

AWESOME RESOURCES FOR HOUSING PROVIDERS

By
Jo Becker

The Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO) is a resource all housing providers should know about. The nonprofit organization provides information and guidance to housing providers and renters throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington.

1. FAIR HOUSING INFORMATION

Fair housing laws are civil rights law that promote equal access to housing and protect housing consumers from discrimination. These federal, state and local laws are separate from the state landlord-tenant laws that govern rental activity and from state real estate laws that oversee professional property management activity.

Fair housing laws cover all housing transactions and interactions between housing providers and consumers. More than a third of all fair housing problems occur with consumers who have disabilities but the law also protects from discrimination based on race, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (children), marital status on other protected classes in particular geographic areas.

Having a clear understanding fair housing laws and keeping abreast of changes in them can be frustrating for members of the housing industry who are held legally responsible for abiding by these laws. By using FHCO as your source of fair housing information, you can stay ahead of the curve and protect yourself from making mistakes that could prove costly.

FHCO is a Resource for Both Consumers and Housing Providers

FHCO provides training opportunities for housing providers, both individual landlords and professional management staff throughout the Portland metro area. Individual companies can also contract for trainings specifically geared to their management and maintenance staff.

- Housing professionals can utilize the FHCO website for information (www.fhco.org), including advertising guidelines, protected classes, illegal transactions and reasonable accommodation requests. The site is also linked to other sites of interest, and streaming video of interviews with fair housing experts will be available on the site very soon.
- Anyone can subscribe to FHCO's free quarterly *Promise of Opportunity* newsletter, which updates readers on important cases and upcoming events
- The fair housing hotline, 503-223-8197/(800) 424-3247, has trained fair housing specialists ready to provide information on fair housing issues and to offer guidance on writing advertisements, policies and rules that meet fair housing requirements. They can also provide housing providers with written materials, posters and coloring books for your properties.

To register for a fair housing training or schedule a customized training for your company, contact Diane Hess at 503.412.6000 or dhess@fhco.org

2. FREE MARKETING FHCO can connect you with HousingConnections.org, a website that allows you to promote your available units to housing consumers throughout the Portland metropolitan area for free. HousingConnections.org touts approximately 4,000 searches each week. FHCO employs a staff person, funded through a generous grant from the City of Portland, who is working to spread the word about the site to housing providers. It is our goal to help you make effective use of this great resource!

If you would like to schedule a presentation, staff training, or one-on-one meeting on using HousingConnections.org effectively, contact Jo Becker at 503/453-4016 or jbecker@fhco.org. You can also contact the Landlord Support Line at 503/823-4141 or help@housingconnections.org Monday through Friday 7AM-8PM or Saturday and Sunday 8AM-7PM.

3. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: FHCO can link you with basic information about a variety of housing-related issues and direct you to the experts on questions about:

- Oregon and Washington landlord-tenant law
- Requirements regarding lead and lead-based paint
- Requirements regarding mold
- Requirements regarding smoke detectors
- Concerns related to lung health in housing

Your Key Contacts at the FHCO:

- For Fair Housing Information Fair Housing Hotline- (503) 223-8197 or (800) 424-3247.
- For information on Fair Housing trainings Diane Hess, (503) 412-6000 or dhess@fhco.org
- For more details on HousingConnections.org – Jo Becker, (503)453-4016 or jbecker@fhco.org

