

Title 15 ▶ Chapter 3

Fair Housing

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Sec. 15-3-1 Statement on Fair Housing.

- (a) **Statement of Purpose.** It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Village of Merrilan to assure equal opportunity to all persons to live in adequate housing facilities regardless of race, family status, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, handicap, sexual preference, marital status of persons maintaining a household, lawful source of income, place of birth, or age, and, to that end, to prohibit discrimination in housing by any persons.
- (b) **State Statutes Adopted.**
- (1) **Adopted by Reference.** The statutory provisions of Sec. 101.22, Wis. Stats., and subsequent amendments thereto, are hereby adopted by reference and made a part of this Chapter as if fully set forth herein.
 - (2) **Implementation.** The officials and employees of the Village of Merrilan shall assist in the orderly prevention and removal of all discrimination in housing within the Village of Merrilan by implementing the authority and enforcement procedures set forth in Sec. 101.22, Wis. Stats.

State Law Reference: Sec. 101.22, Wis. Stats.

Sec. 15-3-2 Definitions as Used in This Chapter.

- (a) **Dwelling.** Any building, structure, or portion thereof which is occupied as, or designed for occupancy as, a residence by one or more families, and any vacant land which is offered for sale or lease for the construction thereof of any such buildings or structure.
- (b) **Family.** One or more individuals, corporations, partnerships, associations, labor organizations, legal representatives, mutual companies, joint stock companies, trusts, unincorporated organizations, trustees, trustees in bankruptcy and receivers.

- (c) **Real Property.** Buildings, structures, lands, tenements, leaseholds, cooperatives and condominiums.
- (d) **Discrimination/Discriminatory Housing Practice.** Any difference in treatment based upon race, color, religion, sex, sexual preference, ancestry, handicap, marital status, place of birth or national origin; or any act that is unlawful under this Chapter.
- (e) **Person.** Individuals, children, firms, associations, joint ventures, partnerships, estates, trusts, business trusts, syndicates, fiduciaries, corporations and all other groups or combinations.
- (f) **Owner.** Lessee, sublessee, co-tenant, assignee, managing agent or other person having the right of ownership or possession, or the right to sell, rent or lease any housing accommodation.
- (g) **Financial Institution.** Any person as defined herein, engaged in the business of lending money or guaranteeing loans.
- (h) **Real Estate Broker/Real Estate Salesman.** Any individual qualified by law, who, for a fee, commission, salary or for other valuable consideration, or who with the intention or expectation of receiving or collecting same, lists, sells, purchases, rents or leases any housing accommodations, including options thereupon, or who negotiates or attempts to negotiate a loan, secured by a mortgage or other encumbrance, upon transfer of any housing accommodation; or who is engaged in the business of charging an advance fee or contracting for collection of a fee in connection with a contract whereby he undertakes to promote the sale, purchase, rental or lease of any housing accommodation through its listing in a publication issued primarily for such purpose; or an individual employed by or acting on behalf of any of these.
- (i) **Housing Accommodation/Dwelling.** Any building, mobile home or trailer, structure, or portion thereof which is occupied as, or designed, or intended for occupancy as, a residence by one or more families, and any vacant land which is offered for sale or lease for the construction or location thereon of any real property, as defined herein, used or intended to be used for any of the purposes set forth in this Subsection.
- (j) **Mortgage Broker.** An individual who is engaged in or who performs the business or services of a mortgage broker as defined by Wisconsin Statutes.
- (k) **Open Market.** The market which is informed of the availability for sale, purchase, rental or lease of any housing accommodation, whether informed through a real estate broker or by advertising by publication, signs or by any other advertising methods directed to the public or any portion thereof, indicating that the property is available for sale, purchase, rental or lease.

Sec. 15-3-3 Unlawful Practices.

In connection with any of the transactions set forth in this Section which affect any housing accommodation on the open market, or in connection with any public sale, purchase, rental or

lease of any accommodation, it shall be unlawful within the Village for a person, owner, financial institution, real estate broker or real estate salesman, or any representative of the above, to:

- (a) Refuse to sell, purchase, rent or lease, or deny to or withhold any housing accommodation from a person because of his race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, sex, age, or place of birth; or
- (b) To discriminate against a person in the terms, conditions or privileges of the sale, purchase, rental or lease of any housing accommodation, or in the furnishing of facilities or services in connection therewith; or
- (c) To refuse to receive or transmit a bona fide offer to sell, purchase, rent or lease any housing accommodation from or to a person because of his race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, sex, age, or place of birth; or
- (d) To refuse to negotiate for the sale, purchase, rental or lease of any housing accommodation to a person because of his race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, sex, age, or place of birth; or
- (e) To represent to a person that any housing accommodation is not available for inspection, sale, purchase, rental or lease when in fact it is so available, or to refuse to permit a person to inspect any housing accommodation, because of his/her race, color, religion, national origin, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, sex, age, or place of birth; or
- (f) To make, publish, print, circulate, post or mail, or cause to be made, published, printed, circulated, posted, or mailed, any notice, statement or advertisement, or to announce a policy or to sign or to use a form of application for the sale, purchase, rental, lease or financing of any housing accommodation, or to make a record of inquiry in connection with the prospective sale, purchase, rental, lease or financing of any housing accommodation, which indicates any discrimination or any intent to make a discrimination; or
- (g) To offer, solicit, accept or use a list of any housing accommodation for sale, purchase, rental or lease with the understanding that a person may be subjected to discrimination in connection with such sale, purchase, rental or lease, or in the furnishing of facilities or services in connection therewith; or
- (h) To induce directly or indirectly, or attempt to induce directly or indirectly, the sale, purchase, rental or lease, or the listing for any of the above, of any housing accommodation by representing that the presence or anticipated presence of persons of any particular race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, sex, age, or place of birth in the area to be affected by such sale, purchase, rental or lease will or may result in either:
 - (1) The lowering of property values in the area;
 - (2) An increase in criminal or antisocial behavior in the area; or
 - (3) A decline in the quality of schools serving the area.
- (i) To make any misrepresentations concerning the listing for sale, purchase, rental or lease, or the anticipated listing of any of the above, or the sale, purchase, rental or lease of any housing accommodation in any area in the Village for the purpose of inducing or attempting to induce any such listing or any of the above transactions; or

- (j) To engage in or hire to be done, or to conspire with others to commit acts or activities of any nature, the purpose of which is to coerce, cause panic, incite unrest or create or play upon fear, with the purpose of either discouraging or inducing, or attempting to induce, the sale, purchase, rental or lease, or the listing for any of the above, of any housing accommodation; or
- (k) To retaliate or discriminate in any manner against a person because he/she has opposed a practice declared unlawful by this Chapter, or because he/she has filed a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in any investigation, proceeding, hearing or conference under this Chapter; or
- (l) To aid, abet, incite, compel or coerce any person to engage in any of the practices prohibited by this Chapter; or to obstruct or prevent any person from complying with the provisions of this Chapter; or any orders issued thereunder; or
- (m) By canvassing, to commit any unlawful practices prohibited by this Chapter; or
- (n) Otherwise to deny to, or withhold any housing accommodation from, a person because of his/her race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, sex, age, or place of birth; or
- (o) For any bank, building and loan association, insurance company or other corporation, association, firm or enterprise whose business consists in whole or in part, in the making of commercial real estate loans, to deny a loan or other financial assistance to a person applying therefor for the purpose of purchasing, constructing, improving, repairing or maintaining a dwelling, or to discriminate against him in the fixing of the amount, interest rate, duration, or other terms or conditions of such loans or other financial assistance because of the race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, sex, age, or place of birth of such person or of any person associated with him/her in connection with such loan or other financial assistance or the purposes of such loan or other financial assistance which is to be made or given; or
- (p) To deny any qualified person access to or membership or participation in any multiple-listing service, real estate brokers organization, or other service, organization or facility relating to the business of selling or renting dwellings, or to discriminate against him/her in their terms or conditions of such access, membership, or participation, on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, sex, age, or place of birth.

Sec. 15-3-4 Exemptions.

This Chapter shall not apply to:

- (a) A religious organization, association, or society or any nonprofit institution or organization operating, supervised, or controlled by or in conjunction with a religious organization, association, or society, which limits the sale, rental, or occupancy, of dwellings which it

owns or operates for other than commercial purpose to persons of the same religion, or which gives preference to such persons, unless membership in such religion is restricted on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, sex, age, or place of birth.

- (b) A private club not in fact open to the public, which as an incident to its primary purpose or purposes, provides lodgings which it owns or operates for other than a commercial purpose, and which limits the rental or occupancy of such lodgings to its members or gives preference to its members.
- (c) Any single-family house sold or rented by an owner; provided, that such private individual owner does not own more than three such single-family houses at any one time; provided further, that in the case of the sale of any such single-family house by a private individual not residing in such house at the time of such sale or who was not the most recent resident of such house prior to such sale the exemption granted by this Subsection shall apply only with respect to one such sale within any twenty-four (24) month period; provided further, that such bona fide private individual owner does not own any interest in, nor is there owned or served on his/her behalf, under any express or voluntary agreement, title to or any right to all or a portion of the proceeds from the sale or rental of more than three (3) such single-family houses at any one time; provided further, the sale, or rental of any such single-family house shall be excepted from the application of this Chapter only if such house is sold or rented:
 - (1) Without the use of any manner of the sales or rental facilities or the sales or rental services of any real estate broker, agent, or salesman or of such facilities or services of any person in the business of selling or renting dwellings, or of any employee or agent of any such broker, agent, salesman, or person; and
 - (2) Without the publication, posting or mailing, after notice, of any advertisement or written notice in violation of the provisions of 42 United States Code Section 3604; and
 - (3) Without the violation of Section 15-3-3 of this Chapter; but nothing in this provision shall prohibit the use of attorneys, escrow agents, abstractors, title companies, and other such professional assistance as necessary to perfect or transfer the title.
- (d) Rooms or units in dwellings containing living quarters occupied or intended to be occupied by no more than four (4) families living independently of each other, if the owner actually maintains and occupies one of such living quarters as his residence.

Sec. 15-3-5 Enforcement.

Any person aggrieved by an unlawful practice prohibited by this Chapter may file a complaint with the Village Board within thirty (30) days after the aggrieved person becomes aware of the alleged unlawful practice and in no event more than sixty (60) days after the alleged unlawful

practice has occurred. The Village Board or duly authorized representative shall receive each complaint and attempt to resolve each complaint. Failure to achieve a resolution acceptable to both parties and compliance with this Chapter shall cause the Village Board to forward the complaint and findings to appropriate state and federal agencies.