



**Describe the Property – Not the People**

Fair Housing is the sale/rental of housing free of discriminatory practices or policies. The Fair Housing Act prohibits any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on a person’s race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability (mental or physical) or familial status. Wisconsin additionally includes other protected classes, such as ancestry, marital status, age (except minors), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, legal source of income (refusing to accept section 8, for example) and veteran status.

The federal Fair Housing Act also prohibits publishing advertisements indicating any preference, limitation or discrimination based on these protected categories with respect to the sale or rental of a dwelling.

But practically speaking, any word or statement that may be perceived to limit a buyer’s choices or indicate a preference based on their protected class should be avoided when advertising a property. While you may not intend to indicate a preference or limitation, even a client’s perception may be construed as discriminatory.

The following word and phrase list is intended only to provide general guidelines to assist in complying with state and federal fair housing laws and nondiscriminatory practices. This list is not intended to provide legal advice.

*NOTE: This list is NOT all-inclusive. It is not intended to be a complete list of every word or phrase that could violate any local, state, or federal statutes. A general list cannot cover every situation or question. Each word must be considered in context.*

If in doubt:

- DO NOT USE ethnic references (e.g. Black, Caucasian/White, Asian, American Indian)
- DO NOT USE nationalities (e.g. Chinese, African, German, Italian)
- DO NOT USE religious references (e.g. near temple, mosque, church, Christian, Muslim, Catholic)
- DO NOT USE sex, gender or sexual orientation (e.g. male, female, transgender, homosexual, gay)

**UNACCEPTABLE**

able-bodied	Chinese	Hindu	Mexican-American	Protestant
adult community*	Christian	Hispanic	migrant workers, no	Puerto Rican
adult living*	colored	HIV	Mosque	(religious references)
adults only*	crippled, no	Hungarian	Muslim	responsible
adult park*	Couples only	impaired, no	Must comply with	retarded, no
African	church	Indian	(nationality)	seasonal workers, no
agile	deaf, no	Irish	Negro	Section 8, no
AIDS	disabled, not suitable for	Italian	newlyweds	senior discount, no*
alcoholics, no	employed, must be	integrated	non-drinkers	smoker(s), no
American Indian	empty nesters*	Jewish	older person(s)*	Social Security Insurance
Appalachian Asian	English only	landlord, (description)	one child	(SSI), no
black(s)	(ethnic references)	Latino	Oriental	Spanish speaking
blind, no	exclusive	married	parish	stable
board approval required	executive	mature couple*	park rules,	Synagogue
Catholic	golden agers*	mature individual*	must comply with...	Temple
Caucasian	group homes	mature person(s)*	physically fit only	tenant(s), description of
Chicano	handicapped,	membership required	Polish	two people
children, no	not suitable for	mentally disabled, no	preferred community	unemployed, no
child(ren), (number of)	healthy only	mentally ill, no		white, white only

**CAUTION**

55 and older community*	Fisherman’s retreat	Mormon Temple	quality neighborhood	(sex or gender)
62 and older*	(gender)	mother-in-law apt.	restricted	Shrine
active bachelor	gentleman’s farm	nanny’s room	retired retiree(s)*	singles only, single person
bachelor pad	grandma’s house	near___	retirement home*	single woman, man
close to	golden agers only*	newlyweds	safe neighborhood	sophisticated
country club, near	handicap	one person	secure	straight only
couple	handyman’s dream	older person*	seeking same	student(s) students, no temple
couples only	ideal for...	perfect for...	senior(s)*	traditional
female(s) only	male(s) only	person(s), (number of)	senior citizen(s)*	two people
female roommate	male roommate	play area, no	senior housing*	walking distance to...
	man, men only	prestigious		

**ACCEPTABLE**

accessible	Equal Housing Opportunity	(neighborhood name)	quiet	smoking, no
alcohol, no	family, great for	nursery	quiet neighborhood	(square feet)
assistance animals only	family room fixer-upper	nursing home	references required	townhouse
bedrooms, (number of)	golf course, near	places of worship, near	(school district)	traditional style
bus, near	great view	play area	(school name)	tranquil setting
convalescent home	guest house	privacy	seasonal rates	verifiable income
convenient to	handicap accessible	private driveway	secluded	view, with
credit check required	hobby farm	private entrance	security provided	wheelchair accessible
den	kids welcome	private property	senior discount*	winter rental rates
desirable neighborhood	luxury townhouse	private setting	single family home	
drugs, no	master bedroom	public transportation, near	sleeping area(s),	
drug use, no	membership available	quality construction	starter home	

\*Senior housing may be exempt if:

- 1) HUD has determined the housing is specifically designed for and occupied by elderly persons under a federal, state or local government program, or;
- 2) It is occupied solely by persons who are 62 or older, or;
- 3) It houses at least one person who is 55 or older in at least 80% of the occupied units, and adheres to a policy that demonstrates an intent to house persons who are 55 or older.