

## OUR MISSION

We promote fair housing and diverse communities, and work to eliminate housing discrimination in Northeast Ohio, by providing effective research, education and advocacy.

Since 1983, the Housing Center has promoted equal access to housing and diverse communities for residents of Northeast Ohio with:

### Research

- Analyses of Impediments to Fair Housing
- Community Lending Factbooks
- Reports on Local Occupancy Codes
- Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Ohio Mortgage Lending
- Obtaining and Maintaining Housing for People with Mental Health Disabilities
- Landlord Training Manuals, and
- The State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio

### Education and Outreach

- Trainings for housing professionals
- Programs for housing buyers and renters in English and Spanish
- “Street Teams” for tabling and community events
- Speakers Bureau available for presentations
- Brochures in English, Spanish and Arabic

### Enforcement

- Monitor rental, sales, homeowners insurance, and lending markets for discriminatory practices

### Advocacy

- Propose and enforce effective fair housing laws
- Facilitate the Greater Cleveland Fair Housing Consortium
- Collaborate with national, state, and local organizations



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MEMBER OF  
GREATER CLEVELAND  
**COMMUNITY  
SHARES**

This pamphlet is intended to convey information. Nothing in this pamphlet should be relied upon as legal advice, nor should this pamphlet be regarded as creating an attorney-client relationship.

Funding provided by  
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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# FAIR HOUSING

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## National Origin & Ancestry



**The Housing Center**  
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### **Does my immigration status affect whether I am protected by the Fair Housing Act?**

**No.** Every person in the United States is covered by the Fair Housing Act. Federal and state laws prohibit discrimination in housing based on:

- Race/Color
- National Origin/Ancestry
- Sex
- Disability
- Religion
- Family Status
- Military Status



**Housing discrimination is illegal regardless of immigration status.**

#### **Examples of housing discrimination:**

- A landlord refuses to rent to a person based on their religion.
- A landlord requires additional identification documents from a person based on their national origin.
- A landlord will not rent to a family with children.

### **What is National Origin discrimination?**

National origin discrimination is when a person is denied housing or offered different terms based their birthplace, culture, or language. Ohio law also protects people based on ancestry.

#### **A person cannot be denied housing opportunities based on:**

- Being from or having family from another country.
- Having a name or accent associated with a national origin group.
- Participation in certain customs associated with a national origin group.
- Being married to or associated with people of a certain national origin.

#### **Examples of housing discrimination based on national origin or ancestry:**

- A housing provider will not rent to someone who speaks a language other than English.
- A housing provider charges a higher security deposit or rent to a tenant because tenant or members of tenant's family was born in another country.
- A realtor only shows a homebuyer certain housing

based on customs associated with homebuyer's national origin/ancestry.

### **Can landlords ask for immigration documents?**

Landlords are able to ask for identification documents and perform credit checks in order to financially qualify a person for housing. However, a landlord should apply the same procedure for all potential tenants. Procedures to screen potential tenants for citizenship and immigration status, such as asking for a green card (permanent resident card) or visa verification, may violate the Fair Housing Act.

### **What if a landlord or neighbor is threatening to report me, a family member, or friends to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)?**

It is illegal to coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with a person exercising their fair housing rights. This includes threatening to report a person to ICE for filing a fair housing complaint. HUD does not inquire about immigration status when investigating fair housing complaints. If ICE becomes involved after a complaint is filed, inform them that you are pursuing a housing discrimination complaint with HUD.

### *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, military status, 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](http://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](http://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.