



Filing a Discrimination Complaint

Commerce is committed to ensuring all individuals have the right to participate in programs and activities operated by our sub-recipients regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, age, disability, or veteran status. Discrimination occurs when a person is treated differently or denied equal treatment or access because of their membership in a protected class, such as, race or religion. In addition to these, individuals, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, have the right to participate programs and activities operated by sub-recipients of grants under the Byrne-JAG grant program. These prohibitions include discrimination in employment as well as the provision of services.

If you believe you, or someone you know, were discriminated against, there are federal and state organizations that can assist in protecting your rights. The following organizations can help you find more information or file a complaint.

Please keep in mind that the information given is only a brief description of potential legal rights and the different agencies that may be able to investigate and address discrimination. Please refer to the different agencies websites or contact their offices, to receive more information.

How to File a Complaint:

Agencies with which you may file a complaint - The links will take you directly to the online complaint filing website.

[U.S. Department of Justice \(DOJ\)](#) : The Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is responsible for enforcing federal civil rights laws that collectively prohibit agencies receiving financial assistance from the DOJ from discriminating in the delivery of services and employment practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, gender identity, or sexual orientation. To file a complaint with the OCR, access the link above or call 202-514-0716.

[U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#): The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting discrimination against a job applicant or employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Federal law also prohibits discrimination against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. EEOC has jurisdiction over most employers with at least 15 employees (20 employees in age discrimination cases), and most labor unions and employment agencies. The laws apply to a range of work situations, including hiring, firing, promotions, harassment, training, wages, and benefits. For more information or to file a complaint with the EEOC Seattle Field Office, access the link above or call 206-220-6884. Please be aware that you GENERALLY have 180 days from the day the discrimination took place to file a complaint, but there are several exceptions and your time limit could be as few as 45 days or as many as 300 days. For more information on time limits please access this [link](#) or call the EEOC Seattle Field Office at 206-220-6884.

[Washington State Human Rights Commission](#) : The Washington State Human Rights Commission (WSHRC) is a state agency responsible for administering and enforcing the Washington Law Against Discrimination. This state law prohibits discriminatory practices in the areas of employment, places of public resort, accommodation, or amusement, in real

estate transactions, and credit and insurance transactions on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, families with children, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age (40 and older), honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability (whether it is an actual disability or just perceived to be one). This law also prohibits retaliation against a person who oppose a discriminatory practice, and those who file health care and state employee whistleblower complaints. For more information or to file a complaint, access the WSHRC link above or call 800-233-3247 or 360-753-6770. Please be aware that the statute of limitations for employment, public accommodation, credit and insurance transactions complaints is six months from the date of the alleged harm, for housing discrimination it is one year, and for state employee whistleblower retaliation it is two years

Contact Information – Discrimination complaints may be filed by email, mail or phone at:

[Office for Civil Rights - U.S. Department of Justice](#)

202-307-0690

810 Seventh Street, NW Washington, D.C. 20531

[U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)

800-669-4000

131 M Street, NE Washington, DC 20507

[Washington State Human Rights Commission](#)

800-233-3247, 360-753-6770

711 S. Capitol Way, Suite 402, Olympia, WA 98504

[Washington State Department of Commerce*](#)

Human Resources Managing Director, Amy Goodall-Rasmussen

amy.goodall-rasmussen@commerce.wa.gov

1011 Plum Street SE Olympia, WA 98504

360-725-2656

*Note: The Washington Department of Commerce does not itself have the authority or the resources to investigate external complaints. Such complaints filed with the Department of Commerce will be processed by the Human Resources Managing Director, who will determine the most appropriate agency to investigate the complaint, and forward the complaint to that agency. The Human Resources Managing Director will notify the complainant of such action and specify which agency the complaint has been referred to.