

Equal Opportunity for All

STATE OF MARYLAND COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

6 St. Paul Street, 9th Floor

Baltimore, Maryland 21202

www.mchr.state.md.us

The mission of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations (MCHR) is to ensure equal opportunity to all who live in, work in, or visit Maryland. The Commission also provides educational and outreach programs designed to improve human relations in the State.

Ensuring Equal Access to Employment, Housing, and Places of Public Accommodation

Maryland's anti-discrimination laws are administered and enforced by the Commission under Article 49B, Annotated Code of Maryland. Maryland protects those within its borders from discrimination in employment, housing and places of public accommodation.

Protected Classes

Article 49B prohibits discrimination against individuals because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, genetic information and, in housing, familial status.

Filing a Complaint

Any individual who believes that they have been unlawfully discriminated against may file a complaint with the Commission. In person, telephone, mail, and on-line complaints are taken. After a complaint is filed, the Commission may commence an investigation to determine whether unlawful discrimination has occurred.

Mediation Services

Mediation is strongly encouraged by the Commission after a complaint is filed. Mediation is an informal negotiating process for settling disputes. The goal is to assist both parties in exploring issues and to reach a *mutually* acceptable resolution of those issues. Mediation is voluntary, confidential, and allows both parties to speak for themselves and to make their own decisions. Mediation is offered as a free service and is conducted by trained volunteers who are not employees of the Commission.

Investigating Discrimination Complaints

If mediation is not successful or attempted, an investigation is commenced by the Commission to determine whether there is evidence that the law has been violated. Investigations that find no violation of the law are dismissed with no further action taken. If an investigation finds a probable violation of the law, an attempt is made to resolve the matter by conference, conciliation and persuasion, prior to instituting legal action.

Legal Action and Remedies

If conciliation of the unlawful conduct is not successful, the case is reviewed by the Executive Director and may be referred to the Commission attorney to file a lawsuit based on the complaint and the results of the investigation. The matter is filed with the Maryland Office of Administrative Hearings, or if elected by one of the parties in a Housing case, the State Circuit Court. In an employment case, remedies may include hiring or reinstatement, back wages and lost benefits. In a housing case, a proven violator of the law may be ordered to sell or lease the housing unit to the complainant, and to pay compensatory damages. Civil penalties may also be assessed and paid to the State General Fund. In cases involving places of public accommodation, cease and desist orders and civil penalties may be imposed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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Employment



Housing



Public Accommodations