

KNOW THE LAW

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
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- pregnancy
- physical disability
- mental disability (excluding credit)
- age (in employment and credit)
- familial status (in housing and credit)
- marital status (in credit)

REMEMBER

All people are created equal and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

IOWA STATE MOTTO

Our liberties we prize and
our rights we will maintain.

OUR MISSION IS A STATE FREE OF DISCRIMINATION

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission

is a neutral, fact-finding, administrative agency that enforces the “Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965,” Iowa’s anti-discrimination law. We do not provide legal representation.

The Commission addresses discrimination in the following ways:

- **Case resolution** through intake, screening, mediation, investigation, conciliation, and public hearings
- **Testing** to determine the extent of discrimination in Iowa



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION



VISIT Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319

CLICK icrc.iowa.gov

CALL 515-281-4121
800-457-4416 (within Iowa only)

EMAIL icrc@iowa.gov



FILING 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, can file a complaint.

- **To file a complaint**, or to ask questions about filing a complaint:

CALL 515-281-4121 or 800-457-4416

VISIT icrc.iowa.gov

- **There is no charge** for filing a complaint.
- **A complaint is filed** when received by the commission.



A complaint must be filed within 300 days of the alleged discriminatory practice, per Iowa law.

I FILED A COMPLAINT, NOW WHAT?*

- 1 **A copy** of the complaint is sent to the Respondent.
- 2 **Questionnaires** are then mailed to both parties.
- 3 **The Commission staff will review the evidence provided** to determine whether the collected information indicates a reasonable possibility of a probable cause determination and warrants further processing. Iowa Administrative Code 161-3.12(1)(f). If so, the case is “screened in.” If not, the case is administratively closed.

When the case is “screened in” and needs further processing, the following scenarios are possible:

If the complaint warrants further investigation, the parties are offered an opportunity to resolve the complaint through a voluntary mediation process. The mediator is a neutral and impartial volunteer or member of the Commission staff who assists the parties to negotiate a no-fault resolution of the dispute.

If an agreement is not reached, the complaint will be investigated. The investigator will conduct a fair, impartial, and thorough investigation. All relevant information is considered by the investigator.

If the evidence merits, the investigation will be presented to an administrative law judge. The judge reviews the collected information and determines whether there is **probable cause** to believe discrimination occurred. **Probable cause** exists if there are reasonable grounds for believing discrimination has occurred. If probable cause does not exist the administrative law judge can determine there is **no probable cause** (discrimination did not occur) and 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 negotiation fails, a decision is made whether to proceed to public hearing. The complainant is represented at the hearing by a representative from the Commission. With notice of public hearing, the complaint is no longer confidential and the complainant no longer has the right to request a right-to-sue and file a lawsuit in district court. 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.

*Example for most non-housing cases

FIGHT DISCRIMINATION

The Commission educates the public by workshops, seminars, and training sessions. We also publish and distribute free materials such as: fact sheets; posters and brochures; Fair Housing Guides; Annual Reports; and other educational materials.

Contact us at 515-281-4121 or 800-457-4416 to request materials and/or a speaker.

A few other ways to fight discrimination:

- 1 **LEARN** what discrimination is and how it harms the individual and society.
- 2 **CHALLENGE** stereotypes.
- 3 **SPEAK-UP** against discrimination.