

## **CITY OF OBERLIN, OHIO**

### **ORDINANCE No. 25-67 AC CMS**

**AN ORDINANCE ENACTING NEW CHAPTER 707 OF THE OBERLIN CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO PROHIBIT THE PROVISION OF CONVERSION THERAPY TO MINORS WITHIN THE CITY OF OBERLIN**

WHEREAS, on July 7, 2025, this Council passed Resolution No. R25-12 CMS expressing its opposition to the provision of conversion therapy to minors within the City of Oberlin; and

WHEREAS, conversion therapy, also known as reparative therapy, is comprised of a range of discredited practices aimed at changing one's sexual orientation or gender identity; and,

WHEREAS, medical, mental health, and child welfare experts have denounced conversion therapy or reparative therapy as ineffective, unreliable, and unsafe for the people, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, (or sometimes questioning), intersex, asexual, and others, ("LGBTQIA+), minors, who undergo such treatment; and,

WHEREAS, such professionals have determined that there is no evidence that conversion therapy is effective or that an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity can be changed by conversion therapy; and,

WHEREAS, such professionals have also determined that conversion therapy or reparative therapy is not only ineffective, but is substantially dangerous to an individual's mental and physical well-being and has also been shown to contribute to depression, self-harm, low self-esteem, family rejection, and suicide; and,

WHEREAS, conversion therapies or reparative therapies are based on the discredited premise that being LGBTQIA+ is a mental disorder that can be cured or corrected; and

WHEREAS, to protect the health, safety, and welfare of LGBTQIA+ minors within the City of Oberlin, this Council desires to codify its opposition to the provision of conversion therapy or reparative therapy to minors within the City of Oberlin, and to adopt prohibitions on the provision of such treatments.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OBERLIN, STATE OF OHIO, THAT:**

**SECTION 1:** This Council finds and declares that there is a compelling interest in protecting the physical and psychological well-being of LGBTQIA+ minors by safeguarding them from conversion therapy or reparative therapy within the city by limiting the risk of serious harm caused by the exposure to such therapies and that there are no other means of protecting LGBTQIA+ minors from the harms associated with such therapies that would be effective.

**SECTION 2:** That new Chapter 707 of the Oberlin Codified Ordinances be and is hereby established to read as follows:

**CHAPTER 707 Conversion Therapy Prohibited**

**707.01 Declaration of Policy.**

It is declared to be the policy of the City of Oberlin, in the exercise of its police powers for the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare, to regulate the conduct of Providers of conversion therapy or reparative therapy treatment to LGBTQIA+ minors within the city. It is not the policy of the City of Oberlin to prohibit or limit proponents or opponents of conversion therapy or reparative therapy from speaking about gender or sexual orientation conversion publicly and privately, including to LGBTQIA+ minors, in forms other than the provision of conversion therapy or reparative therapy.

**707.02 Definitions.**

As used in this chapter:

- (a) Code Enforcement Official means the person designated pursuant to Section 140.01(c) of the Oberlin Codified Ordinances.
- (b) "Conversion therapy" or "reparative therapy" means any practice or treatment by a Provider that seeks to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same gender.
- (c) "Gender expression" and "gender identity" mean the same as is defined in Section 157.01(i) of the Oberlin Codified Ordinances.
- (d) "Minor" means any person under the age of eighteen (18) years.
- (e) "Provider" means an individual who is licensed, certified, or registered under the laws of the State of Ohio, including, but not limited to, practitioners defined in Chapter 4757 of the Ohio Revised Code, to provide mental health services within the City of Oberlin. "Provider" includes, but is not limited to, physicians specializing in the practice of psychiatry, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, social workers, clinical counselors, behavioral clinicians or therapists, nurses, or any other persons offering such mental health services. "Provider" does not include members of the clergy acting in their roles as clergy or pastoral counselors, or providing religious counseling to congregants.
- (f) "Sexual orientation" means the same as defined in Section 157.01(j) of the Oberlin Codified Ordinances.

**707.03 Prohibited practices.**

It shall be unlawful for any Provider to provide, directly or indirectly, Conversion Therapy or Reparative Therapy to a Minor within the City of Oberlin.

**707.04 Enforcement.**

- (a) Upon receipt of a credible report of an alleged violation of this chapter, the Code Enforcement Official shall conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe a violation has occurred. If reasonable cause exists, the Code Enforcement Official shall issue a written notification to the Provider informing the Provider that Conversion Therapy or Reparative Therapy is prohibited by ordinance and that the provision of such therapy shall cease immediately. Such notice shall be sent by U.S. Certified Mail, return receipt requested, to the Provider at the Provider's place of business and, if different, the Provider's last known address. The notice shall include a description of the alleged violation, the right to appeal, and the penalty for a failure to discontinue the prohibited conduct.
- (b) A Provider who fails to discontinue the provision of Conversion Therapy or Reparative Therapy after having been served with notice of violation shall be in violation of this chapter, subject to the penalties set forth in subsection (c) below.
- (c) Each day of a violation constitutes a separate offense. The civil penalty for a first violation of this chapter shall be five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per day. The civil penalty for second and subsequent violations of this chapter shall be one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) per day.
- (d) If a civil penalty or any portion thereof remains unpaid for thirty (30) days, the City Law Director may institute civil enforcement proceedings against the Provider in the Oberlin Municipal Court or other court of competent jurisdiction to collect such penalty, together with interest at the statutory rate, costs, and reasonable attorney's fees.

**707.05 Appeal.**

Any person aggrieved by a final administrative decision or order made under this Chapter may seek judicial review in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 2506 or other applicable law. The filing of an appeal shall not automatically stay the enforcement of any penalty or order unless a stay is granted by the reviewing court.

**707.06 No Liability for Enforcement.**

Nothing contained in this Chapter is intended to be nor shall be construed to create or form the basis for any liability on the part of the City, or its officers, employees or agents, for any injury or damage resulting from or by reason of any act or omission in connection with the implementation or enforcement of this chapter on the part of the City by its officers, employees or agents, except as otherwise provided by law. This section shall not

be construed to waive any immunity provided by Ohio Revised Code Chapter 2744 or other applicable law.

**707.07 Preservation of Free Speech.**

Nothing in this chapter shall be interpreted to infringe upon or otherwise interfere with any rights protected by the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

**SECTION 3:** It is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning or relating to the adoption of this Ordinance were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and any of its committees that resulted in such formal action, were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

**SECTION 4:** That this Ordinance shall take effect upon the earliest date allowed by law.

PASSED: 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: December 15, 2025

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: January 5, 2026

3<sup>rd</sup> Reading: January 20, 2026

ATTEST:



BELINDA B. ANDERSON, CMC  
CLERK OF COUNCIL



EBONI A. JOHNSON  
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

POSTED: 01/21/2026

EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/19/2026