

Discrimination

The Commission investigates alleged violations of Chicago's Human Rights and Fair Housing Ordinances in the areas of:

- **Employment:** Discrimination in any workplace in Chicago with one or more employees is prohibited.
- **Housing:** Discrimination in all housing in Chicago, including small apartment buildings and two-flats, is prohibited.
- **Public Accommodations:** Discrimination by any business in Chicago holding itself open to the public is prohibited.
- **Credit:** Discrimination by any business or institution in Chicago offering credit to the public is prohibited.

The discrimination must be based on membership in at least one of sixteen "protected classes":

- Race
- Sex
- Color
- Sexual Orientation
- Ancestry
- National Origin
- Gender Identity
- Marital Status
- Religion
- Parental Status
- Disability
- Military Status
- Age (over 40)
- Source of Income
- Credit History (employment only)
- Criminal History (employment only)

Sexual harassment, discrimination based on pregnancy, and retaliation for opposing discrimination are also prohibited.

How to File a Discrimination Complaint

Complaints must be filed within **300 days** of the alleged discriminatory action, which must have taken place in Chicago. The Commission accepts complaints in-person, as well as by mail, fax, and email. The Commission does not charge a filing fee or any other costs associated with filing a complaint.



Complaint and Hearing Process

COMPLAINT

- Complaints must allege a violation of the Chicago Human Rights or Fair Housing Ordinance. The Commission investigates each complaint it receives.
- Parties in cases are free to reach a settlement at any time during the process.

INVESTIGATION

- Both sides have the opportunity to provide the Commission with documents, witness statements, and other evidence regarding the claims.

HEARING

- If the Commission makes a determination of "substantial evidence" of discrimination, then the case may proceed to hearing.
- At the hearing, if a violation is found to have occurred, the hearing officer may award monetary damages, attorney's fees, injunctive relief, and a fine to the City.

Recent Changes

Expanded Retaliation Protections to provide protection for individuals who oppose or complain of discrimination and harassment.

- Now, for example, if a worker complains to a supervisor about being sexually harassed, and is later fired, that worker may file a retaliation complaint with the CCHR, regardless of whether they first filed a complaint with a government agency.

Filing Period Extended from 180 days to 300 days.

- Many potential complainants have had difficulty meeting the previous time limits, particularly those without attorneys. In addition, many complainants are confused as to the statute of limitations for claims under the city ordinances as opposed to federal and state law which are both 300 days. The consistency with other laws makes it easier for victims of discrimination to consider their options and make the necessary preparations to pursue a complaint.

Bathroom Access for all individuals based on the gender they identify with, not the gender listed on their identification or birth certificate.

- Businesses in Chicago that hold themselves open to the public may no longer restrict individuals' bathroom access based on their state-issued identification. Rather, individuals in Chicago are free to use the bathroom that corresponds to their gender identity.



Education & Intervention

Hate Crimes

The Commission assists victims of hate crimes. These are crimes of bigotry motivated by a victim's actual or perceived race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, ancestry, sexual orientation, and disability. They can only be charged when another crime such as battery, assault, criminal damage to property, etc. occurs and a specific hate motive is established. If you believe you have been a victim of a hate crime, call 911 to contact the Chicago Police Department immediately.

If you need assistance in reporting a hate crime, call the Commission at 312-744-4874.

Education & Community Tension Intervention

Education is key to preventing and alleviating discrimination, hate crimes, and inter-group tensions. The Commission conducts workshops and peace circles for schools, community groups, religious institutions, and agencies on a variety of topics including bullying and conflict resolution. The Commission has skilled staff trained in mediation that can offer this method of conflict resolution to address tensions that may arise due to racial, ethnic, religious, and other forms of differences.

For questions and to request a workshop or mediation, contact the Commission at 312-744-2571.

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Filing Complaints

Employment: (312) 744-4474
Housing: (312) 744-5879
Public Accommodation: (312) 744-5879
Credit: (312) 744-5879

Councils

Equity: (312) 744-2571
Veterans: (312) 746-8894

Community Tensions:

(312) 744-2571

Hate Crimes:

(312) 744-4874

Education/Workshops:

(312) 744-2571



<https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoCHR>

Enforcement of Chicago's Discrimination Laws Hate Crime Victim Assistance Community Tension Intervention

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Chicago Commission on
**HUMAN
RELATIONS**



LORI E. LIGHTFOOT
MAYOR OF CHICAGO