

Know Your Rights...

It is the goal of the Human Rights Commission to ensure all are treated with dignity and respect and that all people in Westchester County are afforded an equal and fair opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life.

The Westchester County Human Rights Commission

222 Mamaroneck Avenue, Suite 205
White Plains, New York 10605
(914) 995-7710
FAX (914) 995-7720
TTY (914) 995-7754

Westchester
gov.com

Andrew J. Spano, Westchester County Executive
County Board of Legislators

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The Westchester County Human Rights Commission

Delores Scott Brathwaite, Esq.,
Executive Director

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Human Rights in Westchester County

On March 14th, 2000, a new Human Rights Law went into effect in Westchester County. This law made it unlawful to commit discriminatory acts against individuals because of their group identity based on their race, color, religion, ethnicity, creed, age, national origin, alienage or citizenship status, familial status, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability. Recently, on October 6, 2005, the Human Rights Law was expanded and now prohibits discrimination in employment and housing against victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and stalking.

It is unlawful in Westchester County to discriminate against individuals in the following areas:

Employment:

You may not be discriminated against when looking for employment or during the course of your employment. If you believe that you did not get a job, or were unfairly terminated or treated differently at work because of your group identity, you may want to file a complaint.

Places of Public Accommodation:

(Public Places and Services)

You may not be discriminated against in the use of public facilities. For example, restaurants, theaters, stores and other places of public accommodation may not treat you differently or unfairly. If you feel you have been denied access to a public facility because of discrimination, you may want to file a complaint.

Sale, Lease or Rental of Real Estate:

The new law makes it unlawful to discriminate in the renting or selling of any house, condominium, cooperative apartment or commercial real estate. If you feel you were discriminated against in a housing situation because of your group identity, you may want to file a complaint.

Credit:

The law makes it unlawful to deny credit, or to fix higher or unfair rates based upon the defined discrimination. If you have been denied a loan or credit or offered a higher interest rate because of discrimination, you may want to file a complaint.

What Can the Human Rights Commission Do About My Complaint?

If you have been the victim of discrimination, you may be entitled to:

1. Reinstatement in employment.
2. Back pay.
3. A cease and desist order stopping the unlawful discriminatory practice.
4. Compensatory damages for harm caused by the discriminatory conduct.
5. Housing that you were wrongfully denied.

Who Is on the Human Rights Commission?

The Westchester County Human Rights Commission is made up of 15 members of the Westchester community, representing a broad spectrum of our diverse county. The Commission members are nominated by the Westchester County Executive and approved by the Westchester County Board of Legislators.

How Do I Know if I Should File a Complaint with the Westchester County Human Rights Commission?

If you think that your rights have been violated in Westchester County because of discrimination, you should call the Westchester County Human Rights Commission at **(914) 995-7710**. In some cases you may be referred to other local human rights agencies to file a complaint. The Westchester County Human Rights Commission office will make sure you receive timely and confidential assistance.

When Should I File A Human Rights Complaint?

You must file a formal written complaint **within one year** of the alleged discriminatory act. Please note that it may take some time to complete the forms. Please call the Westchester County Human Rights Commission Office to schedule a consultation to discuss your complaint and available remedies.

The Westchester County Human Rights Commission is located at 222 Mamaroneck Avenue, Suite 205, White Plains, N.Y. 10605

For more information please call **(914) 995-7710**.