

Fair Housing Policy

Councilwoman Merisa Bowers
City of Gahanna, Ohio
February 28, 2022

Housing Discrimination:

Housing discrimination in the United States refers to the historical and current barriers, policies, and biases that prevent equitable access to housing.

Housing discrimination became more pronounced after the abolition of slavery, typically as part of Jim Crow laws that enforced racial segregation.

“Exclusionary” type of discrimination are practices that limit a person’s access to housing while seeking to rent or buy.

Fair Housing Policy:

Fair Housing Act (1968 Civil Rights Act & Subsequent Expansions)

- Race, Color, Religion, National Origin
- Sex
- Disability and Familial Status

Local and State legislation to expand protections

- 17 States include protection for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity - does not include Ohio
- Source of Income

Impacts of Housing Discrimination:

Concentrated Poverty

Educational Disparities

Income Disparities

Residential Segregation

Health Disparities

Food Deserts

Isolation

Impacts of Fair Housing Policy:

Right to Housing is a Human Right

Diverse and Integrated Communities

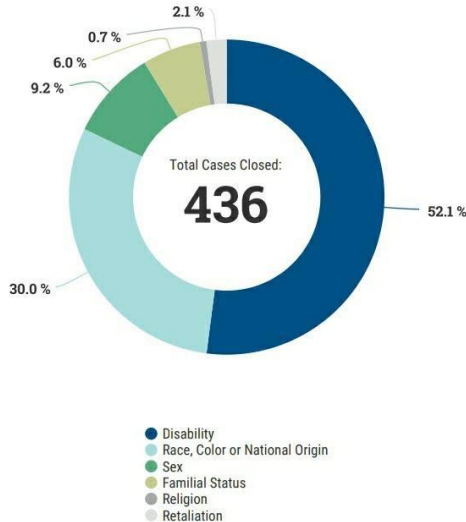
Qualified buyers and tenants in
stable, quality housing

Job Creation and Employers

Housing Discrimination in Ohio

Ohio Housing Finance Agency

2020 Ohio Fair Housing Cases Closed by Primary Basis for Discrimination



Disability discrimination is based on disabilities that substantially limit major life activities, such as blindness, deafness, mobility impairments, chronic fatigue, head injuries, intellectual or learning disabilities and mental illness, as well as HIV infection, alcoholism and drug addiction.



Race discrimination is based on characteristics associated with a particular racial group, including but not limited to skin color. **Color** discrimination is specifically based on skin complexion or tone. **National Origin** discrimination is based on country of birth, ancestry or ethnicity.



Sex discrimination is based on sex classification, gender identity or sexual orientation. It also includes sexual harassment, demands for sexual favors and creating a sexually hostile environment to live in.



Familial Status discrimination is based on the presence of children under age 18 or women who are pregnant. In a housing context, this includes placing unreasonable restrictions on the number of persons who may reside in a unit.



Religion discrimination is based on an individual's religious beliefs or membership in a religious organization in a housing context, that may include zoning ordinances designed to limit use of private homes as places of worship.



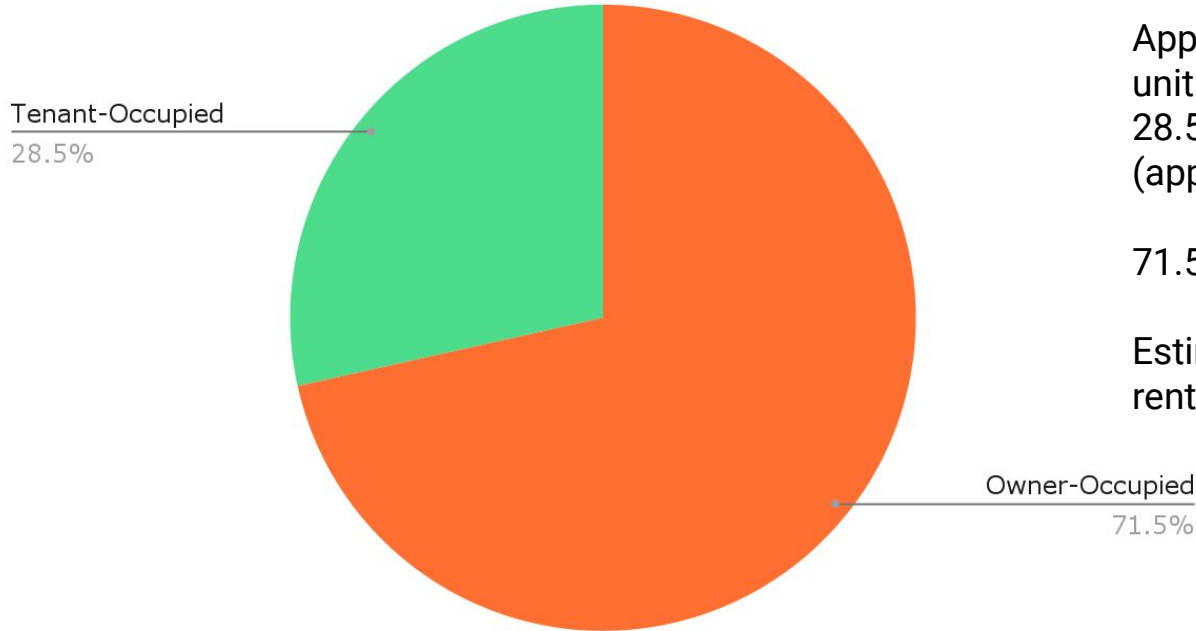
Retaliation discrimination in housing is specifically defined as punishing someone for filing a prior fair housing complaint. This typically arises in the form of non-renewal of a lease or threats of eviction.

Article by Devin Keithley; Ohio Housing Finance Agency;

<https://www.ohiohome.org/news/documents/FairHousing-Databyte.pdf>

Gahanna Rental Landscape

Housing Landscape



Approximately 13,158 total housing units

28.5% (3,750) - Tenant Occupied
(approx. 600 single family, est.)

71.5% (9,407) - Owner Occupied

Estimated over 10,000 residents live in rental housing

Source: City of Gahanna, Dir. of Planning 01/31/22

Why local?

- ❑ Communities taking care of communities
- ❑ Enforcement can be more tailored to community needs - restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution models better deployed
- ❑ As the region feels pressure from population growth, establish proactive protections
- ❑ Consistency across region with many Central Ohio communities expanding housing protection

Protections for Landlords

- Fair Housing Policy (including Source of Income Protection) does **not** require a landlord to rent to someone with illegal, unstable, or insufficient income
- Fair Housing Policy does **not** prevent a landlord from refusing to rent to tenants with poor credit or eviction history so long as those refusals are applied equally
- Fair Housing Policy does **not** deprive a landlord of legal eviction process
- Fair Housing Policy **allows** a landlord to deny housing for other legal reasons (such as the occupancy limits would be exceeded)
- Fair Housing Policy **allows** personal discretion when subletting in own home

Where We Are and Next Steps

Survey of Local Ordinances - in Central Ohio and across the Country

Community Rental Survey/Feedback from Gahanna Landlords

Exploration of HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) funding

Finalize Draft Legislation

Community Education and Engagement

Educate through Rental Registration process

Thank you.

Comments, Questions:
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