



? "My landlord said I am going to be evicted next week..can he do that?
 ? "I have been without hot water for a period of time and the owner isn't doing anything about it, may I withhold my rent?
 ?"I have a documented breathing problem and my air conditioner doesn't work right, I'm getting very high electric bills and the manager has lied to the utility company about its condition."
 ? "I live in a publicly-assisted complex, I am being denied a larger apartment even though my family has grown because the manager says my housekeeping isn't good. Others have been given larger units even though there are not as many in their families."
 ? "My public housing manager says this may be a 'strike,' what recourse do I have?"

Though not always the initial concern, *Fair Housing* issues do emerge as callers discuss their circumstances. Questions surrounding medically-mandated companion pets; curious placements of racial/ethnic groups within a development; questionable patterns of lease non-renewals, disparate maintenance services to tenants in protected classes... all warrant further inquiry under the Fair Housing laws.

Judging from the calls received, it seems that there is consistently a misuse of power and position by landlords. However, it could be concluded that both landlords and tenants could use more education about their rights and responsibilities.

We attempt to educate all callers about the landlord/tenant relationship. We strongly encourage tenants to document their situation and all parties to communicate openly and honestly. Mostly we connect people to the proper resources to remedy their situation.

Generally speaking, callers do not know the following basics:

- ⇒ **It is the landlord's obligation to provide the tenant with a free copy of the Summary of the Residential Landlord Tenant Code;**
- ⇒ **Any significant communication with the landlord should be documented in writing;**
- ⇒ **A court decision by a judge is necessary in order to evict a tenant.**

Many callers seek affordable housing; we are asked "Where can I go,? I can't find housing I can afford." Some have already been devastated by the loss of a home. "... For the past three months, I have been searching for a home, I am a 40 year-old Hispanic, disabled, and homeless person... All the doors continue to slam in my face... I am not

as mobile as I wish I could be due to my illness. I have moved five times in one month and I am drained, please help." To assist in finding housing DHC distributes "Housing in A Hurry" a Guide to Affordable Housing in Delaware [www.housingforall.org/Housing In a Hurry](http://www.housingforall.org/Housing%20In%20a%20Hurry).

Applied knowledge is power. Through the hotline and other work, we seek to minimize the power differential between landlords/managers and tenants by tenants gaining and using housing knowledge. While we collaborate to increase affordable housing, we seek to strengthen the tenure of current renters. DHC concurs with Stone that housing should provide privacy and security against intrusions as evidenced by continued work toward our goal to *affect, impact, and shape the environment relating to housing* and our vision of *housing for all*.

Chart III: Calls by Residential Type
 Inquiries in 2003

