



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0352, **Version:** 1

An Ordinance to Add Chapter 122 (Fair Chance Access to Housing) to Title IX of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor (ORD-21-06)

Formerly incarcerated people experience significant barriers in access to rental housing beyond just the high cost of rent. Often, formerly incarcerated people are screened out when applying for rental housing due to their criminal background. Persons with criminal records have not been shown to be a source of criminal activity, property destruction, or rental housing policy violations any more than have persons without a criminal history. Obtaining stable housing enables people to successfully reintegrate into their communities and significantly reduces recidivism rates. Such housing opportunities will also reduce the incidence of homelessness for persons with criminal records.

Fair Chance Housing ordinances and legislation are being enacted across the county to prohibit the use of criminal histories in determining access to housing. Fair Chance Housing legislation helps remove barriers to housing and allows landlords to consider the merits of housing applicant, providing formerly incarcerated people with a fair chance.

The Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission has drafted a Fair Access to Housing ordinance to eliminate the use of criminal history in tenant selection by Ann Arbor Housing Providers in order to give persons with a criminal record a fair opportunity to compete for rental housing and to be able to reside with family members and others, thus putting them in a better position to return to their communities and to obtain gainful employment.

The only exemptions in the ordinance are for Public Housing Agencies, like the Ann Arbor Housing Commission, which are governed by federal law, and Permanent Supportive Housing providers, such as Avalon Housing, who work to provide housing those who need it most, with no pre-conditions, offer a broad array of supports to help individuals stay housed, and practice harm reduction to engage and support people on their path to recovery.

Prepared by: Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission

Reviewed by: Margaret Radabaugh, Senior Assistant City Attorney

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Nelson, Radina, Hayner, Eyer, Grand, Disch, Briggs, and Mayor Taylor

(See Attached Ordinance as Amended at First Reading on March 15, 2021.)