

## “WHAT YOU CAN AND SHOULD DO” FILE A COMPLAINT

Contact the City of Cumberland Human Relations Commission and Office (301) 759-6659 [www.ci.cumberland.md.us](http://www.ci.cumberland.md.us) of Fair Housing within 6-months of the act of discrimination or make a complaint to the Cumberland Human Relations Commission within 180-days. Complaints outside the City of Cumberland should be directed to the Maryland Commission on Human Relations [www.mchr.state.md.us](http://www.mchr.state.md.us) (1-800-637-6247) or MD HUD Office (800) 955-2232 [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

### THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

A complaint may be filed by any person who claims to have been aggrieved by an act or acts of unlawful discrimination proscribed by the Ordinance. The complaint must be filed with the Commission or Office of Fair Housing within 180 days from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act.

**Penalties for discriminatory acts can result in fines up to 50,000 and punitive damages.**

#### Cumberland Fair Housing Equal Opportunity Office & Human Relations Commission

13 Canal St. Suite 304  
Western Maryland Station Railway Station  
Cumberland, MD 21502  
Phone: 301-759-6659  
Email: [fairhousingspecialist@allconet.org](mailto:fairhousingspecialist@allconet.org)  
Webpage: [www.ci.cumberland.md.us](http://www.ci.cumberland.md.us)

## CUMBERLAND HRC POWERS & DUTIES CODE City of CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND



### Sec. 9-29. Powers and duties.

(a) *Duties.* The commission has the duty to:

(1) Receive and investigate complaints following procedures in this article;

(2) Conciliate disputes involving alleged discrimination when the commission reasonably

believes that an unlawful discriminatory practice has taken place;

(3) Provide advice and assistance to public and private agencies on matters relating to human rights;

(4) Render advice and assistance to the mayor and city council on all matters within this article;

(5) Cooperate with federal, state, and city agencies, citizens, citizen organizations, the board of education and parochial and private schools in formulating and developing educational courses to accomplish the objectives of this article; and

(6) From time to time, but not less than once a year, render to the mayor and city council a written report of the commissions activities and recommendations.

(b) *Powers.* To accomplish the objectives of this article, the Commission is vested the power to:

(1) Hold public hearings in accordance with the provisions of this article;

(2) Administer oaths and affirmations, certify official acts and issue subpoenas and other legal process to compel the production of testimony, books, records, papers, accounts or documents reasonably relevant to any inquiry, investigation, hearing, or proceeding brought under this article;

(3) Adopt procedural and evidentiary rules necessary to fulfill the intent of this article;

(4) Grant relief in the manner prescribed in this article;

(5) Develop programs designed to bring about the prevention and elimination of discrimination, and accept grants and donations on behalf of the city for the purpose of carrying out such programs;

(6) Establish and constitute committees, standing committees, or advisory counsels as the commission deems appropriate and appoint members thereto; and

(7) Subject to customary, budgetary control, secure staff, office space, supplies, and other items necessary for the discharge of the commission's duties.

(Code 1966, § 2-53; Ord. No. 3380, § 4, 8-14-01)

**"FAIR HOUSING,  
IT'S NOT AN OPTION,  
IT'S THE LAW!"**

**YOU HAVE LEGAL RIGHTS  
AGAINST HOUSING  
DISCRIMINATION**



**CITY OF CUMBERLAND  
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
&  
FAIR HOUSING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**



**EQUAL HOUSING  
OPPORTUNITY**

**WE DO BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE  
WITH THE FEDERAL HOUSING LAW**

**CITY OF CUMBERLAND  
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) is a group of citizens appointed by the Mayor and Council, working to protect the rights of individuals to live free of housing discrimination within the City of Cumberland. The efforts of the HRC are directed toward eliminating housing discrimination wherever it exists within the City.

**FAIR HOUSING DISCRIMINATION**

**HOUSING IS DEFINED AS:**

- \* **A dwelling (building, structure, mobile home) for the use of one or more individual, groups or families: or**
- \* **Land offered or sale or lease for the construction of a dwelling**

**FAIR HOUSING LAW**

Your rights and the law are ensured by the 1968 Federal Fair Housing Act, Maryland State Fair Housing Legislation, and the City of Cumberland Fair Housing Code 9-26. The fundamental rights of all citizens are to live peaceably wherever they choose.



**PROHIBITED PRACTICES INCLUDE:**

- \* **Refusal to rent, sell, or lease**
- \* **Discrimination Advertising, Financing, Terms, conditions requirements etc.**
- \* **Restrictive Covenants, Threaten, Coerce, Intimidate**
- \* **Steering: people from neighborhoods of choice**
- \* **Blockbusting: change racial composition of neighborhood , interfere with exercising fair housing rights**
- \* **Requesting information about birth control practices**
- \* **Refusal to consider both applicants income when both parties seek to buy, rent or lease any dwelling**
- \* **Other acts and conditions may also apply**

**FAIR HOUSING DEFINITIONS**

**DISCRIMINATION:** any direct or indirect act, policy, or practice of exclusion, distinction, restriction, segregation, limitation, refusal, denial or any other act or practice of differentiation or preference in the treatment of an individual based on, or the perception of, **race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, or physical or mental disability, or the aiding, abetting, inciting, coercing or compelling thereof.**

**FAMILIAL STATUS:** means the status of one (1) or more individuals who are under age eighteen (18) and being domiciled with a parent or other person having the legal custody of the individual or the designee of the parent or other person having legal custody of the individual, with the written permission of the parent or other person. Familial status includes the status of being a pregnant woman or an individual or is in the process of securing legal custody of an individual under age eighteen (18).

**MARITAL STATUS:** means the state of being single, married, separated, divorced or widowed.

**PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY:** means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one (1) or more major life activities, a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such impairment. The term excludes use of alcohol or drugs in a manner that threatens the safety of others or prevents performance of job responsibilities.

**RELIGION:** all aspects of religious observances and practices, as well as belief, except in those cases when the observance, practice or belief cannot be reasonably accommodated by an employer without causing undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's business.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION:** means having an orientation, or being identified as having an orientation, for male or female homosexuality, heterosexuality or bisexuality by preference or practice.

**DISABLED PERSONS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS TO ACCESSIBLE HOUSING**

If you have a disability, you are protected under the law. It is against the law to:

- \* Refuse to permit, at the expense of the renter, reasonable using modifications necessary for the daily life of a person with a mental or physical disability;
- \* Refuse to adjust the rules, policies, services or practices that hamper the use of an apartment, condominium, or housing by a person with a mental or physical disability;
- \* Have multi-family housing that is not accessible to people with disabilities. Multi-family housing is required to have accessible units and access routes (wide doors and hallways), accessible public and common areas, and management must provide for effective communication as needed by a disabled person.

**EXEMPTIONS OF FAIR HOUSING LAWS**

- \* **AGE RELATED DWELLINGS:** Which include, but are not limited to, senior citizen or Children's preschool home or facility are exempted from discrimination based on age
- \* **OWNER OCCUPIED DWELLINGS:** A housing unit is owner-occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit. Four units or less.
- \* **PRIVATE MEMBERSHIP CLUBS AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS:** Providing housing preference to members only.