

Ronald J. H. O'Leary, Judge
 Cleveland Housing Court
 1200 Ontario Street - Courtroom 13B
 Cleveland, Ohio 44113

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Cleveland Housing Court

Ronald J.H. O'Leary, Judge

SUMMER 2017 ISSUE



HOUSING COURT JUDGE
RONALD J. H. O'LEARY

A Message from Judge O'Leary:

Cleveland boasts more than 70,000 owner-occupied homes. These homes and their families are the cornerstones of our neighborhoods. Unfortunately, long-time residents sometimes struggle to keep up their homes. Practical realities like age, disability, and income can make maintaining a home difficult. As a result, the Housing Court frequently sees homeowners cited for code violations.

Many homeowners do not realize that when the City of Cleveland cites them for Building, Housing, or Health-Code violations, those charges are criminal charges. These charges have a potential \$1,000 fine for every day the property is not up to code. The penalty also could include up to 18 months in jail! But putting homeowners in jail or making them pay large fines only makes it harder for them to repair their homes. This Court understands that every homeowner wants to live in a decent home, but sometimes life gets in the way.

With this in mind, the Housing Court designed the Selective Intervention Program (SIP). SIP was created for two main reasons: 1) to give homeowners the information and guidance they need to bring their homes up to code, and 2) allow them to resolve their cases without having a criminal record. To be eligible, this must be the first time the homeowner has had a case in Housing Court. The owner must live in the property that was cited and must be willing to make a plan to correct the violations.

Along with the referral, I assign a Housing Specialist for all homeowners on SIP. The Housing Specialist is an expert in code requirements, property repair and maintenance, and the programs and services available to assist residents. The Housing Specialist meets with the homeowner and helps create a reasonable plan to complete the repairs, including how the work will be financed and the date by which each item will be fixed. When the homeowner completes the work, the City asks me to dismiss the charges. Then the homeowner has no fine or jail time, and no criminal record!

Housing Court is a problem-solving court. SIP is one of the many programs we designed to help property owners bring their properties up to code. If you would like more information about SIP or the Housing Court's other resources, please plan to attend one of our upcoming Neighborhood Clinics (see locations and dates on Page 2,) stop by the Housing Clinic on the 13th floor of the Justice Center, or visit our website: clevelandhousingcourt.org

KEYS TO IMPROVING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

HOUSING TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Housing Court Judge

Ronald J. H. O'Leary

216-664-4989

Housing Specialists.....216-664-4295 Evictions/Move-Outs.....216-664-4765

Please visit our website at: www.clevelandhousingcourt.org

or our facebook page at: facebook.com/clevelandhousingcourt

RENTAL INFORMATION CENTER

Cleveland Tenants' Organization216-432-0609 Legal Aid Society.....216-687-1900

CITY OF CLEVELAND

Building & Housing

Commissioner's Office.....216-420-8416	Demolition216-664-4319
Building Code Complaints216-664-3095	Electrical Chief Inspector216-664-2207
Housing Code Complaints216-664-2007	Fair Housing Complaints216-664-4663
Environmental Health Commission.....216-664-2300	Homeless Services216-436-2000
Health Code Complaints216-664-2324	HVAC Chief Inspector.....216-664-2284
Housing Court Prosecutor.....216-664-3572	Illegal Dumping 216-664-DUMP
Cleveland City Council.....216-664-2840	Land Bank Lots.....216-664-4126
Mayor's Action Center.....216-664-2900	Permits, Contractor Registration.....216-664-6424
Arson.....216-623-5454 or 216-664-6380	Plumbing Chief Inspector216-664-2284
Board-Up.....216-664-3639	Rental Registration.....216-664-2827
Building Rehab Review216-664-4423	Weatherization216-574-1000
Community Policing216-623-5080	Zoning Administration.....216-664-3827

COMMUNITY CONTROL - Court Supervision Brings Results

Community control is the modern term for probation, and it is one of the tools Housing Court uses to motivate defendants to make necessary repairs.

In most cases, when Housing Court Judge Ronald J. H. O'Leary sentences a defendant, in addition to a fine or jail, he may impose a period of court supervision called community control. A defendant on community control in the Housing Court must obey the law, make any repairs that are still needed at the property that was the subject of the criminal case, and maintain all properties the defendant owns in Cleveland free of code violations.

In addition to those conditions, the Court can impose other requirements specifically for the defendant's individual situation. For example, the Court has forbidden defendants who are over-extended from buying new properties without Court permission. The Court also ordered a bank to install security systems at vacant home subject to frequent break-ins. And,

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What Every Landlord Should Know ...

What Every Landlord Should Know Seminar

Wednesday, September 20th - 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.
St. Patrick's Catholic Church - Thorpe Hall
4427 Rocky River Drive - Cleveland, OH 44135

There is no charge to attend this event

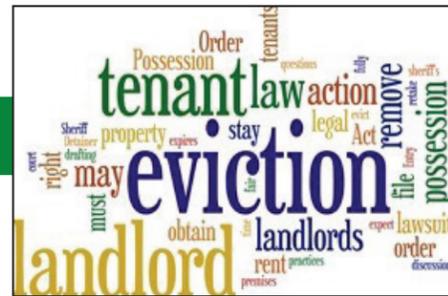
Sponsored by:

Cleveland Housing Court

Ronald J. H. O'Leary, Judge

216-664-4989

www.clevelandhousingcourt.org



This free seminar will provide landlords with information and techniques to help them create positive landlord-tenant relationships, and succeed in evictions, should they become necessary. Landlords also will receive information about the assistance and resources available through the Cleveland Housing Court.

Register by September 18, 2017

Register on the Web:

clevelandhousingcourt.org/en-US/registration.aspx

or

Register by Phone with:

Diana Twymon, Judicial Assistant -216-664-6927

at the Cleveland Housing Court

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COMMUNITY CONTROL - Court Supervision Brings Results

the Court ordered a landlord to hire an experienced property manager to ensure that he will attend to problems at his rental properties.

The success of community control depends heavily on the work of the Housing Specialists. The Housing Specialists serve as the Community Control Officers. They are the Court's eyes and ears, visiting the defendant's properties, talking with tenants and neighbors, supervising the defendant, and requiring that defendant to do whatever is necessary to get and keep the property up to code.

The goal of community control is to find those terms and conditions that will cause an owner to bring his or her properties up to code, improving the quality of housing and other property in our neighborhoods.

Upcoming Housing Clinics Save the Dates

Collinwood Recreation Center

16300 Lakeshore Boulevard

August 2, 2017 - 5:00 to 7 p.m.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

1355 West 70th Street

August 16, 2017 - 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Fairhill Partners - Auditorium

12200 Fairhill Road

September 13, 2017 - 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Fatima Family Center

6600 Lexington Avenue

September 27, 2017 - 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

For additional clinics and

updates visit the court website at

www.clevelandhousingcourt.org

Hoarding – How Much Is Too Much?

Hoarding is more than simply having too much stuff. Hoarders collect and keep so many possessions – clothes, empty boxes, books, newspapers, plastic containers, even animals – that their living spaces become unusable. Their homes become hazardous, not only for the people living there, but for EMS and fire crews who might have to respond to an emergency there..

At the Housing Court, the hoarding issue arises in a number of ways. A City inspector may issue a violation notice to the occupant of the property, and then file a criminal case in the Housing Court. Or, the City may decide to file a civil case, asking the Housing Court to order the resident to clean up the property, or let the City do so. Or, a landlord may file an eviction action against a tenant whose hoarding is impacting not only the tenant, but the neighbors as well.

The hoarding issue is not a simple one, as Housing Court Judge Ron O'Leary mentioned in a recent interview. "Often it's a mental health issue," the Judge noted, "approaching it in the right way is critical to being able to get a long term resolution."

The Housing Court staff has received training in addressing hoarding issues, and understands what it takes to balance the interests of the hoarder, the neighbors, and the City. When the hoarder is over the age of sixty, the Court often calls upon the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging for assistance. The staff at Benjamin Rose works patiently with the hoarder to steadily reduce the build-up of personal property, making the home safer. Forced clean outs are a last resort, but if the resident will not cooperate in eliminating the danger in their home, the Court can order Court Community Service, supervised by a Housing Specialist, to remove the possessions to a level that reduces the risk.

As Judge O'Leary noted in the interview, hoarding presents a fire, health and safety issue. It is not easy to solve, and often takes family involvement. "Family and friends that are aware of the issue should be the front line reaching out to that person." If you or someone you know may have a hoarding problem, see the Housing Specialists in the Housing Clinic on the 13th floor of the Justice Center, for information about available resources.



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Housing Court Judge

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Please visit our facebook page at:

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Cleveland Housing Court Public Service Clinic

The Housing Court Clinic is located on the 13th floor of the Justice Center. It is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. At the Clinic, the Court's Housing Specialists see landlords, tenants and property owners, and answer questions about court procedure, evictions, and City ordinances.

The services of the Clinic are offered by Housing Court Judge Ronald J. H. O'Leary free of charge! If you can't make it to the Clinic in person, you can contact the Housing Specialists by telephone at 216-664-4295.