

Introduction

Purpose

This handbook provides useful information about renting an apartment, fair housing laws and some of the basics of landlord-tenant law. For those looking for rental housing, the handbook has practical suggestions about what to look for while inspecting the rental unit and what questions to ask the landlord. For those who are already renting, the handbook discusses common problems such as nonpayment of rent and complaints about repairs. The handbook also includes information about laws protecting against discrimination in rental housing and provides examples of tenants' rights to equal housing opportunities and equal enjoyment of housing.

Disclaimer (a legal caution)

This handbook contains a general statement of the law and should be used only as a guide. It should not be considered legal advice because everyone's case is different. State law is the same, but local laws may be different. Also, the law about landlords and tenants change. This handbook may not be reprinted every time the law changes.

Need legal help?

A lawyer can help you understand the laws that may apply to your specific situation. If you can't afford a lawyer, contact North Penn Legal Services (NPLS). If you are low-income, you might qualify for free legal help. You can apply for legal help by calling 1-877-953-4250 (1-877-9-LEGAL-0). If you have been the victim of housing discrimination or you have questions about fair housing (housing discrimination) laws in the Lehigh Valley, call North Penn Legal Services' Fair Housing Helpline at 610-317-5322.

Acknowledgments

This handbook merges the content of two fine publications: ***The Right Stuff about Renting*** (published by the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley with the support of the Lehigh Valley office of NPLS) and the ***Handbook for Tenants*** (published by NPLS' Susquehanna Valley offices.) This handbook was made possible by the support of the funders of the Lehigh Valley Fair Housing Project: Lehigh County, Northampton County, and the cities of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton.

Usage

This booklet is written for tenants, and sometimes refers to tenants as "you." However, the information may be helpful to landlords, owners and managers of rental property. They are referred to as "the landlord" throughout the booklet.

Online version and video resources

This handbook is available in an electronic format at www.northpennlegal.org in our Resources Section. Some NPLS videos on rental housing are available on our website and at many area libraries.