How to Avoid Going Viral for All the Wrong Reasons

with Katie Rigsby, CAPS, CAM, CALP

ACCESS FAIR HOUSING RESOURCES & CONTENT FROM TODAY'S SESSION

bitly

A Fair Housing Guide for Marketing and Social Media

Advertising

Under the Fair Housing Act, the definition of **advertising is broad and includes print and online advertisements, materials such as brochures or applications, television and radio ads, and even speech.** All verbal communication that occurs in person or over the phone to a prospective tenant, homebuyer, or borrower is considered a form of advertising. The law prohibits any illegal advertising for an apartment, home, mortgage loan, homeowners insurance, or any real estate-related transaction.

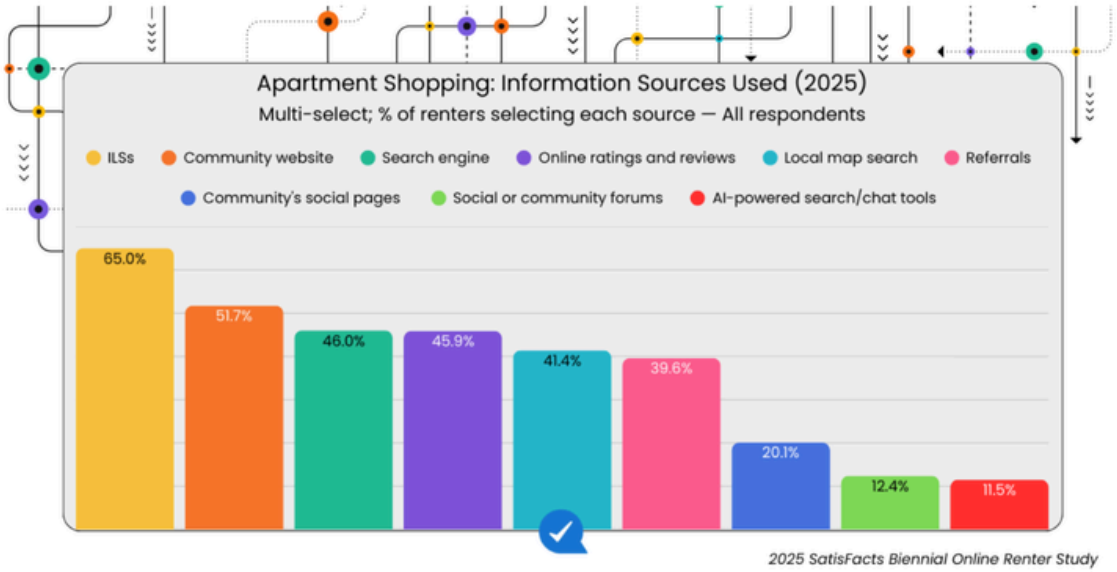
It is unlawful to **make, print, or publish, or cause to be made, printed, or published** any notice, statement, or advertisement, with respect to the sale or rental of a dwelling **that indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination** based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination.

Fair Housing violations more visible than ever.

THEY ARE _____, _____, AND _____

START WHERE PROSPECTS ARE LOOKING...

Apartment Shopping: Information Sources Used (2025)



2025 SatisFacts Biennial Online Renter Study

KATIE RIGSBY Inspires

www.katierigsby.com/fh-social-media

Advertising and Marketing Materials

Print and online advertisements, websites, materials such as brochures, flyers or applications, videos, television and radio ads.

By law, you cannot imply:

- Preference
- Limitation
- Exclusion

Where teams accidentally get in trouble:

- Word choice in ads
- Photos and videos that lack diversity
- Responding differently to online inquiries
- "Targeted" marketing language
- Community descriptions

Marketing Language

Avoid any notice or statement that indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on a protected class.

Avoid Phrases that Suggest

- Preferences or restrictions of specific races
- Family status
- Lifestyle assumptions
- Cultural or religious preferences
- Physical ability

Exclusionary Language

- "Exclusive community"
- "English speaking community"
- "Perfect for singles"
- "Great for families with kids"
- "Ideal for activie individuals"
- "Near church" or "Walk to synagogue"
- "Perfect bachlor pad"
- "Ideal for empty nesters"

Inclusive Language

- "Private community with controlled access"
- Remove entirely, "EHO"
- "Spacious one bedroom floor plans"
- "Open green spaces and playground area"
- "Offers outdoor and wellness features"
- "Near local community centers and places of worship"
- "Open floorplan, ideal for entertaining"
- "Spacious layouts with ample storage"

If the statement describes _____ should live there, it **creates** _____ If it describes what the **property** _____ it **supports** _____

Photos, Videos, and Imagery

- Use diverse imagery that reflects inclusion
- Avoid repeatedly showing only one demographic group
- Show amenities and spaces, not just people
- Be mindful of stock photos that may unintentionally signal a preference

Evidence of compliance

All publishers or advertisements and advertising agencies should post a copy of their nondiscrimination policy in a conspicuous location wherever persons place advertising.

Equal Housing Logo

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Equal Housing Opportunity Slogan

"Equal Housing Opportunity"

Equal Housing Opportunity Statement

"We are pledged to the letter and spirit of U.S. policy for the achievement of equal housing opportunity throughout the Nation. We encourage and support an affirmative advertising and marketing program in which there are no barriers to obtaining housing because of race, color, religion, gender, disability, familial status, or national origin."

Social Media Risks

- Highlighting “types” of residents
- Resident spotlights done incorrectly
- Event photos that exclude representation
- Hashtags and captions
- Sharing resident stories without realizing implications

Targeted Advertising

HUD Guideance in 2024

- Advertisers should avoid using tools that target or exclude people based on protected characteristics or anything that closely represents them.

- Using custom or mirror audiences for housing ads can be risky if the original audience is limited by protected characteristics, because the ad could end up excluding or targeting people unfairly.

Website Risks

- Community descriptions
- Amenity descriptions
- Images and stock photos
- Videos
- FAQ wording
- Website Accessibility compliance

Website Accessibility

Digital accessibility means designing websites, online tools, digital documents, and electronic communications so that people of all abilities can use them with ease. It ensures that individuals who rely on assistive technology, alternative formats, or different methods of navigation can access the same information and complete the same tasks as everyone else.

“Accessible” means that individuals with disabilities are able to independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services within the same time frame as individuals without disabilities, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

Virtual Conversations

Where teams think they are “being helpful” but create violations:

- Email responses
- Text conversations
- Chat bots and live chat
- Virtual tours
- Review responses
- Answering questions about neighbors
- Answering questions about who “lives there”

Please COMPLETE THE SESSION EVALUATION!

www.bit.ly/aagno-viral-eval

FEDERAL LAWS

- U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- National Apartment Association

STATE & LOCAL LAWS

- State Attorney General’s Office
- Local Landlord-Tenant Laws
- State & Local Human Rights Division
- State & Local Civil Rights Division
- State Department of Housing & Community Affairs
- Local Apartment Association

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Let’s Connect!

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