

Property owners must give renters a written receipt for rent payments and security deposits.

# Rental Receipt

7.1 million U.S. households are unbanked and often forced to rely on cash to pay for their essential needs, like rent. Because this does not create a paper trail as checks and debit payments do, some property owners were abusing this lack of documentation and falsely claiming that rent had not been paid, often to evict tenants in retaliation for seeking repairs or other exercises of their legal rights.

**Columbus City Council Ordinance 0496-2021 amended Chapter 4551 of the Columbus City Code to require property owners to provide tenants with a written receipt for any security deposit and all rental payments.** This well-established best practice in the housing industry protects renters from unscrupulous practices and prevents costly and burdensome litigation for property owners.

## When is a receipt required?

For any security deposit payment and any rental payments.

## When must the receipt be provided?

When the payment or deposit is received by the property owner. If the payment is made in cash or another manner that does not automatically generate a receipt, that receipt must be provided within four business days after the money was received.

## What is considered a receipt?

A receipt must be in writing. Provided they contain the proper information, the following types of written receipts are allowable:

- Automatically generated receipts, such as email confirmations; and
- Online payment portals/services in which the tenant may obtain a receipt.

## Are there any exceptions?

Yes, property owners of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) are not subject to this ordinance. PSH is a proven solution to homelessness for the most vulnerable, chronically homeless people with disabilities. It pairs housing with case management and supportive services.

## What is the penalty for violating this ordinance?

Violators are guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree. This is a strict liability offense, according to the Legal Information Institute, "strict liability exists when a defendant is liable for committing an action, regardless of what his/her intent or mental state was when committing the action."

## Where can residents report violations of this ordinance?

Complaints may be submitted to the Columbus Urban League for investigation.

## When did this ordinance become effective?

July 1, 2021.



**File a Complaint with the Columbus Urban League at 740.580.3247, [www.cul.org](http://www.cul.org), or [fairhousing@cul.org](mailto:fairhousing@cul.org)**

"[My property owner] didn't want to come in and fix anything. He would always say someone's coming but... they never reply back, they never come. I called City Code Enforcement, they found a lot of violations."

**Jasmine**

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