



Housing Legislation Fact Sheet

Domestic Violence is a leading cause of housing instability & homelessness

August 2024

June 30th was the last day of the 2024 Legislative Session, and DCADV is so appreciative of all the advocacy from our supporters and community! DCADV supported many pieces of legislation with our community partners, continuing to recognize that domestic violence intersects with other traumatic experiences of Delawareans. We wanted to shed light on some *important housing bills that passed the General Assembly*, and share how this could impact families across the state.

New Housing Protection Laws in Delaware:

Housing is a human right, however we know that there are individuals and families in our communities who experience housing insecurities. People experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity deserve equal and fair treatment, and equal and fair access to housing and employment.



HB 439 and 440: Housing Status as a Protected Class in Housing and Employment Opportunities

This legislation protects people experiencing homelessness from discrimination when seeking housing, employment, and shelter. These bills ensure civil rights that everyone already has and equal treatment in the use of public spaces. It allows the DE Division of Human and Civil Rights to investigate claims of discrimination. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please file a discrimination complaint with the [Division of Human and Civil Rights](#).

SS 1 for SB 293: Source of Income Protection

This legislation protects residents of Delaware who have housing vouchers from being denied rental homes solely due to the way they choose to pay their rent. This expands the Delaware Fair Housing Act to include recipients of government housing assistance, like a housing choice voucher. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of your source of income, please contact [The Delaware Community Legal Aid Society Inc. \(CLASI\) Fair Housing Program](#).





[SB 246: Housing Repair and Modification Fund](#)

This legislation creates a revolving loan fund to support home repair programs operated by the Delaware State Housing Authority, investing in home repair programs to increase the available low-income housing without displacing people in hopes of reducing the health risks that come with unhealthy housing conditions. For more information on Community Benefit Programs that may be able to assist you and your family, please contact the [Delaware State Housing Authority's Housing Development Section](#) or call (302) 739-4263.



[SB 247: Manufactured Housing Communities](#)

This legislation protects residents of manufactured housing communities from rent increases if outstanding health and safety violations are not addressed. For more information, please contact the [Delaware Manufactured Home Owners Association](#).



[HB 442: The Affordable Housing Production Taskforce](#)

This legislation creates a task force that will focus on affordable housing production and provide clear and actionable recommendations to the incoming Governor.

Know Your Rights:

Everyone who lives in the United States is protected from discrimination in housing. This includes the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings; lending; home appraisal; insurance and accessibility.

Under Federal Fair Housing laws, fair housing means you are free to choose a place to live without regard to your race, color, national origin, religion, sex, including sexual orientation and gender identity, disability or familial status. Under Delaware Fair Housing laws, you are also protected without regard to your marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, age and source of income.

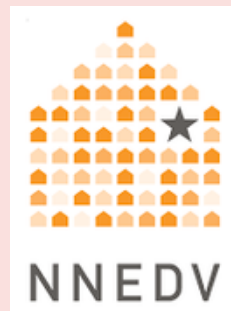
In Delaware, if you are denied an opportunity to rent a home or apartment—or given false information about a rental—because of your source of income, you are a victim of illegal housing discrimination. It is also illegal for landlords or other housing providers to treat current tenants or their guests unfavorably because of the individual's source of income.

Housing providers must treat all incomes equally, as long as the source is legal, regular, and verifiable. Sources of income can include wages earned from employment, public benefits, retirement or disability income, payments from investments or trusts, alimony, and child support. For more information, please visit [Human and Civil Rights DE](#).

DCADV and the Domestic Violence Task Force's (DVTF) Housing Subcommittee have compiled a list of resources to help survivors and their advocates understand the housing system in Delaware, increase access to various resources, and to share information about specific rights and protections that are designed to help survivors.



For more information, please visit our [Housing Information page](#).



According to the [National Network to End Domestic Violence \(NNEDV\)](#), “the intersection of domestic violence, homelessness, and housing insecurity is undeniable, as lack of safe and affordable housing is often reported as one of the primary barriers survivors of domestic violence face when they choose to leave an abusive partner. Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and their children.”

“Victims may also face discrimination in accessing or maintaining housing based on the violent or criminal actions of perpetrators. Additionally, victims are limited in the locations and types of housing they can access because of their unique safety and confidentiality needs, and many housing or homelessness assistance programs have barriers that inadvertently exclude victims of violence.”

“We need to continue to promote flexible systems that support the survivors who flee violence, increase the availability of affordable housing, and ensure that no survivor is evicted because of the perpetrator’s actions. Solutions must encompass a range of options such as emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing options, including housing vouchers, mortgage assistance, and federally subsidized housing. We need consistent, stable funding for domestic violence programs that are poised to provide many of these options, alongside housing advocacy and confidential services to help survivors.”