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Inglis Self-Determination Housing of Pennsylvania

Special Fair Housing Month Issue

As we close out April and Fair Housing Month, our advocacy newsletter explores tenant protections and reasonable accommodations. Remember, the simplest form of advocacy is to just share this newsletter with someone you think could use this information!

And if you were forwarded this email, please [consider subscribing](#).

Estimated Reading Time: 5 Minutes.

What is Fair Housing?

The Fair Housing Act was established in 1968 as an amendment to the Civil Rights Act. The Act was created to protect individuals from discrimination when renting or buying a home. People are protected under the Act based off of disability, race, color, national origin, religion, as of 1988 sex, and familial status, and as of 2021 sexual orientation, and gender identity. While there are some exemptions as to who must follow the Fair Housing Act, all single-family homes when they are privately owned and a real estate broker is involved, single family homes owned by corporations or partnerships, and all multi-family dwellings, such as townhomes and condominiums, fall under protections to renters and buyers under the Fair Housing Act. Though few exceptions apply, no one is able to post discriminatory advertisements or statements, regardless of whether they fall under protections from the Fair Housing Act or not.

While housing discrimination may look different today than it did when the act was first passed, it still frequently occurs, and is important to learn signs that the rights of

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- If a landlord or property manager returns the calls of one client and not another because they sound like they are a different race
- Attempts at 'steering' families or individuals to specific neighborhoods due to racial makeup or familial status
- The information given over the phone about a specific unit does not match the information given in person.
- A transgender person is denied an apartment that they qualify for and is listed as available without explanation.

More examples of housing discrimination can be found here: [Examples of Housing Discrimination | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

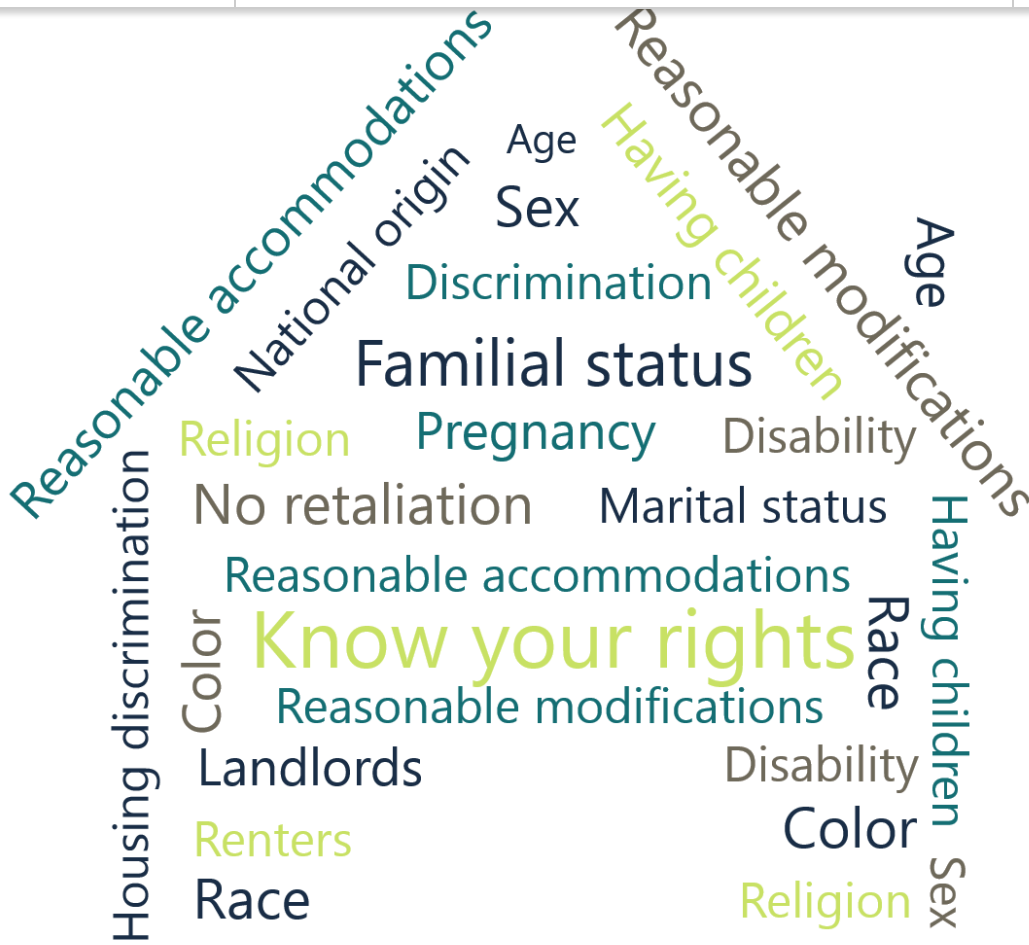
If you do feel as though you have personally experienced or have witnessed someone else experience a fair housing violation, reports can be made online here: [HUD Form 903 Complaint](#), or you can speak with a specialist at **1-800-669-9777**.

Another great resource for renters in PA is [Know Your Rights as a Pennsylvania Renter | Tenants' Rights](#) through the Housing Equality Center of Pennsylvania. Please be aware it is illegal for those who have been reported for fair housing violations to retaliate, intimidate or coerce those who have made reports.

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How is Fair Housing Enforced

In 1991, the Civil Rights Division established the [Fair Housing Testing Program](#) within the Housing and Civil Enforcement Section, which commenced testing in 1992. The volunteers of this program also known as fair housing testers essentially use “matched pair test”. This means that the program used two different individuals – one acting as the “control group” (e.g., white male) and the other as the “test group” (e.g., Black male)—pose as similarly-situated prospective customers. These testers will be given similar situations and characteristics so the testing program can then compare experiences in seeking different services. Having two different testers can provide evidence if a certain group is being discriminated based off their class. You can read [The DOJ Fair Housing Testing Program](#) to learn more.

The Housing Equality Center needs fair housing testers to help investigate complaints of discrimination and uncover illegal housing practices. The Housing Equality Center

If you are interested in becoming a tester you can read more and apply at equalhousing.org.

Home Modification Equals Independence

The costs of common home remodeling projects are specific to the needs of everyone. A person who uses a wheelchair has different needs than someone who is visually impaired, and the cost of modifying their homes varies considerably.

Home accessibility modifications improve life for those with mobility impairments, deafness, visual impairment, or other disabilities. Today, there are more options to make your home more accessible than there ever were before. Modifications like installing ramps, widening hallways for wheelchair mobility, and adding walk-in tubs are a few common upgrades.

Making your home more accessible typically costs \$723 to \$8,158, with a \$4,403 national average according to ANGI but could be as low as \$130 for a grab bar. This entirely depends on the needs of the individual—after all, accessibility features for older adults will be different than upgrades for someone with a disability.

Paying for modifications can be difficult and stressful, below are some commonly used resources to look for funding.

- Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF) - patf.us
- Home and Community-Based Services Waiver Programs (HCBS) - www.dhs.pa.gov
- Pennsylvania Department of Aging: Help at Home (OPTIONS) - aging.pa.gov
- Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation - dli.pa.gov
- Technology for Our Whole Lives (TechOwl) - techowlpa.org
- Center for Independent Living - thepecil.org
- Inglis Home Modification program - inglis.org/homemods

Inglis Home Modifications *for Independence*



It is also important to look at local resources such as redevelopment authorities, economic and community development offices in local government offices.

If you have additional questions, contact your local Regional Housing Coordinator (RHC). SDHPinfo@inglis.org

County Spotlight: *Common Roots*

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[Click here to share one of your programs with us for a county spotlight!](#)



Common Roots is a Nonprofit Community Land Trust. Common Roots offers a Renting Cooperative. Individuals complete four orientation sessions, which educates them about what living in a Renting Cooperative would entail. Individuals living in the Renting Cooperative care for the home as if it were their own. Residents complete many daily maintenance tasks. Residents also attend monthly meetings which are democratically controlled to go over the house budget, house rules and decisions about how they live. The Renting Cooperative recognizes and abides by the Seven International Principles of a Cooperative. When residents stay long-term and take good care of their property, Common Roots saves money. The money that Common Roots saves is equity that the residents build. If residents stay for five years, then they are vested and have earned around four thousand dollars, which they can withdraw as cash or leave to gather interest in the bank. When residents stay for ten years, then they have earned ten thousand dollars.

Common Roots is also launching a Home Ownership Program. Common Roots will rehabilitate single family homes and then sell them to qualified low-income families at an affordable price. Common Roots retains ownership of the land. Common roots will lease the land to the homeowner for a small fee. The homeowner agrees to "pay it forward", as they will agree to limit their proceeds when they go to sell, so that another low-income family can have the opportunity to own a home and build wealth.

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Opening Doors Together 2024 Accessible Housing: A Human Right

Scholarship details:

In-person and virtual scholarship opportunities available for persons 18 and older
 Applications are available at the time of registration, and will be due by Wednesday May 1st, 2024

Responses will be sent out early May

Scholarship recipients will be expected to pay \$25 towards registration

Scholarships are non-transferable

Please contact us at sdhpinfo@inglis.org if you would like additional support in filling out the application

We hope you can join us for the Opening Doors Together 2024 Conference June 11th and 12th in Harrisburg or online via Zoom Events! If cost is a concern, Scholarships are available.

[Click Here for Scholarship Application.](#)

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Join Us in Crafting Brighter Futures

FREE REMAKE LEARNING DAY EVENTS!



01
MAY

4:30PM - 6:00PM
AGES: 11-13

CRAFTING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR FURRY FRIENDS!

Join BotsIQ and Inglis Innovation Center - Pittsburgh for an afternoon of designing and prototyping animal prosthetics!

Make a difference and contribute to the well-being of animals by collaborating with like-minded individuals. Make a positive community impact by learning through this hands-on experience.



Register Today

[HTTPS://FORM.JOTFORM.COM/CONKLIN/PROGRAM-SIGN-UP](https://form.jotform.com/CONKLIN/PROGRAM-SIGN-UP)

14
MAY

4:30PM - 6:00PM
AGES: 11- UP

3D PRINTED ASSISTIVE TECH FOR IMPACT

Help Assemble 3D Printed Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities!

In this session, we will be assembling 3D printed switches to help make products accessible for people with disabilities! This includes products for adaptive gaming, adaptive toys, and communication!



Email

LEAH.MARMO@INGLIS.ORG

Both events are part of the Career Ready PA Backpack Challenge



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PITTSBURGH, PA 15202

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