Fair Housing and Hoarding Fact Sheet

1. **What is Fair Housing?**
   Fair housing is a set of principles and laws which mandate equal access and opportunity in housing. Fair housing covers persons who are members of a protected class which are groups of persons and their families that historically have experienced discrimination. Under the Federal Fair Housing Act, those classes are race/color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, and families with children.

2. **What is hoarding?**
   Compulsive hoarding is (Frost & Hartl, 1996):
   - the acquisition of, and failure to discard, a large number of possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value;
   - living spaces that are sufficiently cluttered so as to preclude activities for which those spaces were designed;
   - the presence of significant distress or impairment in functioning caused by the hoarding.

3. **Why would persons who hoard be covered under fair housing laws?**
   Someone who is a compulsive hoarder meets the definition of disability under federal fair housing laws because it is a mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the person’s major life activities.

4. **What types of protections does a person with a disability have under fair housing laws?**
   Hoarders, as persons with disabilities, have the right to request a reasonable accommodation. A reasonable accommodation is a request for a waiver or change in policies, practices, procedures and services to provide equal access and opportunity in housing for persons with disabilities. There must be a direct connection between the person’s disability and the reasonable accommodation request.

5. **What is an example of a reasonable accommodation that could assist a person whose housing is at risk due to hoarding?**
   If the housing provider is considering eviction of a person with a disability due to the hoarding, a remedy plan can be offered as a reasonable accommodation to preserve the tenancy. This remedy plan could include support services plus an individualized schedule for cleanup and inspections.

6. **Must the housing provider approve a reasonable accommodation request?**
   The request must be approved as long as it does not cause an undue administrative and financial burden or change the basic nature of the housing program.

7. **Who can I call to get help in requesting a reasonable accommodation?**
   Call Housing Opportunities Made Equal (513-721-4663). We will advice you on making a reasonable accommodation request and help in working with the landlord.