons alleging they have been discriminated against in housing because of race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, ancestry, sexual orientation or disability, in addition to familial status in housing.

Chapter X, Article 1 of the Code of the City of Lawrence, Kansas as amended, authorizes the agency to receive, investigate, decide, and attempt to conciliate a complaint or complaints alleging discrimination, segregation, or separation in housing inside the city limits and to hold public hearings.

**Lawrence Human Relations Commission
and Human Relations Division
1006 New Hampshire
Lawrence, Kansas 66044
(785) 832-3310**

If you have questions about your rights or responsibilities under fair housing laws, contact the specialists in the Human Relations Division for a consultation.

They can also provide you with copies of Chapter X, Article 1 of the Code of the City of Lawrence, Kansas, the Kansas Residential Landlord and Tenant Act, the Mobile Home Parks Landlord and Tenant Act, as well as informational brochures and posters.

City of Lawrence, Kansas
Legal Department
Human Relations Division
and
Human Relations Commission

1006 New Hampshire
P.O. Box 708
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

Phone: 785-832-3310
Fax: 785-832-3315

Email: humanrelations@ci.lawrence.ks.us



Landlords, Owners, & Property Managers



Information

City of Lawrence, Kansas



City of Lawrence



Advertising

Housing providers have to be careful not to use ads that say, "Perfect house for couple," or "Christian family preferred." As a rule, ads should not contain words that express a preference based on a protected class. Ads should describe the property and not the tenant. In addition, human models used in sales or rental ads and in brochures and other advertising material should reflect the community's diversity.

Screening Applicants

If you're a housing provider one way to reduce the probability of having a complaint filed against you is to treat everyone the same. Having written guidelines that you follow with each applicant may help you treat everyone the same. Therefore whether you're managing hundreds of units for a large company or an individual who owns and rents a few units you should establish written guidelines for everything: from how you expect the rent to be paid, to your eviction process to how you expect tenant's to behave while living in your dwelling.

Drafting Tenant and Community Rules

A good rule to follow when drafting rules or regulations is to draft them so they don't single out children or members of a protected class. Rather than having a sign that says, "Children are prohibited from running in the common areas," say "No running in the common areas." Instead of saying, "children keep off the grass," have the sign read, "Keep off the grass." Rules and regulations should apply to ALL residents.

Dealing with Problem Tenants

When tenants break the rules, you should apply the consequences fairly, consistently and according to established procedures. What consequences you apply depends on your procedures and on the records you've kept. Some of the records that you should keep include complaints that tenants file against other tenants; complaints that involve the police; letters that you sent to and received from the tenant about lease violations as well as other relevant letters and information. Keeping detailed and accurate records will be important if you have to defend why you evicted the tenant. If you don't keep good records, or if you keep poor records, proving that you evicted a tenant for a non-discriminatory reason may be more difficult.

Handling Maintenance Requests

Does your staff process repair requests from some tenants more quickly than from others? If so, it could lead to a fair housing complaint. Generally, repairs should be done in the order that they are received with emergency repairs taking precedence over routine repairs.

Disabled Tenants

If someone is disabled you cannot refuse to rent to them because of their disability. Just as important, though the law requires that you allow someone who is disabled, at their expense, to make reasonable modifications to their unit if such modifications will allow the disabled person full enjoyment of the premises.

In many circumstances, a housing provider may condition approval of the modification on having the tenant establish an escrow fund to pay to have the unit restored to its original condition when the tenant moves. The housing provider can also ask for assurances that the modification will be done in a professional manner.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can be any unwelcome sexually suggestive or inappropriate language, touching, gestures, demands or conditions made towards or about another person. Housing providers should be concerned about two types of sexual harassment: residents sexually harassing other residents or staff, and staff sexually harassing other residents or other staff.

Housing providers should take allegations of sexual harassment seriously. Taking allegations of sexual harassment seriously begins by having a written policy that explains what sexual harassment is and establishes that it will not be tolerated.

Maintenance staff can also be targets of sexual harassment complaints. Therefore maintenance staff should be trained to enter apartments only after scheduling an appointment. Even if they schedule an appointment maintenance staff should not enter an apartment if it questionable to do so. For example, if the tenant is not properly dressed or if they are in the shower the maintenance staff may want to return later.

Once you've established a sexual harassment policy make sure all staff are properly trained on it and then distribute the policy to all residents.

Whether you want to just talk, obtain more information, or take action to remedy a situation, you may contact the Lawrence Human Relations Division. One of our highly trained Human Relations Specialists can answer your questions or make a referral.



City of Lawrence