

Education

- Restricting or denying access to services or programs
- Asking about race, color, religion, or national origin in an application for admission except as permitted by regulations

HOW DO I FILE A DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT?

If you believe you have been a victim of a discriminatory policy, you may file a complaint by:

1. Calling OAG at (202) 727-3400
2. E-mailing a complaint to OAGCivilRights@dc.gov
3. Mailing a complaint to OAG at 441 4th Street N.W., Suite 600S, Washington, D.C. 20001.

NOTE: The Attorney General represents the people of the District of Columbia, not individuals making a complaint. Filing a complaint with the Office of the Attorney General is not a substitute for bringing an individual lawsuit in court, and it does not affect any of the filing deadlines or other administrative prerequisites that may exist for filing a lawsuit in court or with a government agency. The Attorney General may decline to investigate or pursue complaints filed with the office.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Office of Human Rights (OHR): OHR is the primary District agency that investigates individual complaints of discrimination. You can file a complaint with OHR at <https://ohr.dc.gov/> or call 202-727-4559.

Federal Agencies: Various federal agencies also investigate claims of discrimination:

- *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:* employment discrimination, www.eeoc.gov.
- *Department of Housing and Urban Development:* housing discrimination, https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp.
- *Department of Education Office of Civil Rights:* education discrimination, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

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Stay Connected



Defending Your Civil Rights

*Office of the Attorney General
for the District of Columbia*



Karl A. Racine
*Attorney General
for the District of Columbia*



HOW DOES OAG DEFEND YOUR CIVIL RIGHTS?

Civil rights violations unfairly limit opportunity for District residents and offend their personal dignity. OAG's goal is to ensure equal treatment and meaningful opportunity for all District residents.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) for the District of Columbia protects the civil rights of District residents by bringing lawsuits to challenge discrimination, advocating for legislation to strengthen antidiscrimination laws, and engaging in educational community outreach so that residents know their rights.

OAG's primary mission is to investigate and challenge discriminatory policies and practices that have a significant impact on District residents.

WHAT IS ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION?

Illegal discrimination is defined generally as being treated differently than someone else "because of" a protected trait.

WHO IS PROTECTED UNDER THE DISTRICT'S CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS?

The District has one of the strongest civil rights laws in the country. It protects residents from being treated differently based on:

- Age
- Color
- Credit information
- Disability
- Family responsibilities
- Familial status
- Gender identity or expression
- Genetic information
- Matriculation, *e.g.*, student status
- Marital status
- National origin
- Personal appearance
- Place of residence or business
- Political affiliation
- Race
- Religion
- Sex, including unequal pay or harassment
- Source of income, *e.g.*, housing voucher

These are called protected traits. It is illegal to discriminate based on some or all these categories in employment, housing, public accommodations (*e.g.*, businesses that serve the public), or educational institutions.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION?

The following would be considered illegal discrimination if the decision is made because of a protected trait:

Employment

- Hiring or firing someone
- Treating people differently in compensation or working conditions
- Refusing to refer someone for a job
- Excluding someone from a union
- Excluding someone from a training or apprenticeship program
- Advertising for a job indicating a limitation or preference for certain people

Housing

- Refusing to allow someone to rent or buy a property
- Restricting a tenant's use of facilities

Public Accommodations

- Denying people goods or services
- Publishing advertisements that say that goods or services will be denied based on a protected trait

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