



# Housing Stability Act (HF 3640/SF 3780)

## Minnesota Legislators Prohibited Source of Income Discrimination in Minnesota in 1973

In 1973, Minnesota legislators decided it is a violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act for a landlord to discriminate against someone because they pay their rent with rental assistance – this included federal or state rent supplements. As a result, the MN Department of Human Rights (MDHR) found and Minnesota courts ruled that landlords who failed to accept rental assistance, including housing vouchers, were in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

In 2010, the Court of Appeals wrongly applied the Minnesota Human Rights Act when it allowed landlords to discriminate against someone who is a recipient of Section 8, a federal public assistance program.

Today, Minnesota Legislators have an obligation to clarify what has been the law in MN for 50+ years: The Minnesota Human Rights Act prohibits any person from refusing to rent to someone because they are a recipient of a federal, state, or local public assistance program, including housing voucher programs such as Section 8 and VASH, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing.



## Over 50 years of enforcing the Minnesota Human Rights Act

### Emma's Story

In 1977, Emma and her 76-year-old mom moved into their St. Paul home. Emma's serious health issues meant she was unable to work and in April of 1978, Emma learned she was eligible for Section 8. Her landlord not only refused to accept her rental assistance, but in September of 1978, increased the rent. As a result, Emma and her mom lost their home.

MDHR investigated this case and found Emma's landlord violated the Minnesota Human Rights Act by failing to accept rental assistance.

### Maria's Story

Maria lived with her husband in their St. Paul home from 1994 to 2001 when her landlord stopped accepting her Section 8 voucher and forced them out of their home. They struggled with homelessness for months, experiencing depression and fear.

In 2004, the District Court ruled that Maria's former landlord violated the Minnesota Human Rights Act by failing to accept rental assistance.

### Aaron's Story

Aaron moved into his home in 1999 where he paid his rent, in part, using Section 8 for 20 years. He used a wheelchair and his landlord allowed Aaron to make changes, including installing a wheelchair accessible shower. In 2019, a new owner bought the property and told Aaron he would not accept Section 8 and forced Aaron from his home.

In 2022, MDHR's investigation found Aaron's landlord violated the law by failing to accept rental assistance.

## The Time is Now

- In 2023, Minnesota passed **\$124 million** in rental assistance programs to support Minnesotans.
- Minnesota families with children experiencing homelessness grew by **27%** in January 2023 compared to 2022<sup>1</sup>.
- Native Americans and American Indians are **30 times** more likely to experience homelessness than white Minnesotans<sup>2</sup>.
- Adults with disabilities experience poverty **2 times** more than adults without disabilities and rely on housing assistance programs like Bridges, Shelter + Care, Temporary Housing Assistance<sup>3</sup>.



1. January 2023 Point-in-Time Count by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
2. Minnesota Housing tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2019 1-year sample)
3. Goodman, Nanette, Michael Morris, Kelvin Boston, and Donna Walton. n.d. "FINANCIAL INEQUALITY: Disability, Race and Poverty in America."

*Names on the first page may have been changed to maintain confidentiality.*

## Prohibiting Source of Income Discrimination Works

In cities and states with similar laws, families have greater success finding housing and housing authorities have a higher utilization rate of housing vouchers.

## Minnesota is one of 20 States

20 states, including Minnesota and the District of Columbia, prohibit public assistance discrimination, often referred to as source of income discrimination, including prohibiting discrimination when a family is paying for their rent using federal or state housing assistance programs.

For more information and to get involved, contact **Government Relations.MDHR@state.mn.us**.



Upon request, this information can be made available in alternative formats for individuals with disabilities by emailing [info.MDHR@state.mn.us](mailto:info.MDHR@state.mn.us) or calling 651.539.1100.