

City of Blaine, Minnesota

Fair Housing Policy

1. Purpose/Vision

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act establishes federal policy for providing fair housing throughout the United States. The intent of Title VIII is to assure equal housing opportunities for all citizens. Furthermore, the City of Blaine, as a recipient of federal community development funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, is obligated to certify that it will affirmatively further fair housing.

The City of Blaine is committed to meeting this obligation, and has developed this Fair Housing Policy to further that goal.

2. Fair Housing Policy Statement

It is the policy and commitment of the City of Blaine to ensure that fair and equal housing opportunities are granted to all persons in all housing opportunities and development activities funded by the city regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, national origin, or disability. This shall be done through strong external policies that provide meaningful access to all constituents and fair housing informational and referral services; and internal practices and procedures do not discriminate and that affirmatively further fair housing.

3. External Practices

a) Fair Housing Referral

The City of Blaine has designated the Planning Department as the responsible department for provision of fair housing information and referral of fair housing complaints. Planning staff will be responsible for the intake, processing, and referral of all fair housing complaints. While not expected to be experts in fair housing laws, staff will be familiar with state and federal fair housing laws, the complaint process for filing discrimination complaints, and the state and federal agencies that handle complaints.

The city does not claim to have all the resources needed to solve diverse fair housing issues. Therefore, staff will utilize external organizations to respond to fair housing complaints. External organizations may include the US Department of Housing and Urban

Development-Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Human Rights, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, Housing Justice Center, Judicare of Anoka County, and Home Line Minnesota.

Records showing the date, time and nature of the fair housing complaint, as well as the decisions made regarding the complaint process (referrals, information given, etc.) and any follow up action will be fully documented.

b) Meaningful Access

- Online Information – the City of Blaine will have information about fair housing and its fair housing officer prominently displayed on its website. The website will also have links to various fair housing resources, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Minnesota Department of Human Rights, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, Judicare of Anoka County, and others. The website will also link to state and federal fair housing complaint forms. In addition, the city will post the following policies:
 - i. Reasonable Accommodation Policy
 - ii. The State of Minnesota's Olmstead Plan

c) In-Person Information – staff will provide in-person fair housing information including:

- A list of fair housing enforcement agencies
- A FAQ of Fair Housing Law
- Fair Housing Complaint Forms

d) Languages – the City of Blaine is committed to providing information in the native language of its residents. The City of Blaine will provide information and hear and respond to complaints utilizing phone translation services as necessary.

e) Rental Licensing Program – the city administers a rental licensing program which requires the property owners of rental dwelling units to obtain an annual license from the city. The city will provide information on this fair housing policy to licensees.

4. Internal Practices

The City of Blaine commits to the following steps to promote awareness and sensitivity to fair housing issues in all of its government functions.

- a) Staff Training – the city will regularly train its staff and elected officials on fair housing considerations.
- b) Housing Analysis – the city will review its housing inventory periodically to examine the affordability of both rental and owner-occupied housing and whether all reasonable actions have been taken to remove barriers to ensure adequate housing choice for all city residents.
- c) Code Analysis – the city will review its municipal code periodically with specific focus on ordinances related to zoning, building and occupancy standards, to identify any potential for disparate impact or disparate treatment.
- d) Project Planning and Analysis – the city planning functions and development review will consider housing issues, including whether potential projects may perpetuate segregation or lead to displacement of protected classes.
- e) Community Engagement – the city will seek input from underrepresented populations in the community.
- f) Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing – as a recipient of federal funds, the city agrees to participate in the Regional Analysis of Impediments, as organized by the regional Fair Housing Implementation Council. The city will consider integrating the recommendations and action plan into city planning documents.



FAIR HOUSING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT HOUSING IS COVERED?

Fair housing laws cover most housing. Owner occupied buildings with four or fewer units, single family homes sold or rented without the use of a broker, and housing operated by organizations and private clubs that limit occupancy to members (such as fraternities and sororities) are exempt from some fair housing laws.

WHAT ACTIONS ARE PROHIBITED?

Equal access to housing must be provided regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, national origin, or disability.

In the sale and rental of housing, this prohibits:

- Refusal to rent or sell housing
- Refusal to negotiate for housing
- Making housing unavailable
- Denial of a tenant
- Setting different terms or conditions on sale or rental of housing
- Falsely denying that housing is available

Additionally, mortgage lenders may not refuse to make loans, provide information about loans, impose different terms, discriminate in the appraisal of a property or take discriminatory action in the sale or purchase of mortgages.

WHERE CAN I FILE A FAIR HOUSING COMPLAINT?

Fair housing complaints may be filed directly with:

HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

PH: 800-669-9777 TTY: 800-927-9275

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/online-complaint

Minnesota Department of Human Rights

PH: 651-296-5663 TTY: 651-296-1283 or 800-657-3704

<https://mn.gov/mdhr/yourrights/what-is-protected/housing/>

WHERE CAN I GET LEGAL ADVICE?

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid

612-334-5970

Apply for legal assistance online:

<https://www.justice4mn.org/a2j/>

Home Line Tenant Hotline

612-728-5767 or 866-866-3546

<https://homelinemn.org/>

Judicare of Anoka County

763-783-4970

<http://www.anokajudicare.org/>

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FAIR HOUSING AND TENANT'S RIGHTS?

Home Line Tenant Hotline

<https://homelinemn.org/>

612-728-5767 or 866-866-3546

Minnesota Attorney General Office

651-296-3353 or 800-657-3787

Landlords and Tenants Handbook:

<https://www.ag.state.mn.us/brochures/pubLandlordTenants.pdf>



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