



THE RESIDENT

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Below are three examples of behavior that is no longer allowed, two examples come from the office of Fair Housing.

- A gay man is evicted because his landlord believes he will infect other tenants with HIV/AIDS.
- A property manager refuses to rent an apartment to a transgender applicant because the applicant's appearance does not conform to traditional gender roles.
- A case manager at a PHA asks an applicant for her sexual orientation as a part of the application process.

HUD Bars Discrimination against LGBT People



On January 28th, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan announced a change which lands a blow against housing discrimination toward people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT): the creation of the Equal Access to Housing Rule. Secretary Donovan stated, "Today, I am proud to announce a new Equal Access to Housing Rule that says clearly and unequivocally that LGBT individuals and couples have the right to live where they choose. This is an idea whose time has come."

The new HUD rule would now forbid discrimination based on sexual orientation, identity or expression. This means Public Housing residents cannot be discriminated against for:

- the gender of their romantic interests/partners;
- identifying as transgender or choosing not to identify as any gender; or
- not sticking to traditionally masculine or feminine dress or actions.

Further, the new rule states that "[T]he majority of HUD's rental housing and homeownership programs already interpret the term 'family' broadly. The proposed rule clarified that family who are otherwise eligible for HUD programs may not be excluded because one or more members of the family may be LGBT or perceived to be LGBT." Additionally, PHAs may not ask about an applicant's sexual orientation as part of the housing application process.

HUD also supports the existing protections against this type of discrimination in state and local laws. If a resident lives in an area with stronger discrimination protections in their state or local laws, those laws take precedence over HUD's rules. To learn more about the new rule and states with LGBT protection visit [HUD's page](#) on LGBT discrimination.

By expanding these protections, this Equal Access to Housing Rule can help reduce homelessness among LGBT adults and youth. LGBT youth, those between 12-24 years of age, are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, often as a result of discrimination. According to the nonprofit group, the Center for American Progress, 20 to 40 percent of homeless youth are LGBT. To learn more about young LGBT homelessness, visit <http://bit.ly/c9YYFW>.

This change was made official by the addition of the Equal Access to Housing Rule to the [Federal Register](#) where the government publishes updates to its rules among other things. HUD is promoting the Equal Access to Housing Rule by filming an educational video featuring staff from the Fair Housing and Public Housing offices. The Department has also launched its "Live Free" campaign which includes print advertisements you can see [here](#).

With the new rule, the Department takes a bold step in ensuring that Public Housing is available to all. As HUD Secretary Donovan said in his January speech, "With this historic rule, the Administration is saying you cannot use taxpayer dollars to prevent Americans from choosing where they want live on the basis [of] sexual orientation or gender identity - ensuring that HUD's housing programs are open, not to some, not to most, but to all."

First Lady and Let's Move! Combat 'Food Deserts'

Let's Move! is First Lady Michelle Obama's initiative to fight childhood obesity. One part of this fight is eliminating "food deserts." Neighborhoods that are over a mile from the nearest supermarket are considered food desert; in these communities access to affordable, quality, nutritious food is limited. Food deserts are found in both rural and urban areas and are home to over 23 million Americans, including 6.5 million children. A map of food deserts is available here:

<http://1.usa.gov/kJcR1U>.

The initiative offers information and strategies for improved nutrition and increased exercise in an effort to ensure that this is not the first generation to be less healthy than its parents. The program helps stock grocery stores, corner stores, and farmers' markets with healthy and nutritious foods. It also provides suggestions for what you can do in your own community to improve access to healthy foods.

Last fall, in a Chicago speech, the First Lady highlighted the importance of access to healthy food. "... we all grew up in communities with grandmothers who cooked two, three vegetables that you had to eat. There was no ifs, ands or buts about it. But that's because many of our grandparents, they had community gardens; there was the vegetable man that came around. There were many other resources that allowed them to have access. So it's not that people don't know or don't want to do the right thing; they just have to have access to the foods that they know will make their families healthier."

Often the grocery stores that sell healthy foods, including fresh, fruit and vegetables, are out of reach. Also, healthy foods that are available are too expensive for many people to afford on a regular basis. Lack of access is known to contribute to food shortages and hunger. However, it is also a critical part of why many people, adults as well as children, are simply not eating enough fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to remain healthy.

Some ideas for improving access to healthy food include hosting a local farmers' market at your public housing authority or place of worship. You can also advocate for these vendors and others who sell healthy foods to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The USDA provides information to help you get a market started. To learn more visit: <http://1.usa.gov/9smvWH>.

To partner with a local food bank on offering healthy options in your area visit Feeding America to find the food bank closest to you:

<http://feedingamerica.org/>.

TIPS:

March Means Spring Cleaning

Spring time is quickly approaching so it is the perfect time to do some spring cleaning. Spring cleaning can lead to healthier living conditions, better use of space and possibly make you a few dollars.

- 1. Clean out those closets.** Are there old toys, clothes, or clutter that isn't being used or is broken? Take an hour or two and have each person in the family go through their things to decide what should be tossed out and what is still in good condition but isn't in use. The latter can be sold in a garage sale, consignment shop or donated. Remember, donations may be tax deductible!
- 2. Dust.** Take the time to vacuum around baseboards, heating vents, drapes, under the sofa cushions, and wipe down window sills and non-upholstered furniture. Also, don't forget to vacuum under those big furniture items too.
- 3. Don't overlook the bathroom.** Bathrooms are subject to a lot of moisture day in and day out which can cause mold growth. This is a good time to make note of any leaking or damaged fixtures that would need repair. If you do notice something, be sure to contact your landlord immediately so the problem can be corrected.
- 4. Appliances need a spring cleaning, too.** Clean out the refrigerator, check dates on items in bottles in jars to make sure they are still in date. If you can, pull out the refrigerator and check behind to make sure nothing has fallen since the last cleaning. Wipe down the inside and outside of appliances with a soft cloth and a solution of ½ cup of bleach and 4 cups of warm water.
- 5. Get organized.** Take an hour with your family to make sure things all have a place and that everyone in the family knows where those places are. Set up a tray for mail and another for keys. Are there hangers and hooks for coats? Places for backpacks to go after school? Keeping things organized helps everyone keep the house tidy and gives the family more time for other fun activities.

These tips are only a starting point. Have the whole family pitch in with ideas for a clean spring.

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Department of Labor Helps Youths Find Summer Jobs

Earlier this year, President Obama launched Summer Jobs+. This joint initiative calls on businesses, non-profits, and government to work together to provide pathways to employment for low-income youth for the summer. Young Americans looking for job opportunities will be able to go to the Summer Jobs+ Bank, a search tool which will have postings from employers; the jobs bank will launch within a few weeks. To learn more about Summer Jobs+ go to: <http://www.dol.gov/summerjobs/Employers.htm>.