

## Resources are available to you.

*It is helpful to have all available information about your criminal record so that you can address the records as you apply for housing. You can access information about requesting your own criminal record here: <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Individuals-and-Families/Consumers/Requesting-Your-Own-Criminal-Records> (note that there may be fees associated with requesting your record).*

*You can find more extensive information on our website, [www.ohiopoverlylawcenter.org](http://www.ohiopoverlylawcenter.org).*

*You can find information about your local reentry coalition by visiting :*

*<http://www.reentrycoalition.ohio.gov/default.html>.*

*\*The contents of this pamphlet are not legal advice. If you have questions, please contact Janet Hales at [jhales@ohiopoverlylaw.org](mailto:jhales@ohiopoverlylaw.org)*



*Housing is one of the most basic human needs and a key to successfully rebuilding a life after incarceration. The Ohio Poverty Law Center believes that you should have the opportunity to live in safe, affordable housing after serving a sentence. As many as one in six Ohioans—or 1.92 million people—have a misdemeanor or felony conviction. Those who have served a sentence deserve the opportunity to access housing that will serve as a foundation for a stable life well beyond the walls of one's home.*

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# Housing with a Criminal Record

*Obtaining a safe, affordable place to live after serving a sentence*



## What is the law?

*The law has clarified some important points that may impact your search for housing:*

- An arrest, alone, is not evidence of criminal activity and cannot be the basis for denying access to housing, or terminating or evicting a person from housing.
- If a public housing authority is going to deny a person's access to public housing because of a criminal record, he or she should be given a chance to dispute the accuracy of that record.

*There are only two crimes that are necessary and permanent bars to obtaining public housing:*

- Manufacturing methamphetamine on public housing property
- A crime that requires you register as a sex offender

Conviction "look back" time periods should be reasonable and persons should be given the chance to show that they have been rehabilitated.

## What are my rights?

*If you are applying for or already live in public housing and the housing authority is using your record against you:*

- You have a right to be notified and have the opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the record before your admission is denied.
- The housing authority should consider your circumstances individually and only consider crimes that —
  - Happened within a reasonable time before your application
  - Are justified by a legitimate connection between the crime and a threat to the safety of other renters and their property
  - Resulted in a conviction

*You have a right to appeal a denial or termination.*

## What can I do to prepare?

*When you are disclosing information about your criminal record to a housing provider, you can submit evidence that mitigates your criminal record or balances out its negative impact. The following documents are examples:*

- Completion of or enrollment in programs related to alcohol abuse, drug use, anger, or any other issue that may have influenced the criminal act.
- A resume
- One or more letters of recommendation from reputable community members that know you personally and can speak to your character—the person should include a contact phone number for questions.
- A brief personal statement in which you explain who you are and what safe and affordable housing means to you and your life.