

# ARE YOU LOOKING FOR RENTAL HOUSING?

## WHAT LANDLORDS CAN CONSIDER

You are protected from discrimination based on race, religion, gender, family structure, disability, source of income, ability, and many other factors.

- Your application cannot be denied because you have bad credit or no credit.
- A landlord cannot ask questions about or deny your application based on sealed eviction records, eviction cases over 3 years old, or eviction cases that did not result in a judgment for the landlord.
- You may not be denied because you were accused of violating a lease in the past if the violations were related to:
  - domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault
  - being a victim or witness of a crime
  - a household member's disability.

## BEFORE YOU PAY AN APPLICATION FEE,

Landlords must tell you their financial, employment, criminal, and rental history requirements **in writing** before taking an application fee. This includes:

- 1.If there is an application fee, how much the fee is, what it will be used for, and how you can get a refund.
- 2.The type of information that they are looking for and what would make them deny an application.
- 3.How long they will take to make a decision about an application.
- 4.The number and type of units they have available.

Landlords must give you information about your right to file a complaint, dispute information used to review your application, and view your credit report if you are denied.

Application fees cannot be more than \$50.

**If a landlord denies your application, they must give you a written denial with the specific reasons for denial** and a copy of any information used to make the decision.

Written denials must also have statements about your right to dispute any inaccurate, prohibited, or protected information used in the denial. Landlords must respond to disputed denials **in writing** within 10 days.

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## IF YOU HAVE A HOUSING VOUCHER

- It is illegal for a landlord to tell you they do not accept housing vouchers.
- Landlords cannot ask you about credit issues, late rent, or unpaid rent from before you had a voucher.
- They also cannot ask you about your income, credit score, or lack of a credit score.
- You cannot be charged more in rent or fees than someone without a housing voucher.

## MORE ON CRIMINAL RECORDS

- No landlord can ask you about your criminal history at all until you get a conditional offer of housing **in writing**.
- Then, the landlord can review relevant criminal history, which only includes certain types of charges from the last 7 years.
- Landlords can never consider arrests that did not lead to a conviction.
- If you have a relevant criminal history, the landlord cannot reject your application without considering:
  - The type and seriousness of the crime.
  - Your age at the time, how much time has passed, and rehabilitation.
- The decision is based on how much the crime would impact other tenants if it happened again, and if the crime happened inside your rental unit.

If your rental application has been wrongfully denied or if you have been discriminated against by a housing provider, you may benefit from seeking out legal counsel if you would like to pursue legal action in D.C. Superior Court.

**Neighborhood Legal Services Program (NLSP) provides free legal advice and representation to low-income residents of D.C.**

If you think your rights may have been violated, contact NLSP for help! Call **(202) 832-6577** or visit [www.nlsp.org](http://www.nlsp.org) for more information.

