

Jackson County Fair Housing Program's Guide to Fair Housing



It is not lawful to deny someone the opportunity to live where they want and can afford to live. If you believe you are being treated unfairly, take the following steps to protect yourself:

1. Keep a written record of any meetings and/or phone calls you have with a landlord, property manager, real estate agent, loan officer or insurance agent. Write down the person's name, title, company, and the date and time of the discussion. Write down what happened, what was said and what was promised.
2. Keep copies of any documents you signed, applications, leases, receipts, as well as any documents that were given to you.
3. Contact the Jackson County Fair Housing Program or another resource listed on this brochure.

There are State and Federal Fair Housing Laws in place to protect citizens from discrimination when housing is being sold, rented, brokered, and during the mortgage lending process. No one may take the following actions based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, national origin, age or military status:

- Refuse to rent or sell housing
- Refuse to negotiate for housing
- Make housing unavailable
- Otherwise deny a dwelling
- Set different terms for the sale or rental of housing
- Provide different housing services or facilities
- Falsely deny that housing is available for inspection, sale or rental

You should be careful if one of the following happens to you:

- You are told the apartment you want to rent is not available after you have completed an application.
- You are told you cannot rent an apartment because of your children.
- You are asked to sign blank or incomplete documents.
- You are told you might like "another neighborhood" or you cannot "afford" the neighborhood."

Remember: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true!!!!

Additional Fair Housing Resources are Available Online!

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_eq/ua_opp

Jackson County:

<http://www.jacksoncountyoio.us/boards-agencies/fair-housing-program/>

Local Contact: Carla Marcum
Jackson County Commissioners
26 South Street, P.O. Box 606
Jackson, OH 45640
740-286-3301

Renting

Renting usually requires signing a legal document which is binding between landlord and tenant for a definite time period. Many tenants never sign a lease. If you do not, that does not mean you do not have the same rights as a tenant who has a lease. However, oral agreements are not recommended! Here are some other things to be aware of:

- A tenant should be keeping premises safe and sanitary.
- A landlord may collect a security deposit to cover the costs of unpaid rents and/or costs of property damages caused by a tenant. Landlords are required to return the deposit within 30 days after the tenant gives up occupancy and terminates the rental agreement.
- A landlord may bring an eviction action in court when tenant fails to pay on time or is not following the terms of a lease agreement.
- A tenant should refrain from damaging the premises and keep guests from damaging.
- A tenant should comply with State and municipal drug laws in connection with the premises and require guests to do the same.

Concerning repairs to rentals:

If you see things in a rental unit that need to be repaired, it is a good idea not to move in until the repairs are made. Be careful if the landlord promises to pay you to make repairs. Make sure agreements are definite and promises are in writing. If you are living in a unit that needs repairs, request those repairs in writing and give a reasonable amount of time for the landlord to complete the repairs. The landlord is responsible for making the unit livable and in good working order. If your landlord is not meeting these obligations, you should call the Fair Housing Hotline, 1-800-850-0467.

In Ohio, the Landlord has a duty to:

- Put and keep the premises in fit and habitable condition;
- Comply with building, housing, health and safety codes;
- Keep all electrical, plumbing, heating, ventilation systems and fixtures in good working order;
- Maintain all appliance and equipment supplied to a tenant;
- Treat every applicant and tenant equally;
- Provide 24 hour notice before entering a tenant occupied unit.

In Ohio, Landlord-Tenant relations are governed by the Ohio Landlord Tenant Laws (Ohio Revised Code 5321) and by the Eviction Statute (ORC 1923), which can be found online at <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/5321> and <http://code.ohio.gov/orc/1923>

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Fair Housing is the Law

Housing discrimination is illegal. Fair housing means you may freely choose a place to live without regard to your race, color, religion, sex, nationality, disability status, familial status, military status, or age.

If you have a disability, the fair housing laws protect you. The fair housing laws protect people with mental illness, cerebral palsy, visual and hearing impairments, HIV and AIDS, and, physical impairments that require walkers, wheelchairs and canes. It also protects people who need companion animals and/or personal attendants.

If you have children, you cannot be denied housing simply because you have children this includes pregnant women, families with children, adult guardians of children, and households in the process of gaining custody of children.

IF YOU FEEL YOU HAVE BEEN
DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, DO NOT
HESITATE TO CALL FOR HELP OR FILE A
COMPLAINT

Jackson County Fair Housing Hotline:
1-800-850-0467

The Ohio Civil Rights Commission:
1-614-466-5928

**The U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development:**
1-800-669-9777 / TDD 1-800-927-9275

Ohio Legal Aid:
1-866-529-6446

Southeast Ohio Legal Services:
1-800-686-3668