COMMUNITY PULSE

FAIR HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER

JANUARY 2026

Fair Housing Resource Center

The Fair Housing Resource Center is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization offering several housing programs to benefit residents of Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula County, Ohio. The mission of the Fair Housing Resource Center is to promote equal housing opportunities for all persons and to advocate for fair housing and diversity in Lake and surrounding counties through the education and involvement of the public, governments, and the business community.

FHRC operates a Landlord/Tenant hot-line service for county residents to assist them in protecting their housing rights. FHRC also operates a fair housing intake 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 homeowner counseling such as foreclosure prevention, predatory lending, home financing and repairs.

Meet the Team

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Community Pulse

Fair Housing Resource Center

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Painesville, Ohio 44077
P:(440)392-0147 | F:(440)392-0148
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www.fhrc.org

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we turn the page to a new year, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to you—our community. Your encouragement, partnership, and belief in our mission have been the foundation that kept us strong during a year filled with extraordinary challenges. Together, we've faced uncertainty, adapted, and continued to make a meaningful impact for those who need us most.

Your resilience and commitment remind us that even in the hardest times, hope shines brightest when we stand together. Every word of support and every effort to stay connected has helped us move forward, and for that, we are profoundly thankful.

As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with optimism and excitement. We believe this coming year will bring new opportunities to grow, serve, and create lasting change. With your continued partnership, we know we can achieve amazing things.

From all of us at Fair Housing Resource Center: Thank you for being part of this journey. Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a new year filled with peace, health, and possibility.

With gratitude and hope,

Your FHRC Team

The State of Fair Housing in 2026: Progress and Challenges Ahead

By: Patricia Kidd, Esq., Executive Director

As we step into 2026, the promise of fair housing remains as vital as ever. The past year has reminded us that equal access to housing is not just a legal right—it's a cornerstone of thriving communities. Yet, despite decades of progress, barriers persist and the work to ensure fairness for all continues.

Recent data shows housing discrimination complaints remain alarmingly high, with over 32,000 cases reported last year. Discrimination based on disability leads the list, followed by race, sex, and national origin. These numbers underscore the reality that systemic inequities are far from resolved. At the same time, enforcement agencies face resource constraints, slowing complaint resolution and placing greater responsibility on local organizations to monitor and advocate for fairness.

On the policy front, 2026 brings cautious optimism. Legislative proposals such as the Fair and Equal Housing Act and the Housing Fairness Act aim to expand protections and strengthen enforcement tools. HUD's updated Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule also signals renewed commitment to equity, requiring communities to actively address segregation and barriers to opportunity. Additionally, HUD's priorities for the year focus on reducing homelessness, increasing affordable housing supply, and improving efficiency—critical steps toward a more inclusive housing landscape.

Looking ahead, affordability remains a pressing concern. While mortgage rates are expected to stabilize, regional disparities in housing costs will continue to challenge families and policymakers alike. Ensuring that fair housing principles translate into real-world access will require collaboration across sectors and sustained public engagement.

As we embrace the new year, let's reaffirm our shared commitment to fairness, equity, and opportunity. The path forward may be complex, but together, we can build communities where every individual has a place to call home—free from discrimination and full of possibility.

Here's to a 2026 defined by progress, resilience, and hope.

A New Way to Look at Your Tax Refund

By: Dana Pritschau, Certified Housing Counselor

Every year around this time, I start hearing the same thing from clients: “My tax refund is coming — and it’s already gone.” And honestly, I get it. For many families, this is the one moment in the year where a little extra money finally shows up. It’s tempting to treat it like a reset button or a reward after a long year of doing your best.

But here’s something I’ve learned working with so many households: a tax refund can do a lot more than people give it credit for.

I’ve watched clients use part of their refund to knock down one stressful bill or pay off something that’s been hanging over their head. The relief they feel lasts longer than the refund itself — sometimes all year. Others set aside a small amount for an upcoming need, and a few months later they’re thankful they planned ahead instead of scrambling.

And yes, there’s nothing wrong with treating yourself to something small. A little joy matters too. The key isn’t to avoid spending — it’s to make the money work for you, not disappear overnight.

This tax season, try thinking about your refund as a chance to take pressure off future you. Whether it’s clearing a balance, preparing for something you know is coming, or giving yourself a moment of happiness, the choices you make with this one check can create stability long after tax time is over.

You deserve that kind of peace.

TIPS FOR LEASE RENEWALS AND COMPREHENSION

By: Michelle Brunson, Staff Attorney/ Test Coordinator

Whether you're renewing an existing lease or signing a new one, taking time to understand the terms can save you money, stress, and unexpected surprises. Here are key tips to guide you through the process.

1. Start Early
Know when your lease ends and what timeline renewals have. Many landlords require renewal decisions 60 days in advance, and starting early gives you time to negotiate, compare market rents, or plan a move if needed.

2. Understand Your Rent and Fees
Confirm the new rental rate, how much it increases (if at all), and when payments are due. Look for additional fees—parking, pets, utilities, or other new charges—that may not be clearly highlighted. Small add-ons can significantly increase your total monthly cost.

3. Check Lease Length and Flexibility
Some landlords offer discounts for longer terms or month-to-month options at a premium. Choose what best suits your future plans. If you might relocate soon, flexibility may be more valuable than a slightly lower rent.

4. Review Maintenance and Repair Duties
Your lease should spell out who handles repairs and what qualifies as an emergency. Understanding these responsibilities helps avoid disputes or unexpected bills. This is especially pertinent when it comes to yard or driveway maintenance.

5. Note Rules on Guests, Pets, and Alterations
Policies on guests, subletting, paint, or modifications vary widely. Make sure the rules match your lifestyle, and get any exceptions in writing.

6. Pay Attention to Renewal and Termination Clauses
Some leases auto-renew unless you give notice. Others charge early-termination fees. Knowing these terms keeps you in control of your timeline and budget.

7. Ask Questions Before Signing
If anything seems vague or unfair, ask for clarification. A reputable landlord will explain or adjust when reasonable.

By reading your lease carefully and approaching renewals proactively, you can secure a rental arrangement that fits your needs—without last-minute surprises.

STAR PROGRAM INTAKE DAY

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Need help with rent? Join Fair Housing Resource Center for **Intake day.**

What is Intake Day?

Intake day is 1 day each month when FHRC accepts applications for our STAR Program. Check our website or scan the code for our upcoming intake day!

INTAKE DAY DETAILS

When: TBD
Time: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Where: Fair Housing Resource Center
1100 Mentor Avenue,
Painesville, Oh 44077

How to Apply?

1. Contact our office for an application before intake day.
2. Complete the application and gather the supporting documents.
3. Arrive to our office during Intake day hours with the application and supporting documents.
4. You will meet with an FHRC staff member who will review your application and documents to make sure a complete application is submitted.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

440-392-0147 www.fhrc.org 1100 Mentor Avenue, Painesville

Issues Impacting Small Landlords in the Tri-County Area

By: Michelle Brunson, Staff Attorney/ Test Coordinator

Small landlords—those owning just one to four units—provide much of the affordable rental housing in Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula counties. But rising costs and new pressures are making it harder for them to stay in the market, which has direct consequences for renters and communities.

Much of the region's rental housing is decades old, especially in cities like Painesville, Ashtabula, and Conneaut. Landlords are facing expensive repairs, including roof replacements, outdated electrical systems, furnace failures, and moisture issues near Lake Erie. In rural areas of Geauga and Ashtabula, septic and well repairs add to the burden. Adding to these issues is the difficulty in finding affordable, available contractors —especially in rural townships—leading to delayed repairs and higher labor costs. Additionally, insurance premiums have climbed, particularly for older or lakefront properties. Property taxes are also a strain: Geauga's higher millage, rising valuations in Lake County suburbs, and tight margins in Ashtabula all make it difficult for small owners to absorb costs without rent increases.

When small landlords struggle, the region risks losing some of its most affordable rentals. Corporate buyers can outbid locals, raise rents faster, and pull older homes out of long-term affordability. Stable, affordable rental options are essential for local workers, seniors, and families. Advocating for policies that help support small landlords ultimately supports housing stability across the entire tri-county region.

Budgeting Matters

By: Dana Pritschau, Certified Housing Counselor

As a housing counselor, one of the most important things I teach clients is understanding their budget and knowing their maximum affordable rent. Rent is usually the largest monthly expense, and choosing a number that's too high can create long-term financial stress.

Your budget isn't just a list of bills — it's your stability plan. It needs to leave room for essentials like groceries, transportation, utilities, medical needs, and a small emergency cushion. When rent takes up too much of your monthly income, the rest of your budget becomes harder to manage and the risk of falling behind increases.

Knowing your maximum rent amount helps protect you from taking on housing that looks manageable today but becomes overwhelming later. Even if a unit is beautiful or a landlord approves you for a higher payment, staying within your pre-calculated limit is what keeps you financially safe.

It may also be time to rethink your current housing if you're paying more than 35–40% of your income toward rent, relying on credit cards to get through the month, or constantly choosing which bills to delay. These are signs that your home is no longer financially healthy for the long term.

Understanding your rent limit gives you control, confidence, and the ability to choose housing that supports your future — not drains it. Making financially informed choices today creates a stronger foundation for tomorrow.

COMFORTING WINTER FOODS TO WARM YOU FROM THE INSIDE OUT

By: Michelle Brunson, Staff Attorney/ Test Coordinator

When winter weather settles in, nothing beats the comfort of a warm, home-cooked meal. Cold days call for recipes that are hearty, nourishing, and easy to enjoy with family or friends. One timeless favorite is soup. Think slow-simmered chicken noodle, creamy loaded potato, or a rich tomato basil paired with a warm loaf of bread. Soups are simple to customize and perfect for making in large batches.

Chili is another winter essential. Whether you prefer classic beef chili, turkey chili, or a vegetarian version packed with beans and vegetables, its filling, flavorful, and even better the next day. Serve it with cornbread or over baked potatoes for an extra-comforting meal.

For cozy dinners, casseroles shine in winter months. Baked pasta dishes, shepherd's pie, or chicken and rice casseroles provide warmth and convenience, especially on busy evenings. Roasted vegetables are also ideal during colder months—root vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, and brussels sprouts become caramelized and flavorful when roasted.

Don't forget about winter desserts. Warm apple crisp, bread pudding, or hot cocoa with homemade whipped cream add a sweet ending to chilly evenings. Even breakfast can feel cozy with oatmeal topped with cinnamon, nuts, and fruit.

Winter recipes are all about comfort, warmth, and bringing people together. With the right dishes, even the coldest days can feel inviting and satisfying.

A Note to Our Seniors: Finding Connection and Joy

By: Dana Pritschau, Housing Counselor

Hello Friends,

I know that losing a spouse or partner can leave a big emptiness in your days. It's normal to feel sad, lonely, or unsure what comes next. I want you to know that even in these tough moments, there are ways to reconnect, find joy, and feel a renewed sense of purpose.

Sometimes, the smallest step can make a big difference. Attending a local senior club, joining a lunch program, or taking part in a group activity is a wonderful way to meet new friends who understand what you're going through. Even a short walk with others, a craft class, or a volunteer opportunity can turn an ordinary day into something meaningful.

Volunteering is a special way to reconnect — sharing your skills, kindness, and experience with others not only helps the community but reminds you of the value you bring. Many seniors tell me that giving back gives them energy, purpose, and new friendships.

You don't have to do everything at once. Start small — maybe visit a senior center, call a friend to meet for coffee, or try a new class. Every little step opens a door to connection and brighter days.

Remember, you are not alone. Your community is full of people who care, who want to see you happy, and who are ready to welcome you with open arms. Take that first step today — new experiences, friendships, and joy are waiting for you.

JOIN THE
LAKE COUNTY HOUSING COALITION

The Lake County Coalition for Housing is a collaborative network of housing advocates, service providers, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, landlords, and community members.

We come together to address housing challenges across Lake County—from homelessness prevention and affordable housing development to landlord-tenant resources and fair housing education.

the Coalition for Housing
and Support Services of Lake County Inc.

What We Do:
Coordinate Community Responses to Housing

Needs

- From emergency shelter to affordable housing initiatives, we work collectively to identify and address gaps in housing services.

Provide Education & Outreach

- We offer trainings, workshops, and community forums on topics like tenant rights, landlord support, fair housing laws, homelessness prevention, and more.

Promote Resource Sharing & Networking

- Connect with agencies, service providers, and stakeholders across sectors to streamline referrals and increase housing options.

Advocate for Policy Change

- Support local and state efforts that expand housing opportunities and protect vulnerable populations.

MAXIMIZING SPACE AND MINIMIZING NOISE IN AN APARTMENT

By: Michelle Brunson, Staff Attorney/ Test Coordinator

Shhh!

Living in an apartment often means dealing with limited space, layout constraints, and noisy neighbors. Still, with a few smart, renter-friendly strategies, you can create a home that feels both roomy and peaceful—no renovations required.

Maximizing Space

1. Choose Multi-Functional Furniture

Opt for pieces that work double-duty, like sofa beds, storage ottomans, or folding tables. These reduce clutter and help small rooms stay flexible.

2. Use Vertical Space

Take advantage of walls and doors with tall bookcases, removable shelves, and over-the-door organizers. Going vertical frees up valuable floor space.

3. Declutter Intentionally

A tidy home always feels larger. Use baskets, bins, and under-bed storage to keep items organized.

4. Improve Lighting

Good lighting can visually expand a room. Add lamps to brighten dark corners, use light curtains to let in sun, and place mirrors to reflect light throughout the space.

5. Optimize Your Layout

Move furniture to keep pathways clear and define zones with rugs. Simple layout changes often make the biggest difference in how spacious an apartment feels.

Minimizing Noise

1. Add Soft Materials

Rugs, curtains, and upholstered furniture absorb sound and reduce echoes—an easy fix for both indoor noise and neighbor noise.

2. Seal Gaps

Weatherstripping, door sweeps, or even rolling up towels beneath doors can block sound leaking through windows and doors. These options are temporary and removable.

3. Use Bookshelves as Buffers

Place filled bookcases against shared walls to help dampen noise from adjoining units.

4. Introduce White Noise

Fans, white noise machines, or ambient sound apps can mask unavoidable noise and make your space feel calmer.

5. Rearrange Thoughtfully

Keep beds or desks away from noisy walls and use large furniture pieces to create extra sound barriers.

These are just a few ideas to make sure your apartment is as cozy as you deserve.

Winter Weather and Maintenance Issues

By: Michelle Brunson, Staff Attorney/ Test Coordinator

Losing heat in winter or discovering frozen pipes can be stressful—especially in a rental. Acting quickly protects your home, your safety, and your belongings. Just keep in mind, if you attempt to fix things yourself without your landlord's written permission, you may be liable for any associated costs or damages.

1. Notify Your Landlord Immediately

Lack of heat and frozen pipes are typically considered urgent maintenance issues. Contact your landlord or property management right away by phone, text, or email. If you do call, a follow-up text or email for proof of notification is best.

2. Document the Issue

Take photos or videos of thermostat readings, frost on pipes, or any resulting property damage. This helps if you need reimbursement for damaged personal items or if a dispute arises later.

3. Prevent Further Pipe Damage

If you suspect a pipe is frozen, keep faucets slightly open to relieve pressure. Do not try to thaw pipes with open flames or high-heat tools. Open cabinet doors under sinks to let warmer air circulate around plumbing. If you have partial heat, concentrate it in areas with vulnerable pipes.

4. Protect Yourself From the Cold

If the heat is out, use safe supplemental warmth such as extra clothing, blankets, and space heaters rated for indoor use. Never use ovens, grills, or outdoor heaters—they are fire and carbon-monoxide hazards.

5. Reach Out to Other Resources

If your landlord is unresponsive to heating issues, depending on where you are located, your local health department may be able to get involved. If you are unsure of your rights, give Fair Housing Resource Center a call.

Prompt communication and safe temporary measures can prevent major damage and ensure the issue gets resolved quickly.

DID YOU KNOW.....?

By: Dana Pristchau, Housing Counselor

LAKETRAN SENIORS ON THE GO / DIALARIDE / REDUCED FARE TRANSIT

Did you know Laketran offers free or reduced fare door to door transit to seniors (60+) and people with disabilities? Their "Seniors on the Go" program offers rides to grocery stores, doctors, pharmacies, and senior centers — a big help for those who no longer drive.

Phone: 440-354-6100

LAKE COUNTY VOLUNTEER NETWORK

Did you know there's a volunteer program for residents age 55+ who want to give back or get connected to community services? The volunteer network helps match seniors with local needs and can be a great way to remain active, engaged, and involved .

Phone: 440-350-5360

LIFELINE OFFERS FREE TAX PREPARATION

Lifeline offers free tax preparation help through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. Eligible residents (low to moderate income, elderly or disabled) can get help filing federal and state taxes at no charge — no need to pay for costly tax preparation services. Clinics are held at multiple locations including Painesville, Perry, and Wickliffe.

Phone to schedule: 440-639-4420

GEAUGA COUNTY JOB & FAMILY SERVICES (JFS)

Did you know JFS provides basic needs services including food or emergency assistance, help with childcare, and access to public assistance for qualified residents? JFS is a great resource for families or individuals needing short-term support.

Phone: 440-285-9141

GEAUGA HUNGER TASK FORCE

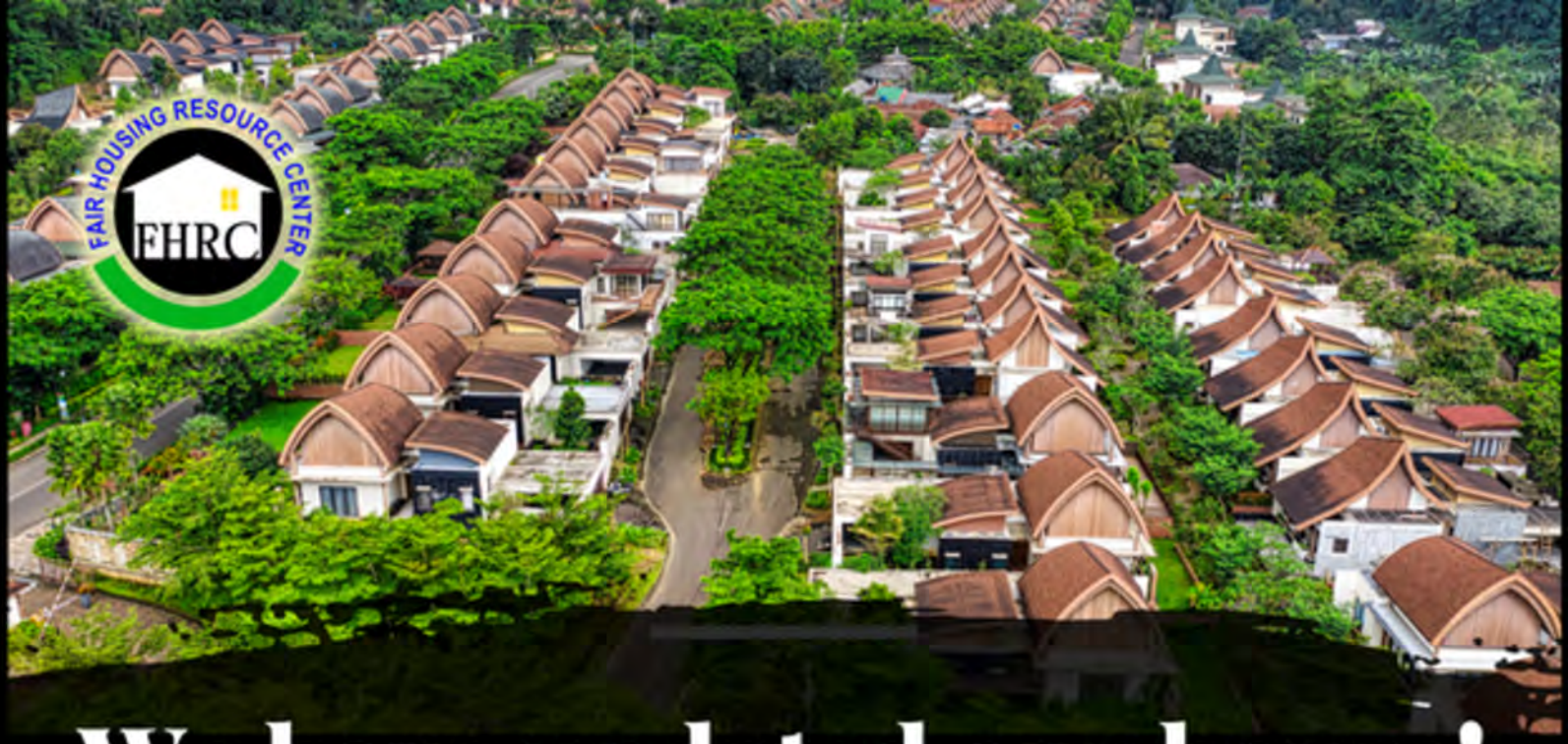
Did you know the Hunger Task Force helps individuals and families who need access to food support in Geauga County? Especially helpful for seniors, children, and low-income households.

Phone: 440-285-2261

FAMILY PRIDE OF NORTHEAST OHIO SENIOR & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Did you know Family Pride offers services to help seniors and families with mental health support, community connections, and assistance with accessing medical care or needed services across Ashtabula, Lake, and Geauga counties.

Phone: 440-286-1553



We have updated our hours!

FHRC has new open office hours.

FHRC staff are still hard at work Monday–Thursday, but our ***doors*** will now be open to the public only on:

Tuesday: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Thursday: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Need help another day? No problem — just give us a call!

440-392-0147

Continuum of Care: What's Changing and What It Means for Our Community

By: Patricia Kidd Esq., Executive Director

The Continuum of Care (CoC) program is a federal initiative that funds housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. Recently, HUD proposed major changes that could affect how these funds are used.

What Was Proposed?
HUD suggested limiting funding for permanent housing programs—like Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing—to about 30% of a community's budget. The rest would go to short-term options such as transitional housing or programs requiring work or treatment participation. Advocates warned this could reduce stability for people who need long-term support.

Why Does This Matter?
Permanent housing programs currently make up most CoC funding. Cutting them back could mean fewer options for older adults, people with disabilities, and others who rely on stable housing to stay safe and healthy.

What's Happening Now?
After strong pushback—including lawsuits from states and service providers—HUD withdrew the proposed changes for now. They plan to reissue updated guidelines soon, but the future direction is still uncertain.

Local Impact: Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula Counties
Lake County: The Lake County Continuum of Care is reviewing its plans and monitoring HUD's next steps to protect permanent housing programs.

Geauga & Ashtabula Counties: Both counties are part of Ohio's rural housing network. If HUD enforces the proposed cap, Ohio could lose about $80 million in permanent housing funding, affecting thousands of households statewide. Rural areas such as Geauga and Ashtabula counties would be especially vulnerable.

What Can We Do?
Stay informed: We'll share updates as HUD releases new guidance.
Speak up: Community voices matter—advocating for housing stability helps ensure programs meet real needs.
Support local efforts: Volunteering, donations, and spreading awareness make a difference.

The goal of CoC is to end homelessness, and any changes to funding priorities affect how we achieve that. Together, we can work to keep housing accessible and supportive for those who need it most.

JOIN THE GEAUGA COUNTY HOUSING COALITION

The Geauga County Housing Coalition brings together organizations, businesses, and individuals committed to creating housing opportunities and improving resources in our community.

WHY GET INVOLVED?

✓ **Stay Updated** – Learn about the latest housing programs and initiatives.
✓ **Build Connections** – Network with community leaders and housing professionals.
✓ **Collaborate & Innovate –** Help shape policies and solutions for housing challenges.

WHAT WE DO

Meetings Every Other Month – Discuss housing concerns & solutions.
A Strong, Supportive Network – Work alongside passionate advocates.
Share & Learn – Contribute ideas and gain valuable insights.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP!

Your involvement can make a real impact! Join us to be part of the conversation and the solution.

CONTACT US

Membership Coordinator: Carol Coggins, Siracki
Email: realtorcarolcoggins@gmail.com

Dear Housing Hollie,

Winter has officially arrived, and every time it snows, my apartment complex parking lot turns into an ice rink. I'm genuinely worried about slipping and falling while walking to my car. I've seen neighbors struggling too, and it feels dangerous. I've asked the property manager about salting the lot, but they keep saying it's "not required by law." Is that true? Doesn't Ohio have rules about keeping common areas safe in winter? If someone gets hurt, who's responsible—the landlord or the tenant?

Warm Regards,
Slippery

Housing

Dear Slippery,

Great question! Ohio law does not have a statewide rule requiring landlords to salt parking lots or remove snow and ice. In fact, Ohio follows what's called the "no-duty winter rule." This means property owners generally aren't liable for injuries caused by natural accumulations of snow and ice.

So who's responsible? It often comes down to your lease agreement and local ordinances. Many cities require sidewalks to be cleared within 24-48 hours, but parking lots are usually governed by lease terms. If your lease says the landlord handles common areas, they should be salting. If not, tenants may share responsibility.

My advice:

- Check your lease for winter maintenance clauses.
- Look up your city's snow removal ordinances.
- Report any dangerous conditions in writing and keep a record.

Stay safe out there—and maybe keep a bag of salt handy just in case!

Sincerely,

Hollie

Housing Hollie

Dear Housing Hollie,

I'm really stressed out. Yesterday, my landlord called and said my rent is going up starting next month—even though I signed a 12-month lease and still have six months left! I've been a good tenant, always pay on time, and take care of the apartment. I thought the lease locked in my rent until it expires. Can they just change the amount whenever they want? If I refuse to pay the higher amount, could they evict me? I don't want to end up in court, but this feels unfair. What does Ohio law say about this?

Sincerely,
Worried and Broke

Hollie

Dear Worried and Broke,

You're right to question this—Ohio law is clear on rent increases. If you have a fixed-term lease (like a 12-month agreement), your rent amount is locked in for the entire term. Your landlord cannot raise the rent mid-lease unless your lease specifically includes a clause allowing it.

If you're on a month-to-month lease, it's a different story. In that case, your landlord can raise the rent, but they must give you at least 30 days' written notice before the increase takes effect.

One more thing: rent hikes can't be retaliatory (for example, because you complained about repairs) or discriminatory (based on race, religion, disability, etc.). Those are illegal under Ohio law and Fair Housing rules.

My advice:

- Review your lease for any rent adjustment clauses.
- If you're month-to-month, make sure you get proper written notice.
- If you suspect retaliation or discrimination, document everything and reach out for legal guidance.

Bottom line: With a fixed-term lease, your rent should stay the same until renewal. Month-to-month? Expect notice before any changes.

Sincerely,
Hollie
Housing Hollie

LEASING 101

By: Patricia Kidd, Esq., Executive Director

So you've been looking, calling and viewing new places to rent and low and behold, you've found the perfect place. It's paperwork time, where do you sign?

Not so fast! Rushing into signing a lease is the first place many new tenants get trapped into a bad situation. Arming yourself with a little background knowledge on general landlord tenant law can help you negotiate a lease that is fair and legal for both you and your landlord.

First step, read the lease! It can be long and full of legalese, but take some time to read through it. If you are not sure what a term or clause means, ask questions. Call your new prospective landlord or call Fair Housing to make sure you are understanding what you are agreeing to.

What should be in your lease agreement? Well, there are basics items to every lease agreement such as: term of lease; amount of rent; amount of security deposit; rent due date; and possible late fees for late rent. That seems pretty basic.

Yet, many lease agreements contain other clauses that may or may not be in compliance with Ohio Landlord Tenant Law.

Ohio Revised Code section 5321.13 covers terms that are prohibited in rental agreements.

1. The first item the law discusses is the fact that your lease cannot include a clause that allows a landlord to obtain an automatic judgement against you for unpaid rent or damages without completing the court process.

2. Second, the agreement cannot have an agreement that the tenant will pay the landlord's attorney fees.

3. Third, an agreement cannot limit a landlord's legal liability to a tenant.

4. Fourth, a lease agreement cannot allow a landlord to not comply with Landlord duties required under the law.

Basically, a lease may have a lot of parts, subheadings and sections but the lease may not limit your tenant rights provided under Ohio landlord/tenant law. For example, the Ohio law listed under Landlord Obligations states: A landlord must "maintain in good and safe working order all the electrical" of the unit. However, your lease states that the tenant is responsible for maintaining the unit and must make all repairs including the electrical fixtures and components. Under #4 above, the law states that a lease agreement cannot allow a landlord to not comply with Landlord duties required under the law. So, just because it's in your lease that you will make electrical repairs, it is ultimately your landlord's responsibility.

Signing a lease can be exciting and daunting at the same time. It is important to remember not to rush into anything and if you do not understand something make sure you stop and ask questions! Happy house hunting.

JOIN

THE ASHTABULA COUNTY HOUSING COALITION

Who are we?

The Ashtabula County Housing Coalition is a network of agencies, organizations, and businesses dedicated to improving housing opportunities in Ashtabula County.

Why Join?

- Stay Informed – Get updates on local housing initiatives, programs, and services.
- Network & Collaborate – Connect with industry professionals, community leaders, and housing advocates.
- Be a Voice for Change – Share your insights and contribute to innovative housing solutions.

Join Us Today!

Your involvement strengthens our mission. Whether you're an expert, advocate, or concerned citizen, your voice matters!

Contact Us

For more information reach out to Alice Harden at aliceh@doyccac.org

Contact us for More information

Fair Housing Resource Center
1100 Mentor Avenue
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Email: Info@FHRC.org
Visit us: www.FHRC.org