



**The Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc.** is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that offers several housing programs that benefits residents of Lake County, Ohio and surrounding communities. The mission of Fair Housing Resource Center (FHRC) is to promote equal housing opportunities for all persons and to advocate for fair housing and diversity in Lake County and surrounding communities through the education and involvement of the public, government, and the business community. FHRC operates a Landlord/Tenant hotline service to Lake County residents to assist them with their housing rights. FHRC also operates a fair housing intake and investigation complaint service for victims of housing discrimination. FHRC is a Housing Counseling Agency certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and provides homeownership counseling, such as: pre-purchase home buying, educational and group workshops, resolving and preventing mortgage delinquency, home maintenance and financial management for homeowners, rental counseling, and homelessness counseling.

***Fair Housing is NOT an Option...  
Fair Housing is THE LAW!***

## **“YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO HOUSING FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION”**

**Sex • Disability • Familial Status  
Race • Color • Religion  
National Origin or Ancestry • Military Status**

*If you feel you've been discriminated against in housing, make sure you take these steps:*

- Keep a record of the names, dates, addresses, phone numbers and other important information which can assist in the investigation of your complaint.
- Don't forget to be as specific as possible about the incident. Get the names and addresses of any witnesses to the incident whenever possible.
- Following the incident, you have one year to file an administrative complaint or two years to file a lawsuit.



### **Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc.**

1100 Mentor Ave.  
Painesville, Ohio 44077  
(440) 392-0147, Fax (440) 392-0148  
Toll Free (866) 411-3472  
TTY (440) 392-0148  
Email: [info@fhrc.org](mailto:info@fhrc.org)  
**[www.FHRC.org](http://www.FHRC.org)**

**U.S. Department of Housing and  
Urban Development (HUD)**  
(800) 669-9777 • (800) 927-9275 TTD/TTY  
**[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)**

**Ohio Civil Rights Commission**  
615 West Superior  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113  
(216) 787-3150  
**[crc.ohio.gov](http://crc.ohio.gov)**

This brochure is intended for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. If you need legal advice please contact your local Bar Association, Legal Aid Society or a private attorney.



## **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!!!**

### ***Fair Housing and Families With Children***







*"Everyone has the same opportunity to get the housing of their choice (under the law)..."*  
-Carl Harris

Familial Status discrimination is a common occurrence for those seeking housing, and it is commonly misunderstood. Familial Status discrimination is unfair treatment by a housing provider to people with children. Many housing providers think it is okay to tell potential renters and buyers "we don't accept children", but it is not; it is a violation of fair housing laws.

### Defining Familial Status

Under the Fair Housing Act, familial status is defined as a household where one or more individuals have not reached eighteen (18) years of age that live with: (1) a parent or other person having legal custody of said individual(s); or (2) a person designated to have custody, with written permission from a parent or other person. Also protected under "familial status" is any person who is pregnant or is in the process of securing legal custody of any individual who has not reached 18 years of age.

However, housing complexes for older persons are exempt from the prohibition against familial status discrimination if: a facility is designated as "62 and older," where all the 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.



## Common Ways Families Are Discriminated Against

Housing providers use subtle and sometimes not so subtle ways to try to prohibit families from renting or buying units.

### Advertising

It may be unlawful to print or publish advertisements that are discriminatory with respect to the sale or rental of a unit. Phrases such as "no children: or "adults only" are considered discriminatory and a violation under the Fair Housing Act. Both the landlord and the publisher could possibly be held liable.

### "Opposite Sex/Separate Bedroom" Policies

These type of policies can be devastating to families with children; forcing them into larger apartments at a greater expense. It also can pose an unnecessary limit on the number of available apartments. Mandating that boys and girls must occupy separate bedrooms may be a violation of fair housing laws.

### Segregating and Steering Families

Some apartment complexes attempt to have designated buildings or units set aside for families with children. They promote these facilities as having singles and families separated from each other. These complexes attempt to justify the segregation by saying the policies are nurturing and beneficial to those with children. This may be a violation of the Fair Housing Act.

## Occupancy Codes

Most cities and villages have occupancy codes that regulate the number of people that can live in a house or apartment, often based on total square footage of the unit.

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, health department or call Fair Housing Resource Center at (440) 392-0147.

### Common Ways Families Experience Discrimination:

- Up front refusal to rent to families with children, such as "No Children Policies"
- Demanding that children of opposite sex have separate bedrooms
- Requiring families to live in specific buildings of a complex or only on first floors of a building
- Inquiring about the ages of the occupants, asking how many will be children or charging extra for children
- Refusing to rent based on perceived risks and dangers of the property
- Making comments that they want to keep the neighborhood "quiet"
- Restricting children because of "unsafe conditions"

