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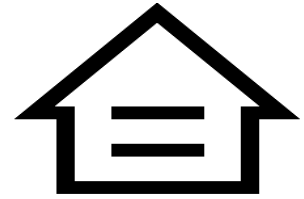
**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY**  
**FAIR HOUSING TASK FORCE**

**48 Court Street**

**Canton, New York 13617-1169**

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**WEB SITE <http://www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Planning/FHTF.htm>**



**Before You Rent: Things to do to Protect Yourself Before Signing A Lease**

Carefully evaluate how renting and buying compare. Purchasing a home sometimes can be less expensive than renting.

Determine if the home/apartment is big enough.

Evaluate the condition of the home/apartment. Are there signs of insect or rodent infestation?

Determine what the reputation of the landlord is. Will you be able to get along with the landlord?

Find out what the rent and security deposit will be.

Find out under what conditions the security deposit will be returned to you and when.

Find out what expenses, other than rent and a security deposit, can be expected including utility expenses.

Find out how much the heating bills are during the winter. Contact the utility company for a monthly average.

Find out whom you should contact if there is a maintenance problem.

Determine who is responsible for snow removal and lawn care.

Find out if there are any rules concerning noise, pets, smoking, et cetera.

Avoid entering into an agreement with a landlord who you do not trust.

Make sure that you like the home/apartment and its location. Does the neighborhood have the services that you need?

*Fair Housing Opens Doors!*

Make sure that you are willing to stay in the home/apartment for the full term of the lease.

Talk with the previous or current tenants about the home/apartment and the landlord.

Complete a condition report on the rental unit with the landlord so that you will not be accused of causing damage that you did not cause. For an example of a condition report, see the attached document.

Carefully read and understand a copy of the lease that you will be expected to sign. It may be useful to contact an attorney to help you review the lease. For a sample lease, call the Fair Housing Task Force at (315) 379-2292.

If you believe that you are being discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, or disability, contact the Fair Housing Council of Central New York at 315-471-0420 or HUD's Office of Fair Housing at 1-800-669-9777 (and 1-800-927-9275 for the hearing impaired).

*Fair Housing Opens Doors!*