The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the state government agency created to ensure equality for all. Our primary purpose is to protect you from discrimination by enforcing and promoting the Kentucky Civil Rights Act and federal civil rights laws.

The Kentucky Civil Rights Act

The following are protected classes under the law: Age, Color, Disability, Familial Status, National Origin, Race, Religion, Sex and Tobacco-Smoking Status.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is defined in the Kentucky Civil Rights Act as any direct or indirect act or practice of exclusion, distinction, restriction, segregation, limitation, refusal, denial, or any other act or practice of differentiation or preference in the treatment of a person or persons, or the aiding, abetting, inciting, coercing or compelling thereof made unlawful under this law.

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The commission receives, initiates, investigates, conciliates and rules upon complaints alleging violations of the Kentucky Civil Rights Act. The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights also has authority from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce federal civil rights laws.

The commission is mandated to educate the public about the laws against discrimination and the benefits of equality. We conduct a comprehensive program of education, training, research, outreach and partnership to vigorously carry out this task.

In 1966, our role expanded with passage of the Kentucky Civil Rights Act (Kentucky Revised Statute Chapter 344). This law made discrimination illegal, and it gave the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights the statutory authority to enforce civil rights laws for the Commonwealth. The law also made Kentucky the first state in the south to prohibit discrimination.

Every person is protected from discrimination in the following areas: Housing, Employment, Public Accommodations and Financial Transactions.

Public Accommodations

It is illegal for a place of public accommodation, resort or amusement to refuse or deny the full and equal enjoyment of goods, facilities and accommodations to any person because of his or her color, disability, national origin, race or religion. A place of public accommodation includes any place, store, or other establishment, either licensed or unlicensed, which supplies goods or services to the general public or which solicits or accepts the patronage or trade of the general public or which is directly or indirectly supported by government funds. Stores, restaurants, businesses, theatres, hotels, and medical offices are just a few examples. In addition, restaurants, hotels, motels, and facilities directly or indirectly supported by government funds are prohibited from denying goods and services on the basis of sex.

Financial Transactions

The denial of credit or financing by a financial institution or person offering credit is illegal when it is based on color, disability, national origin, race, religion or sex. It is illegal to discriminate for these reasons in the interest rate or monthly payment of a loan, in its terms and payment schedule, points, fees, or penalties, or in the offer of credit insurance on the loan.
Retaliation

It is illegal to retaliate or discriminate in any manner against a person who has opposed a practice declared unlawful by the Kentucky Civil Rights Act or because he or she has filed a complaint or assisted in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under the Kentucky Civil Rights Act.

How to File a Complaint

You may contact the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights to make a charge of discrimination by phone, in person, or by fax or email. Remember, to make a housing discrimination complaint, you must contact us within one year of the alleged discrimination. For an employment or public accommodation discrimination complaint, you must contact us within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.

After you contact us, our representative will interview you to get details about what occurred. Once it is determined that the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights has jurisdiction to handle the complaint and that your concern meets the requirements for a complaint, your case will be assigned to an enforcement officer. The enforcement officer will thoroughly and impartially investigate the circumstances of the complaint. The enforcement officer will also work with you and the respondent to reach a satisfactory resolution by conciliating the case, if possible. A conciliation is similar to a settlement. Otherwise, after an investigation is complete, and if a probable cause finding is made, the case will move into the litigation phase and will be handled by a commission attorney. The Board of Commissioners will determine a final outcome and issue a ruling. The commission acts with the authority of a court of law.

Another alternative is to participate in our mediation program. Mediation is an informal, voluntary process, which provides a forum for discussion about the complaint between you, the other parties involved and a neutral mediator, with the aim of quickly resolving the complaint.