Protection from Source of Income Discrimination

The cost of housing in Denver is a critical concern, and the City has invested in many tools to help families overcome those challenges, including building more units and providing housing assistance. Discrimination based on source of income prevents these tools from being utilized effectively. A family should not be turned away from renting or purchasing a home they can afford because of how they plan to pay.

We have a long history of working to prohibit discrimination in housing based on race, sex or gender identity, disability, age, sexual orientation, etc., but unlike other cities, Denver does not protect against housing discrimination based on a person’s source of income. This shuts vulnerable residents out of accessible housing, causes displacement, and concentrates poverty. Sixty-five cities and counties have ordinances protecting renters and prospective buyers from source of income discrimination dating back to the 1970s. It is time for Denver to engage in the best practices that have proved to be both successful and manageable in cities and counties around the country.

THE PROBLEM

- Source of income discrimination is a tremendous barrier for people who receive public housing assistance, income derived from social security, pensions, annuities, state or federal disability programs or benefits, child support, alimony, foster care subsidies, veterans’ benefits, and other government assistance.
- Source of income discrimination traps people in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty and diminishes children’s chances of moving out of poverty.
- Polling by Enterprise Community Partners and All In Denver indicates broad interest in protecting rental applicants from source of income discrimination, with 76 percent in “support,” and 54 percent in “strong support.”
- According to a recent statewide survey, 47 percent of respondents who had been rejected from housing cited source of income discrimination as the reason.

THE IMPACT OF SOURCE OF INCOME DISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS

- Discrimination protections protect families’ ability to secure safe, quality housing.
- Protections decentralize poverty and promote geographic equity in housing.
- When protections are in effect, voucher utilization rates improve.
- Discrimination protections prevent homelessness.

THE SOLUTION

A Denver City/County ordinance would ensure that a person’s source of income does not preclude them from accessing housing.

COLORADO RENTERS’ EXPERIENCES

“I relied on student loans for income for several years and was told by many management companies that was an unacceptable form of income they would not consider.”
(ZIP code 80218)

“Both [my partner and I] have disabilities and my partner’s source of income was SSDI at the time. Finding accessible housing is EXTREMELY difficult. There is little presence of the disabled working class.”
(ZIP code 80203)

“Most Denver rentals are not interested in renting to people with vouchers or on fixed incomes.”
(ZIP code 80022)
Endorsements

9to5 Colorado
All In Denver
B-Konnnected
Center for Health Progress
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition
Colorado Fiscal Institute
CWEE
Denver Homeless Out Loud
Denver Metro Fair Housing Center
Denver Women’s Collaborative
Enterprise Community Partners
Jobs with Justice
Mile High Connects
Safehouse Denver
South Broadway Christian Church
The Denver Foundation
The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado
UNE