

Describe the Property – Not The People

The Fair Housing Act prohibits any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on a person’s race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability (mental or physical) or familial status. Wisconsin additionally includes other protected classes, such as ancestry, marital status, age (except minors), sexual orientation, legal source of income (refusing to accept section 8, for example) and status as a victim of domestic abuse, sexual abuse or stalking.

The federal Fair Housing Act also prohibits publishing advertisements indicating any preference, limitation or discrimination based on these protected categories with respect to the sale or rental of a dwelling.

Practically speaking, any word or statement that may be perceived to limit a buyer’s choices or indicate a preference based on their protected class should be avoided when advertising a property. While you may not intend to indicate a preference or limitation, even a client’s perception may be construed as discriminatory.

The following word and phrase list is intended only to provide general guidelines to assist in complying with state and federal fair housing laws and nondiscriminatory practices. This list is not intended to provide legal advice.

NOTE: This list is NOT all-inclusive. It is not intended to be a complete list of every word or phrase that could violate any local, state, or federal statutes. A general list cannot cover every situation or question. Each word must be considered in context.

If in doubt:

- DO NOT USE ethnic references (e.g. Black, Caucasian/White, Asian, American Indian)
- DO NOT USE nationalities (e.g. Chinese, African, German, Italian)
- DO NOT USE religious references (e.g. near temple, mosque, church, Christian, Muslim, Catholic)
- DO NOT USE sex, gender or sexual orientation (e.g. male, female, transgender, homosexual, gay)

55 or Older*	Crippled	Indian	Physically fit
62 or Older*	Employed	Integrated	Polish
Able Bodied	Empty nester	Irish	Prestigious
Active	Exclusive	Italian	Protestant
Adult	Family	Jewish	Puerto Rican
Adults Only*	First time	Latino	Retarded
African	Gay	Man	Retired
Asian	German	Married	Section 8
Bachelor	Handicap	Mature	Senior
Catholic	Handyman	Mexican	She
Caucasian	He	Mormon	Single
Child	Hers	Mosque	Spanish
Chinese	Hindu	Muslim	Straight
Christian	His	Newlywed	Synagogue
Church	Hispanic	Older	Temple
Colored	Hungarian	Oriental	White
Couple (s)	Ideal for	Perfect for	Woman

*Senior housing may be exempt if:

- 1) HUD has determined the housing is specifically designed for and occupied by elderly persons under a federal, state or local government program, or;
- 2) It is occupied solely by persons who are 62 or older, or;
- 3) It houses at least one person who is 55 or older in at least 80% of the occupied units and adheres to a policy that demonstrates an intent to house persons who are 55 or older.