

## **City of Saint Paul – Fair Housing Awareness Month 2020**

Each year in April we celebrate the passage of the Fair Housing Act, an important piece of civil rights legislation providing protection against discrimination in housing. Passed on April 11, 1968, the federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on **race, national origin, color, religion, sex, familial status and disability**. In addition, the Saint Paul Human Rights Ordinance extends protection against discrimination on the basis of **creed, sexual or affectional orientation, ancestry, age, marital status and status with regard to public assistance**. Not only intentional discrimination, but also disparate impact discrimination which results when neutral policies disproportionately negatively impact people of color and other protected classes. This means that it is illegal to have adverse action taken against you in a housing transaction based on your membership in a protected class.

This year, we acknowledge 52 years of Fair Housing amid the spread of a global pandemic. As we work locally to meet the immediate basic needs of those impacted by COVID-19, uncertainty remains on how this crisis will impact housing choice in the weeks and months ahead. While the law prohibits housing discrimination, now more than ever, the potential exists for the fair housing and civil rights of our residents to be violated as Coronavirus fears spread. The Saint Paul Department of Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity is here for you.

We know Fair Housing requirements, complaints and investigations can feel complicated. If you feel you have been discriminated against or your fair housing rights have been violated, please contact us today. While in-person services are limited in accordance with public health official guidance around COVID-19, individuals can file complaints either over the phone or electronically. Department staff remains able to investigate discrimination complaints, provide education and resources, and respond to the needs of the community. You can also visit [www.stpaul.gov/HREEO](http://www.stpaul.gov/HREEO) for more FAQ'S and resources to help identify if you may be experiencing discrimination.

The City of Saint Paul remains committed to ensuring each and every Saint Paul resident fully realizes fair housing.

*Valerie Jensen,*

Director,  
Department of Human Rights and  
Equal Economic Opportunity