

FAIR HOUSING

It's Your Right



**EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY**

CITY OF LANCASTER, OHIO

Community Development
Department

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“FAIR HOUSING - EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL”

Most people enjoy receiving special attention, "something extra" that makes you feel set apart from the crowd. It might be a tone of voice or information you didn't expect to receive.

If you feel set apart from the crowd in your housing choice, the "something extra" you may be receiving could be illegal discrimination. "Concern" that you might not be happy where you are residing, inquiries or limitation on children, comments about the changing character of the neighborhood may be signs of discrimination. It is illegal to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability. In addition to the Federal protected classes, the Ohio Fair Housing law adds ancestry and military status to the list.

Does your landlord require only you to sign a lease? Is your rent higher than your neighbor's for the same unit? Has someone steered you from one neighborhood into another because "you would be happier there"? Do you fit into one of the above protected classes? If so, you may have experienced illegal discrimination.

The only concern a potential home seller, Realtor, lender or landlord should have is someone's ability to afford the property. Single women with children are often victims of discrimination. Their housing choices may be limited by income and child care considerations or expenses. Children are considered as a part of the family unit, as would be another adult.

Landlords may make credit checks or contact prior landlords for recommendations. If they do, they must do this for all potential renters. It is discriminatory to single out a person's credit or references in the attempt to keep them from renting or owning a property.

A security deposit, usually equal to one month's rent, is customary. If someone requires you to pay a higher or additional deposit because you have children, it is illegal discrimination.

This brochure provides additional information regarding your housing rights. Contact the Lancaster Community Development Office, at 740-687-6663, if you feel you may be the victim of illegal discrimination.



Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Federal Fair Housing Law) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex in the sale, financing or rental of housing.

The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 expands the protection of Title VIII to familial status and disability. The act also establishes an administrative and judicial enforcement mechanism for cases where discriminatory housing practices can not be resolved informally, and provides for monetary penalties in cases where housing discrimination is found.

The Fair Housing Act, and its amendments, **prohibit discrimination** in housing because of:

RACE

COLOR

NATIONAL ORIGIN

RELIGION

SEX

FAMILIAL STATUS

*(The presence of children under the age of 18
living with parent or legal custodian; or pregnant women)*

DISABILITY

In addition to the Federal Fair Housing Act, the Ohio Fair Housing Law (Ohio Revised Code Section 4112) includes the following as additional protected groups:

ANCESTRY

MILITARY STATUS

Please Note:

The Fair Housing Act does not protect a person who is a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or who currently uses illegal drugs.



Additional Protection if You Have a Disability

If you, or someone associated with you:

- Has a physical or mental disability (including, but not limited to hearing, mobility and visual impairments, cancer, chronic mental illness, HIV/AIDS or mental retardation) that substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- Has a record of such a disability or
- Are regarded as having such a disability, a housing provider may not:

Refuse to let you make reasonable modifications to your dwelling or common use areas, at your expense, if it may be necessary, for you to fully use the housing. (Where reasonable, a landlord may permit changes only if you agree to restore the property to its original condition when you move.

Refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services if it may be necessary for you to use the housing on an equal basis with nondisabled persons.

Example: *A building with a "NO PETS" policy must allow a visually impaired tenant to keep a guide dog.*

Example: *You need grab bars to use your bathtub. At your own expense, the landlord permits you to reinforce the interior of the wall and install grab bars. When you move, the landlord requests that the grab bars be removed. This is reasonable.*

The landlord requests that the reinforcements be taken out of the interior of the wall. This is unreasonable, you are not required to do so.

Example: *An apartment complex that offers tenants ample, unassigned parking must honor a request from a mobility-impaired tenant for a reserved space near his/her apartment if it may be necessary to assure that she can have access to his/her apartment. .*



In the Sale and Rental of Housing: In Ohio no one may take any of the following actions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, ancestry and military status:

Refuse to rent or sell housing.

Refuse to negotiate for housing.

Make housing unavailable.

Otherwise deny a dwelling.

Set different terms, conditions or privileges for sale or rental of a dwelling.

Provide different housing services or facilities.

Falsely deny that housing is available for inspection, sale or rental.

For profit, persuade or try to persuade homeowners to sell or rent dwellings by suggesting that people of a particular race, etc. have moved, or are about to move into the neighborhood (blockbusting) or

Deny anyone access to, membership or participation in, any organization, facility or service (such as a multiple listing service) related to the sale or rental of dwellings, or discriminate against any person in the terms or conditions of such access, membership or participation.

Refuse to make a mortgage loan.

Refuse to provide information regarding loans.

Impose different terms or conditions on a loan, such as different interest rates, points or fees.

Discriminate in appraising property.

Refuse to purchase a loan or

Set different terms or conditions for purchasing a loan.



In, addition, it is a violation of the Fair Housing Act to: Threaten, coerce, intimidate or interfere with anyone exercising a fair housing right or assisting others who exercise the right

Make, print, or publish any statement, in connection with the sale or rental of a dwelling, which indicates a preference, limitation, or discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, ancestry, or military status. This prohibition against discriminatory advertising applies to single-family and owner-occupied housing that is otherwise exempt from the Fair Housing Act.

Refuse to provided homeowners insurance coverage for a dwelling because of the, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, ancestry, or military status of the owner and/or occupants of a dwelling.

Discriminate in the terms or conditions of homeowners insurance coverage because of the, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, ancestry, or military status of the owner and/or occupants of a dwelling

Refuse to provide available information on the full range of homeowners insurance coverage options available because of the race, etc. of the owner and/or occupants of a dwelling.

Make print or publish any statement, in connection with the provision of homeowners insurance coverage, that indicates a preference, limitation or discrimination based on, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, ancestry, or military status.



If you feel you have been illegally discriminated against in the sale or rental of housing, make immediate detailed notes of your experience, including;

- Your name and address
- The date of the alleged violation
- The name and address of the person your complaint is against (the respondent)
- The address or other identification of the housing involved
- A short description of the alleged violation (the event that caused you to believe your rights were violated).

Then contact the following local fair housing agency:

**City of Lancaster
Community Development Department
111 South Broad Street
Suite 217
Lancaster, Ohio 43130
(740) 687-6663**

You will have the option of filing a discrimination complaint form with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and/or the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) or the Lancaster Community Development Department's office may attempt to mediate the situation for you. You have one year after the alleged violation to file a complaint with HUD/OCRC, but you should file it as soon as possible.

If HUD/OCRC investigates your complaint and finds reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred, you will be informed and an administrative hearing will be held. There is no cost to you. Attorneys with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and/or the Ohio Civil Rights Commission will litigate on your behalf. If a finding of discrimination occurs, the guilty party can be ordered to:

- Compensate you for actual damages including, out-of-pocket expenses and emotional distress damages.
- Provide permanent injunctive relief.
- Provide appropriate equitable relief (for example, make the housing available to you).
- Pay your reasonable attorney's fees.
- Pay a civil penalty to HUD to vindicate the public interest. The maximum civil penalties are: \$16,000, for a first violation of the Act; \$37,500 if a previous violation has occurred within the preceding five-year period; and \$65,000 if two or more previous violations have occurred within the preceding seven-year period.



You may choose to have your case decided in federal district court within one year of an alleged violation. The attorney general will file a suit and litigate it on your behalf. The district court can order relief and award actual damages, attorney's fees and costs. In addition, the court can award punitive damages.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to summarize your rights to fair housing. The fair housing act and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's regulations contain more detail and technical information.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development address in Washington is:

***U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
451 Seventh Street, SW - Room 5204
Washington, D.C. 20410-2000
1-800-669-9777***

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's regional office for Ohio is:

***U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Ralph H. Metcalfe Federal Building
77 West Jackson Boulevard, Room 2101
Chicago, IL 60604-3507
1-800-765-9372***

The address of the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity employment opportunity division of the Columbus field office of Housing and Urban Development is:

***Division of Fair Housing and
Equal Employment Opportunity
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
200 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 469-5737***

The address of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission central office is:

***Ohio Civil Rights Commission
Rhodes State Office Tower
30 East Broad Street, 5th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 1-888-278-7101
TTY: 614-752-2391***





For further information call the toll-free fair housing complaint hotline;

1-800-669-9777

Hearing impaired persons may call (TDD):

1-800-927-9275

To file electronically, visit: www.hud.gov/fairhousing



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