

The Housing Research & Advocacy Center is a not-for-profit fair housing agency whose mission is to eliminate housing discrimination and assure choice in Northeast Ohio by providing those at risk with effective information, intervention and advocacy.

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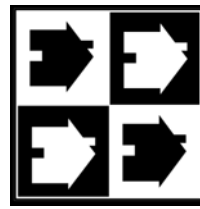
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Housing Research & Advocacy Center


A charter member of
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Housing
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FAIR HOUSING & FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN



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Who is Protected?

Federal and state fair housing laws make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of *familial status*—the presence of children under the age of 18. Familial status protection covers households in which one or more minor children live with:

- A parent
- A person who has legal custody (including guardianship) of a minor child or children
- The designee of a parent or legal custodian, with written permission of the parent or legal custodian

Familial status protection also extends to pregnant women and any person in the process of securing legal custody of a minor child (including adoptive or foster parents).

Exemptions

Some senior housing facilities and communities are exempt from liability for familial status discrimination. If a facility or community is designated as “62 and older” (where all residents are at least 62 years of age) or “55 and older” (where at least 80% of the units have at least one occupant who is 55 years of age or older) it may be exempt from these provisions and may be allowed to prohibit children under the age of 18.

In addition, some federally subsidized housing may be subject to additional requirements. Contact the Housing Center for more details.

What is Prohibited?

It is illegal to do any of the following actions based on familial status:

- Refuse to rent, sell or negotiate for housing
- Set different terms or conditions, or provide different services or access to facilities
- Make housing unavailable or otherwise restrict choice
- Discriminate in advertising by listing limitations or preferences
- Refuse to provide information regarding homeowners’ insurance or mortgage loans
- Refuse to make or purchase a loan
- Refuse to provide homeowners or renters insurance
- Impose different terms or conditions in a loan, such as different interest rates or fees
- Threaten, coerce, intimidate or interfere with anyone exercising their fair housing rights

Possible Signs of Discrimination

“We don’t want any children here”

“Each child must have their own bedroom”

“Your children cannot use the pool”

“Children of the opposite sex cannot share a bedroom”

Occupancy Codes

Federal guidelines generally allow at least two persons per bedroom. Most cities and villages in the region have occupancy codes that regulate the number of people that can live in a house or apartment, often based on the total square footage in the unit or the bedrooms. A landlord may limit the number of people allowed to live in a dwelling based on a reasonable occupancy code. However, attempts to impose occupancy standards stricter than allowed by local and federal standards may be discriminatory. For more information, contact your local building department, or call the Housing Center at 216-361-9240.

Where to Go for Help?

If you think you have been a victim of housing discrimination because of your race, national origin, religion, sex, color, familial status, disability, ancestry, or any other reason, please contact the Housing Research & Advocacy Center for assistance at 216-361-9240.

You can also contact the Ohio Civil Rights Commission at 1-888-278-7101 or online at www.crc.ohio.gov, or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) at 1-800-669-9777, or online at www.hud.gov. For the hearing impaired, call 1-800-927-9275. HUD also offers assistance with reading and completing HUD forms through interpreters, tapes, and Braille materials.