For help with domestic violence:
Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center
(216) 391-HELP (4397)
www.dvcac.org

For fair housing complaints:
Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research
(216) 361-9240
www.thehousingcenter.org

For legal services:
Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
(216) 687-1900
www.lasclev.org

United Way's 2-1-1 First Call for Help
www.211oh.org

For women's rights issues:
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio
www.acluohio.org

For drug addiction or mental health services in Cuyahoga County:
Alcohol and Drug Addiction Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County
(216) 241-3400
www.adamhscc.org

For drug addiction or mental health services in Lorain County:
Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board of Lorain County (440) 989-4900
www.lorainadas.org

For information on shelters:
Frontline Services (216) 623-6555
http://www.frontlineservice.org

The mission of the Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research is to protect and expand fair housing rights, eliminate housing discrimination and promote integrated communities. Since 1983, the Fair Housing Center has promoted equal access to housing and diverse communities for residents of Northeast Ohio with research, education and outreach and advocacy for victims of housing discrimination.

Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research
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This pamphlet is intended to convey information only.
Nothing in this pamphlet should be relied upon as legal advice, nor should this pamphlet be regarded as creating an attorney-client relationship.

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The Cleveland Foundation

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Domestic violence is when one person intentionally causes physical or psychological harm to another person in an intimate relationship, including sexual assault, physical abuse, and psychological/emotional abuse. It is a crime that occurs in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships, and is used to establish and maintain power and control over another person. An estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by a partner each year. While fifteen percent of domestic violence victims are men, domestic violence is a crime that disproportionately affects women and mothers with children.

One housing barrier for survivors of domestic violence is when they face eviction due to the actions of their abuser. Violence in the household, destruction of property, or calls to 911 as a result of a domestic disturbance may lead to eviction because of some local nuisance ordinances that require eviction for excessive police calls. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) however, protects victims of domestic violence (and survivors of sexual assault, dating violence and stalking) from eviction and termination due to their status, in federally subsidized housing programs, including Housing Choice Voucher programs, and the Housing Choice Voucher Program. In 2018, Cuyahoga County passed anti-harassment legislation that provides county-wide protection from housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in all of its municipalities.

**Landlord’s Responsibilities**

Landlords must abide by fair housing laws. It is illegal to discriminate in housing, deny housing, or make housing unavailable based on a protected class. Some local nuisance ordinances penalize landlords and property owners if emergency services are called to a property repeatedly, and require a landlord to “abate the nuisance”, or evict the tenant. However, in instances involving a person who is a domestic violence victim or a person with a disability, those nuisance ordinances can be in violation of fair housing laws when they disproportionately affect specific protected classes of people. A landlord unsure of how to handle this type of situation should contact their attorney or The Fair Housing Center for help.

**Common Scenarios**

- My abuser went to jail for domestic violence and now I can’t pay the rent.
- The neighbors called the police because of screams coming from my apartment, but my abuser ran off before they got there. I was served with an eviction notice for violating the city’s nuisance ordinance.
- I called the police on my abuser but I was charged with child endangerment for having my son in this environment.
- My child told her teacher that her dad hits me and now I’m getting calls from social services.
- My landlord knows I’m a victim of domestic violence and pressures me for sexual favors for reduced rent. What should I do?
- I applied for housing but once the property manager found out about my DV status, my application was denied.
- I have a criminal record due to fighting off my abuser and now I can’t get housing.

**Where to go for help?**

If you think you have been discriminated against in housing because of your status as a survivor of domestic violence, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, national origin, religion, sex, color, familial status, disability, military status, ancestry, or any other reason, please contact The Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research at 216-361-9240 to speak with an advocate.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What if by calling the police on my abuser I get evicted?**

Some nuisance ordinances provide exclusions for domestic violence situations but vary by municipality. For ones that don’t, it may be a fair housing violation and you should contact The Fair Housing Center.

I don’t feel comfortable disclosing my status as a survivor of domestic violence to my new potential landlord. What do I say about my living situation?

Many domestic violence victims do not feel comfortable disclosing that information. You are not required to, but it can help if you need assistance in the future.

**My name is not on the lease. How do I get the landlord to change the lease from my abuser’s name to mine?**

If you are in subsidized housing, a service coordinator should be able to facilitate a name change on the lease. In private housing, a landlord should be willing to accommodate such a request.

I want to keep my children in this school district, so why should I have to move?

You should not have to move, however it may be necessary for your protection, but by seeking help, it’s possible you will be able to stay and your abuser will be removed.

**My landlord is demanding I perform sexual favors for reduced rent. What should I do?**

This is sexual harassment, a violation of fair housing laws, and is housing discrimination based on sex. Call The Fair Housing Center and we will talk you through your options and if necessary, help you file a fair housing complaint.

**Committed to fair housing for all.**

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**Protections for Survivors of Domestic Violence**

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on protected classes, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status, and disability. Sex discrimination protections extend to sexual harassment, creating quid pro quo (this for that) arrangements, or a sexually hostile living environment.

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued the HUD LGBT Rule, requiring equal access to HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status. This rule also applies to private landlords who have FHA-insured mortgages or participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. In 2018, Cuyahoga County passed anti-discrimination legislation that provides county-wide protection from housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in all of its municipalities.

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[The Fair Housing Center]

9240 to speak with an advocate.

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