

MMHA Fair Housing Best Practices Document

Metro Multifamily Housing Association's (MMHA) Board of Directors, staff and members are dedicated to quality rental housing and upholding fair housing laws as a legal and moral obligation to offer equal opportunities and consistent policies for everyone. When Fair Housing laws are broken through proven discriminatory actions, violators must be held accountable.

MMHA believes offering frequent Fair Housing training will improve Fair Housing awareness for landlords. The association is committed to developing training partnerships with federal, state, county and city housing agencies who have demonstrated unbiased and fair application of rules. MMHA equally supports expanded Fair Housing nonadvocacy *independent audits (or testing) that ensure frequent, unbiased feedback on compliance with Fair Housing laws. MMHA will review the recommended 'Best Practices' document annually and update as appropriate.

MMHA recommends the following 'Best Practices' for those operating in the property management industry:

Training

- Provide a Fair Housing Policy statement to all employees upon hiring.
- Require newly hired or new employees to receive Fair Housing training within 30 days of hire date and all other employees to have a Fair Housing update annually.
- Include Fair Housing discussions as part of regular staff meetings.
- Include Fair Housing updates in newsletters or other correspondence that go out to employees.
- Encourage all employees to reference the MMHA web site.

Screening

- Post rental criteria at property and on web site.
- Give rental criteria and application to every prospective resident regardless of whether it is requested.
- Use *third party screening for all rental applications.
- Formalize and document the appeal process for denials.
- Develop a formalized wait list policy.

Marketing

- Display Fair Housing Posters in office location and common areas, if available.
- Post Fair Housing information on your web site.
- Ensure all advertising is in compliance with Fair Housing regulations.

Reasonable Accommodations

- Remind employees that every request is considered valid until it has been explored.
- Develop a clear, written policy.
- A senior individual in the organization (not on-site staff) should review and make determinations on RA requests. An asset manager, or other management staff, should review RA files periodically so ensure consistency and proper documentation.

Testing/Auditing

- Conduct independent third party testing of employees.
- Conduct self-testing of employees at periodic intervals.
- Document all exchanges with potential or current residents by using a formal written system the equivalent of a guest card/log book.

Definitions

- Third Party Screening – Decision making regarding the application is not done by the on-site individual who is receiving the application.
- Independent Audits/Testing – A non-advocacy party that has no financial or philosophical interest in the outcome of the audits or testing.