

Fair Housing Month

Beaver County – April marks Fair Housing Month, in which Realtors® across the country recommit to fair and equitable treatment for all homebuyers and renters.

The federal Fair Housing Act, which was passed in April 1968, protects the rights of those searching to rent or buy a home by banning discrimination in housing-related transactions based on seven protected classes: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability and familial status. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act protects against housing discrimination in the commonwealth and includes two additional protected classes: age (over 40) and users, handlers or trainers of assistance animals for persons with disabilities.

“Treating clients fairly is something Realtors® subscribe to with the National Association of Realtors® Code of Ethics, and in fact, our Code of Ethics also prohibits discrimination against clients based on sexual orientation and gender identity” said Beaver County Association of Realtors® President Julie Sebock. “It is not something we take lightly. We believe everyone has the right to choose where they want to live and we’re committed to being honest and impartial when it comes to fair housing and upholding the law.”

Fair housing extends well beyond working with your Realtor®. Discrimination has happened with mortgage lenders, appraisers and homeowners’ insurance when someone is treated differently due to their race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability or familial status. “Redlining” is also a form of discrimination when banks and insurance companies deny services to residents of certain areas based on the race or national origin of the residents in the neighborhood where their homes are located.

“Being treated fairly when going through the homebuying or renting process is of utmost importance,” she added. “Seeking different professional opinions is a good way to confirm you are getting a fair treatment.”

If consumers believe they have experienced a fair housing issue, they should contact the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission at phrc.pa.gov.