HOW & WHERE TO FILE

If you feel that you were discriminated against while trying to buy or rent, you can file a complaint or get assistance from any of the agencies listed.

When filing a complaint, you will need to provide the following information:

- your name, address, and telephone number;
- the name address and telephone number of the person or firm being charged with housing discrimination;
- the date when the alleged act occurred;
- state the basis for discrimination (race, color, creed, sex, marital status, religion, national origin, or handicap);
- state clearly all details which caused you to file the complaint;
- the full name and exact position or title of all individuals mentioned;
- the name, address, and telephone number of any witness able to support your charge.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU FILE?

The first step is an investigation of your complaint. If there appears to be a basis for action, an attempt will be made to conciliate the complaint. This means it may be possible to negotiate an agreement acceptable to both parties.

If conciliation is not possible, further legal action may be necessary to remedy the discriminatory conduct.

Regardless of the action taken, however, you have the right to file a complaint with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission and with the U. S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development.

If You Need Assistance, Please Contact:

Medina County Fair Housing Office
124 W. Washington St., Suite B-4
Medina, Ohio 44256
330-722-9219 or
330-225-7100, ext. 9219
330-336-6657, ext. 9219
TTD/TTY: 330-725-9123

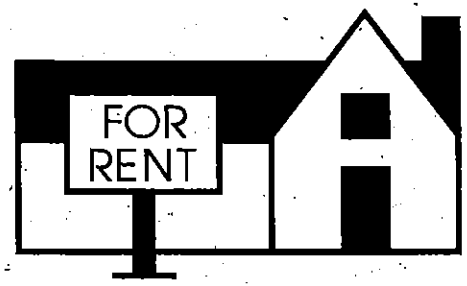
Ohio Civil Rights Commission
AKRON REGIONAL OFFICE
Akron Government Center
161 S. High St., Suite 205
Akron, OH
330-643-3100

HUD - Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO)
626 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60606-5760
1-800-669-9777 - Complaint Hotline

You do not need an attorney to file a housing discrimination complaint. However, if you wish legal advice and are eligible, the telephone number of Medina Community Legal Aide is: 330-723-5380

Funding for this pamphlet came from a Community Development Block Grant for Fair Housing

FAIR HOUSING AND YOU!



Sponsored by:
Medina County Fair Housing
124 W. Washington St., Suite B-4
Medina,OH 44256

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

There are both state and federal laws which prohibit housing discrimination. In fact, it is not only illegal to discriminate against someone because of his or her race, but also because of a person's color, creed, sex, religious belief, marital status, national origin, handicap or family status.

Some of these terms are easily understood, but others may be confusing. Simply put:

- **Race** refers to a major ethnic group;
- **Color** means a person's complexion or skin tone;
- **Creed** includes any statement of principles, opinions, or beliefs;
- **Sex** refers to either the male or female gender;
- **Religious belief** is someone's spiritual attitude;
- **Marital status** includes single, married, or divorced;
- **National origin** refers to a person's ancestry;
- **Handicap** means a physical or mental disability;
- **Family status** means families or heads of households with children; it may also cover elderly housing.

Laws prohibiting discrimination affect everyone who may be involved with the sale or rental of housing.

This includes not only the real estate agent and landlord but also the seller and lending institution.

Secondly, discrimination is prohibited not only in the public and private sale or rental of housing units but also in the offering of vacant land for residential construction.

AREAS OF DISCRIMINATION

The Civil Rights Act of 1866, the National Fair Housing Act of 1968, Jones v. Alfred H. Mayer Company *(U.S. Supreme Court, 1968)*, and Chapter 4112 of the Ohio Revised Code address the following areas of discrimination:

- Refusing to sell, rent or lease;
- Altering the terms or conditions for buying or renting;
- Denying that housing is available for inspection, sale, or rent when it is available;
- Denying or altering terms and conditions for home loans by commercial lenders;
- Steering, mortgage and insurance red lining.

RECENT AMENDMENTS TO THE FAIR HOUSING ACT

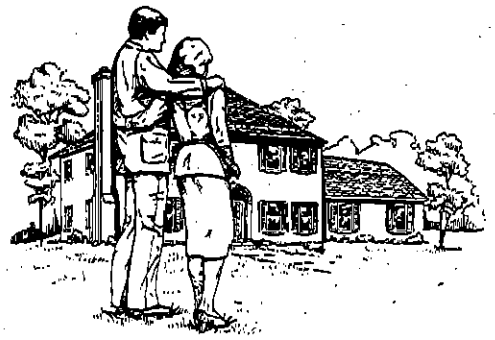
Changes made to the federal Fair Housing law or Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1988 were enacted in September of 1988 and became effective on March 12, 1989.

Title VIII has prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of a dwelling based on color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 expands the coverage of Title VIII to prohibit discriminatory housing practices based on handicap and familial status. The Act also establishes an administrative and judicial enforcement mechanism for cases where discriminatory housing practices cannot be resolved informally, and provides for monetary penalties in cases where housing discrimination is found.

SUBTLE DISCRIMINATION

If you were looking for an apartment and were told *"we don't want your kind in this neighborhood"*, you might rightfully feel that you had been discriminated against.

However, subtle discrimination may also exist and is more difficult to recognize. ***For example:***

- You can inquire about an apartment advertised in the newspaper and are told that it is still available. However, when you immediately go to see the apartment, you are told it has been rented.
- You are told by the manager of an apartment complex that there are no units available for families with children and that there is a long waiting list. However, you happen to notice a few days later that there is an apartment advertised for rent in that same complex.
- While showing you a home, the real estate agent spends a great deal of the time emphasizing the problems and limitations of the residence.

All of these may be a subtle form of discrimination, and you may have the basis for filing a complaint.