



FACT SHEET:

Housing Provider Obligations to Prevent and Address Religious Discrimination in HUD-Assisted Housing

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d, et seq., and its implementing regulations, 24 C.F.R. 1 (collectively, Title VI), prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2023, HUD published a fact sheet describing ways in which the protections of Title VI cover persons who are or are perceived to be Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, or of another religious group. As explained in that fact sheet, Title VI extends to discrimination based on actual or

perceived (i) shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics or (ii) citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity.

This fact sheet describes the obligations of HUD-assisted housing providers to prevent and address illegal discrimination, and in particular, to address discriminatory harassment against persons who are or are perceived to be Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, or of another religious group. Note that while this fact sheet focuses on obligations under Title VI, other civil rights laws may also apply.¹

Harassment that is based on a protected characteristic is illegal. Illegal harassment may include severe or pervasive offensive remarks or hostile behavior.



Examples of discriminatory harassment by landlords, their agents, or tenants in a housing context include:

- A property manager repeatedly asking a Sikh tenant to disperse his gathering with friends and family in a common space, when similar requests are not made of other tenants
- A tenant constantly watching another tenant who dresses in a manner associated with the Islamic faith, confronting the tenant in common areas, and calling the tenant a “terrorist”
- A tenant repeatedly yelling antisemitic slurs at a Jewish tenant
- A tenant repeatedly taking down or defacing another tenant’s religious symbol displayed on their apartment door, when such displays are permitted by property management
- A tenant yelling at other tenants to “speak English” whenever he hears them speaking in a language other than English

Housing providers—including public housing agencies, HUD-assisted housing owners and managers, and landlords that accept tenant-based or project-based vouchers—are responsible for making sure housing is free from discrimination, which includes preventing and addressing discriminatory harassment in housing. Tenants have a right to complain and have the harassment stopped. Remedies for illegal harassment may include money damages for harm caused by the harassment, transfer to new housing, and/or an order requiring the landlord to stop the harassment and take steps to prevent future occurrences.

To protect tenants’ right to

harassment-free housing, housing providers should:

- Ensure that their agents and employees do not harass tenants.
- Investigate allegations of discriminatory harassment, take steps to stop harassment, and inform tenants about actions taken, where appropriate.
- Protect from retaliation anyone who reports harassment or makes a complaint.
- Tell residents and voucher program participants how to file a civil rights complaint, including a Title VI or Fair Housing Act complaint, with HUD.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

What can a person do if they experience discrimination?

Anyone who believes that they have been discriminated against in a HUD-assisted program or activity based on their race, color, or national origin (including shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, and citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity) can file a complaint with HUD's [Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity \(FHEO\)](#). You may file a complaint by mail, [online](#), or by phone (1-800-669-9777). You can file a complaint with FHEO whether or not you are a U.S. citizen. HUD welcomes and is prepared to receive calls from individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as individuals with speech and communication disabilities. To learn more about how to make an accessible telephone call, please visit the [Federal Communications Commission's Telecommunications Relay Service webpage](#). You may also ask for disability-related assistance when you contact FHEO, including reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids and services for effective communication on matters related to your complaint.

Visit HUD's [Discrimination on the Basis of Religion, Shared Ancestry, or Ethnic Characteristics webpage](#) for more information.

¹ Several legal authorities explicitly prohibit discrimination in housing on the basis of religion. These include the following:

- **The Fair Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3601-19 Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968** (Fair Housing Act), as amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, because of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), familial status, national origin, and disability. It also requires that all federal programs relating to housing and urban development be administered in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing.
- **Section 109 of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, 42 U.S.C. § 5309** (Section 109) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), and religion in any program or activity funded in whole or in part under Title I of the Community Development Act of 1974, which includes Community Development Block Grants.