

Iowa Civil Rights Commission



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400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319

515-281-4121
800-457-4416
FAX 515-242-5840

<http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc>

*Our Vision is a state free of
discrimination.*

*Our Mission is enforcing civil rights
laws through compliance, mediation,
advocacy, and education.*

What is the Iowa Civil Rights Commission?

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission is an administrative agency that enforces the "Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965." Iowa's anti-discrimination law.

The Commission addresses discrimination through:

- Investigation of complaints filed with the agency.
- Reconciliation of complaints by mediators and conciliators.
- Conducting a multi-faceted public education program.
- Providing consultation and direction for communities wanting to identify and resolve diversity and discrimination issues locally.

What is discrimination?

The "Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965" prohibits discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and education.

Discrimination (different treatment) and harassment, is illegal if based on race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, physical disability, mental disability, age (in employment and credit), familial status (in housing and credit) or marital status (in credit).

Who may file a complaint?

Any person who claims to be aggrieved, or wronged, by a discriminatory or unfair practice, as defined by the Iowa Civil Rights Act.

How is a complaint filed?

A complaint is filed when received in writing by the commission. To file a complaint, or to ask questions about filing a complaint, call 515-281-4121 or 800-457-4416. There is no charge for filing a complaint.

Is there a filing limitations period?

Yes. Under Iowa law, a complaint usually must be filed within **180 days** of the alleged discriminatory practice.

What happens after a complaint is filed?

A copy of the complaint is sent to the Respondent. Usually a questionnaire is mailed to both parties. The Commission staff will review the complaint, the answers to the questionnaires and any other collected information, and will then make a decision as to whether further investigation is warranted.

If the complaint warrants further investigation, the parties are offered an opportunity to resolve the complaint through a voluntary mediation process.

The mediator would be a neutral and impartial Commission staff member who assists the parties negotiate a no-fault resolution of the dispute. If an agreement is not reached, the complaint will be put in line for investigation.

When a complaint is assigned to an investigator, an impartial and thorough investigation will be conducted. All relevant information is considered by the investigator.

Following an investigation, an administrative law judge reviews the collected information and decides: **probable cause** (discrimination probably occurred) or **no probable cause** (discrimination probably did not occur). If the decision is “no probable cause, the complaint is dismissed.

If “probable cause” is found, the Commission attempts to negotiate the best settlement for the complainant and the people of Iowa. If this attempt fails, a decision is made whether to proceed to public hearing. With notice of public hearing, the complaint is no longer confidential. After hearing, the Commission makes a final decision whether discrimination occurred.

If the Commission determines the Respondent violated the **Iowa Civil Rights Act**, the Commission will order appropriate “make whole” relief. Examples of Commission-ordered relief are: back pay and interest; actual expenses; an order to cease discriminatory practices; emotional distress damages, and reasonable attorney’s fees.

How does the ICRC educate the public?

The Commission conducts workshops, seminars, and training sessions on a variety of civil rights topics, publishes and distributes materials on civil rights, and offers an extensive video lending library.

What materials are available to the public?

The Commission offers free materials: fact sheets; posters and brochures; **Fair Housing Guides**; **The Communicator** newsletter; **Annual Reports**; and many other educational materials. These are also available from our website. Call the Commission at **800-457-4416** or **515-281-4121** to request a speaker or materials.

What can I do to fight discrimination?

- Learn what discrimination is and how it hurts.
- Challenge stereotypes.
- Speak-up against discrimination.
- Learn to appreciate diversity, and advocate for greater diversity everywhere.
- Talk to people about the evils of discrimination and the value of diversity.
- Help start diversity appreciation teams in your community, at work, and in the schools; and then participate.
- Participate in Study Circles in your community.

Iowa Local Commissions

- Ames Human Relations Commission
515-239-5101
- Bettendorf Human Rights Commission
563-344-4000
- Burlington Human Rights Commission
319-753-8120
- Cedar Falls Human Rights Commission
319-273-8600
- Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission
319-286-5036
- Clinton Human Rights Commission
563-242-3207
- Council Bluffs Civil Rights Commission
712-328-4618
- Davenport Civil Rights Commission
563-326-7888
- Des Moines Human Rights Commission
515-283-4284
- Dubuque Human Rights Commission
563-589-4190
- Fort Dodge/Webster County Human
Rights Commission
515-576-2201
- Fort Madison Human Rights Commission
319-372-7700
- Grinnell Human Rights Commission
641-236-2600
- Indianola Human Rights Commission
515-961-9410
- Iowa City Human Rights Commission
319-356-5022
- Keokuk Human Relations Commission
319-524-2050
- Marshalltown Human Rights Commission
641-754-5712
- Mason City Human Rights Commission
641-421-3618
- Mount Pleasant Human Rights Commission
319-385-1470
- Muscatine Human Rights Commission
563-264-1550
- Ottumwa Human Rights Commission
641-683-0600
- Sioux City Human Rights Commission
712-279-6985
- Waterloo Commission on Human Rights
319-291-4441
- West Des Moines Human Rights Commission
515-222-3664

IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

Educational Resources

Resource Services' staff is available for presentations on a variety of civil rights topics, such as:

- Overview of State And Federal Civil Rights Laws
- Equal Employment Opportunity Practices
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Appreciating Diversity
- Fighting Discrimination for Schools
- Fair Housing
- Harassment and Sexual Harassment
- Overview of the Commission

Videos and tapes on civil rights topics are available for loan for a small fee. See the complete list at:

www.state.ia.us/government/crc

FREE Publications about the Commission and civil rights. See web page for list.

Call

1-800-457-4416, ext. 1-8086, or
515-281-8086

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