

Chapter 140
FAIR HOUSING

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[HISTORY: Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Village of St. Johnsville 11-18-1991 by L.L. No. 2-1991. Amendments noted where applicable.]

§ 140-1. Purposes and enactment.

For the purpose of providing and ensuring fair housing opportunities for all within the Village of St. Johnsville, the Board of Trustees of said Village, in the County of Montgomery, State of New York, under the authority of the General Municipal and Village Laws, hereby obtains, enacts, and publishes this chapter.

§ 140-2. Word usage.

For the purpose of this chapter, certain words or phrases herein shall be interpreted as follows, except where the context clearly indicates the contrary: words used in the singular include the plural, words used in the present tense include the future tense, the word "person" includes a corporation as well as an individual, and the word "shall" is always mandatory.

§ 140-3. Definitions.

For the purpose of this chapter, certain terms or words herein shall be interpreted as follows:

DISCRIMINATORY HOUSING PRACTICE — An act that is unlawful under §§ 140-4, 140-5 and 140-6.

DWELLING — Any building, structure, or portion thereof which is occupied as, or designed or intended for occupancy as, a residence by one or more families, and any vacant land which is offered for sale or lease for the construction or location thereon of any such building, structure, or portion thereof.

FAMILY — Includes a single individual.

PERSON — One or more individuals, corporations, partnerships, associations, labor organizations, legal representatives, mutual companies, joint-stock companies, trusts, unincorporated organizations, trustees, trustees in bankruptcy, receivers, and fiduciaries.

TO RENT — To lease, to sublease, to let and otherwise to grant for a consideration the right to occupy premises not owned by the occupant.

§ 140-4. Discrimination in sale or rental of housing.

Except as exempted by § 140-7, it shall be unlawful within the Village of St. Johnsville:

- A. To refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.
- B. To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith, because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.
- C. 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 preferences, 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.
- D. To represent to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin that any dwelling is not available for inspection, sale, or rental when such dwelling is in fact so available.
- E. For profit, to induce or attempt to induce any person to sell or rent any dwelling by representations regarding the entry or prospective entry into the neighborhood of a person or persons of a particular race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

§ 140-5. Discrimination in financing of housing.

It shall be unlawful within the Village of St. Johnsville for any bank, building and loan association, insurance company, or other corporation, association, firm, or enterprise whose business consists in whole or in part in the making of commercial real estate loans to deny a loan or other financial assistance to a person applying therefor for the purpose of purchasing, constructing, improving repairing, or maintaining a dwelling; or to discriminate against him in the fixing of the amount, interest rate, duration, other terms or conditions of such loan or other financial assistance because of the race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin of such person or of any person associated with him in connection with such loan or other financial assistance, or the purposes of such loan or other financial assistance, or of the present or prospective owners, lessees, tenants, or occupants of the dwelling or dwellings in relation to which such loan or other financial assistance is to be made or given; provided that nothing contained in this section shall impair the scope or effectiveness of the exception contained in § 140-7.

§ 140-6. Discrimination in provision of brokerage services.

It shall be unlawful within the Village of St. Johnsville to deny any person access to or membership or participation in any multiple-listing service, real estate broker's organization, or other service, organization, or facility relating to the business of selling or renting dwellings; or to discriminate against him in other terms or conditions of such access, membership, or participation on account of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

§ 140-7. Exemptions.**A. Sales/rental by owners.**

- (1) Nothing in § 140-4 (other than Subsection C) shall apply to:
 - (a) Any single-family house sold or rented by an owner; provided that such private individual owner does not own more than three such single-family houses at any one time; provided, further, that in the case of the sale of any such single-family house by a private individual owner not residing in such house at the time of such sale, or who was not the recent residence of such house prior to such sale, the exception granted by this subsection shall apply only with respect to one such sale within any twenty-four-month period; provided, further, that such bona fide private individual owner does not own any interest in, nor is there owned or reserved on his behalf under any express or voluntary agreement, title to any right to all or a portion of the proceeds from the sale or rental of more than three such single-family houses at one time; provided, further, that the sale or rental of any such single-family shall be excepted from the application of this chapter only if such house is sold or rented A) without the use in any manner of the sales or rental facilities or the sales or rental services of any real estate broker, agent, or salesman, or of such facilities or services of any person in the business of selling or renting dwelling, or of any employee or agent of any such broker, agent, salesman, or persons, and B) without the publication, posting, or mailing after notice, of any advertisement or written notice in violation of § 140-4 of this chapter; but nothing in this proviso shall prohibit the use of attorneys, escrow agents, abstractors, title companies and other such professional assistance as may be necessary to perfect or transfer the title; or
 - (b) Rooms or units in dwellings containing living quarters occupied or intended to be occupied by no more than four families living independently of each other, if the owner actually maintains and occupies one of such living quarters as his residence.
- (2) For the purpose of this exemption, a person shall be deemed to be in the business of selling or renting dwellings if:
 - (a) He has, within the preceding 12 months, participated as principal in three or more transactions involving other sale or rental of any dwelling or any interest therein; or

- (b) He has, within the preceding 12 months, participated as agent, other than in the sale of his own personal residence, in providing sales or rental facilities or sales or rental services in two or more transactions involving the sale or rental services in two or more transactions involving the sale or rental of any dwelling or any interest therein; or
- (c) He is the owner of any dwelling designed or intended for occupancy by, or occupied by, five or more families.

B. Sales/rentals by religious organizations. Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit a religious organization, association, or society, or any nonprofit institution or organization operated, supervised, or controlled by or in conjunction with a religious organization, association, or society, from limiting the sale, rental, or occupancy of dwellings which it owns or operated for other than a commercial purpose to persons of the same religion, or from giving preference to such persons, unless membership in such religion is restricted on account of race, color, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin. Nor shall anything in this chapter prohibit a private club not in fact open to the public, which as an incident to its primary purpose or purposes provides lodgings which it owns or operates for other than a commercial purpose, from limiting the rental of occupancy of such lodgings to its members or from giving preference to its members.

§ 140-8. Administration.

The authority and responsibility for publicizing, administering, and enforcing this chapter shall be in the Village's Fair Housing Officer, to be designated annually at the Reorganizational Meeting of the Board of Trustees by the Mayor of the Village of St. Johnsville.

§ 140-9. Reporting of violations.

Violations of this chapter shall be reported in person or in writing to this Village's Attorney or its Fair Housing officer within a year of the alleged discriminatory housing practice.

§ 140-10. Enforcement.

Where sufficient cause exists to believe that the terms of this chapter have been violated, the Fair Housing officer shall institute a suit in a court of competent jurisdiction against the alleged violator within 120 days following the issuance of the charge.

§ 140-11. Penalties for offenses.

Where a person or organization has been found, after a trial on the merits, in violation of this chapter, a fine shall be imposed on such person or organization not to exceed \$10,000 for a first offense, and \$25,000 for a second offense and \$50,000 for third offense. The minimum fine for violations of this chapter shall be \$50,000 for a first offense, and \$500 for each additional offense. Each and every separate violation of this chapter shall be deemed an offense for the purposes of imposing the appropriate fine.

§ 140-12. Amendments.

The Village Board of Trustees may, on its own initiative or on petition, amend, supplement, or repeal the provisions of this chapter in conformity with applicable law after public notice and hearing.

§ 140-13. Interpretation.

In their interpretation and application, the provisions of this chapter shall be held to be minimum requirements adopted for the promotion of the public health, morals, safety or the general welfare. Whenever the requirements of this chapter are at variance with the requirements of any other lawfully adopted rules, regulations, or ordinances, the most restrictive, or that imposing the highest standards, shall govern.

§ 140-14. Short title.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as "The Village of St. Johnsville Fair Housing Law."

