



HOUSING RIGHTS INITIATIVE

Know your rights as a rent voucher holder!

Since 2019, it is **illegal** for landlords and real estate brokers in New York State to refuse to show and/or rent apartments to people because they receive government assistance to pay their rent. In other words, you cannot be treated differently by a broker or landlord simply because you use a voucher to cover some or all of your rent. While this form of discrimination is very common, it is often difficult to detect because it is not always explicit.

Some explicit examples of source of income discrimination:

- “No Government Programs,” or a similar phrase on listing
- “We do not take section 8”
- “The owner of this building doesn’t work with programs”

Some of the more ambiguous ways that you can be discriminated against include:

- Landlord having minimum income requirements that are impossible for a voucher holder
- Requiring a minimum credit score if the tenant’s voucher covers the entire rent
- Landlord or broker telling the voucher holder that they’re “unsure of the policy,” but will get back to them with an answer, only to “ghost” them and never actually return their call.

While searching for an apartment as a voucher holder:

- Make sure that you document where you found the listing, preferably by taking a picture or a screenshot.
- Make sure to record the complete address of the unit you are seeking, including the apartment number.
- Make sure to record the full name, title, and phone number or email address of the person you speak to.

Keeping track of this information could be helpful for you to enforce your rights. If you are a voucher holder and suspect that you have been discriminated against because you have a voucher, you can **contact the NYS Division on Human Rights by calling (914) 989-3120 or the NYS Attorney General Letitia James’ office at (800) 771-7755** to file a claim.

Remember, it is illegal for landlords and real estate agents to refuse to show or rent an apartment to you because you have a voucher.

For more information please feel free to contact us at discrimination@housingrightsny.org.