

# **Taunton Housing Authority**

## **Antidiscrimination Policy**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Taunton Housing Authority (“THA”) is responsible for providing a residential environment that is free of unlawful harassment, discrimination or retaliation. Every individual covered by this Policy has a right to be free from unlawful harassment and discrimination. Any retaliation against any individual who has made a harassment or discrimination complaint is unlawful.

The Authority will not condone any such act or acts by or against its commissioners, officers, agents, employees, tenants, applicants for housing or applicants for employment. All such acts will be dealt with swiftly to insure that this policy is upheld.

Discrimination and harassment that is based on any of the following characteristics is unlawful:

- Age
- Ancestry
- Color or Race
- Disability/Handicap
- Gender
- Gender Identity
- Genetic Information
- Marriage Status
- Membership in the Armed Forces
- National Origin
- Political Beliefs
- Presence of Children (for certain housing per G.L. c. 151 § 4(11))
- Religion or Creed
- Receipt of Public Assistance or Housing Subsidy (for rental accommodations G.L. c. 151 § 4(10))
- Sexual Orientation
- Veteran Status

It is not possible to list all the circumstances that may constitute discrimination in violation of this Policy. Discrimination may take many forms, including both verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Prohibited behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors connected to someone’s membership in one or more groups protected by law as noted in the first paragraph above: slurs or other derogatory comments; sharing demeaning pictures, cartoons, or jokes; and demeaning gestures.

### **COMPLAINTS**

Any individual who believes or has reason to believe that he or she has suffered discrimination in the terms, conditions, or privileges of housing on the basis of possessing any of the

characteristics described above, or any other basis prohibited by law, has the right to file a complaint. Complaints may be made in writing or orally.

If you would like to file a complaint, you may do so by contacting the Executive Director at 30 Olney St., Suite B, Taunton, MA 02780, at (508) 823-6308. If the complaint is against this individual, the complaint should be filed with the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Authority. The party receiving the complaint or his/her designee shall investigate the complaint and shall remain, at all times, a neutral party.

All THA employees share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of discrimination or harassment and cooperating in any investigation of alleged complaints.

### *Complaint Procedures*

The complaint should specify, in as much detail as possible, what occurred and when, and should include the names of all witnesses and any supporting documents.

When the THA receives a complaint, the THA shall designate an Investigator, who shall promptly begin investigating the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner to determine whether there has been a violation of this Policy and/or any applicable federal or state anti-discrimination laws or regulations. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. The investigation will include, as necessary under the circumstances, private interviews with: the person filing the complaint; any witnesses named in the complaint or identified by the complainant; and the person alleged to have engaged in the harassing or discriminatory behavior. The complainant, the person alleged to have harassed or discriminated against the complainant, and all witnesses who are persons covered by this policy are required to fully cooperate with all aspects of the investigation. When the investigation is complete, the Investigator shall recommend corrective action as necessary.

Given the sensitive nature of complaints of discrimination and harassment, all parties and witnesses in a complaint, as well as any supervisory or management employees or other individuals who are aware of a complaint or investigation thereof, are strongly encouraged to maintain this information as confidential, so as not to negatively impact an investigation.

### *Corrective Action*

If it is determined that discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or other inappropriate conduct has been committed by a THA employee, THA shall take such action as is appropriate under the circumstances, which may include: counseling, informal or formal reprimands, written or verbal warnings, suspension, reduction in pay, reduction in duties, transfers, and other formal sanctions, up to and including termination of employment.

If a tenant for housing is found to have violated this Policy, that tenant may be subject to eviction or any other appropriate remedial action. Similarly, an applicant for housing may have their application denied if they are found to have violated this Policy.

## *State and Federal Remedies*

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to unlawful discrimination or harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Claims to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”) and to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) must be filed within 300 days and 180 days, respectively, of the alleged incident.

### **FEDERAL—United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”)**

Fair Housing Hub  
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development  
Thomas P. O’Neill, Jr. Federal Building  
10 Causeway St., Room 321  
Boston, MA 02222  
(617) 994-8320 or 1-800-827-5005  
Complaints\_office\_01@hud.gov

### **STATE—The Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination (“MCAD”)**

#### **Springfield Office:**

436 Dwight Street  
Second Floor, Room 220  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413) 739-2145

#### **New Bedford Office:**

128 Union St., Suite 206  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
(774) 510-5801

#### **Boston Office:**

One Ashburton Place, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 994-6000

#### **Worcester Office:**

484 Main Street, Room 320  
Worcester, MA 01608  
(508) 453-9630

### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

The THA will not discriminate against people with disabilities in the terms, conditions, or privileges of their residency in THA housing. The THA will make reasonable accommodation to the physical or mental limitations of a qualified person with a disability that are known to the THA, unless doing so would cause an undue hardship to the operations of the THA.

[Individuals seeking reasonable accommodations may submit their request in writing to Kimberly Lavigne, Assistant Executive Director, 30 Olney St. Suite B, Taunton, MA 02780, 508-823-6308.](#)