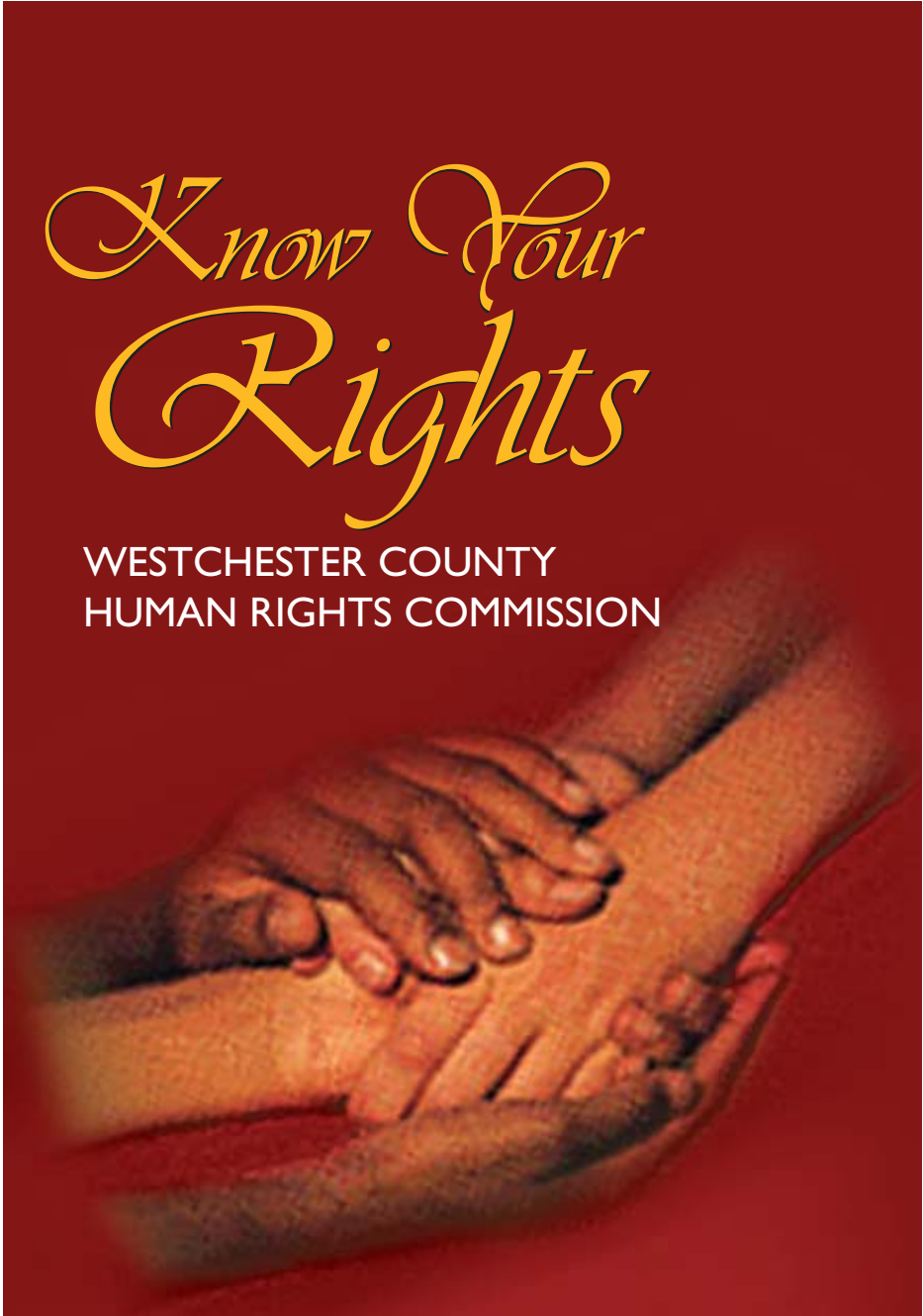


Andrew J. Spano, Westchester County Executive
County Board of Legislators

I Know Your Rights

WESTCHESTER COUNTY
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



Know Your Rights...

On March 14, 2000, the Westchester County Board of Legislators unanimously passed and the County Executive signed the Westchester County Human Rights Law. This law made it unlawful to commit discriminatory acts in employment, housing, public accommodation and credit 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.

On October 6, 2005 the Human Rights Law was expanded to become the only human rights law in New York State to prohibit discrimination in both employment and housing against victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and stalking. On June 4, 2007 the law was further expanded to provide for monetary damages in cases where there is a pattern and practice of discrimination; the award of punitive damages in all cases where the discrimination has been willful or wanton or malicious; and the assessment of civil fines and penalties in housing cases.

The Westchester County Human Rights Commission is the agency designated to enforce the Human Rights Law for the County of Westchester.

Areas of Discrimination:

Employment

Employers may not discriminate against you whether you are seeking employment or during the course of your employment. If you believe that you did not get a job, or that you were treated differently at work, or were unfairly terminated from employment because of your group identity, you may want to file a complaint.

Individuals are also protected under the Westchester County Human Rights Law from being treated differently, unfairly or terminated from employment because of domestic violence, sexual abuse or stalking. It is also illegal for your employer to take any action against you for having filed a complaint of discrimination. The Westchester County Human Rights Law protects you against retaliation provided you reasonably believe in good faith that the employer's conduct is unlawful.

Sale, lease or rental of real estate

It is 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. Victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse or stalking are also protected from housing discrimination under the Westchester County Human Rights Law.

Places of Public Accommodation (Public Places and Services)

You may not be discriminated against in the use of public facilities where goods, services, facilities, accommodations, advantages or privileges are extended. For example, restaurants, theatres, stores, hotels 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 or treated differently because of 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, terms or conditions, based upon the defined discrimination. If you have been denied a loan or credit or offered a higher interest rate which may have been based on discrimination, you may want to file a complaint.

What can the Human Rights Commission do...

The Commission has the legal power to investigate your complaint. If the law was violated, we also have the legal power to conciliate or mediate your case. This means that we will try to help you and the person or organization you are complaining about resolve the matter and reach an agreement.

A formal mediation by an impartial mediator is also available. If your complaint is not conciliated or mediated, and the Commission has determined that probable cause exists that you were the victim of discrimination your case may go to an administrative hearing before the Commission in a legal proceeding held before an administrative law judge. After the hearing, a final order will be issued which must be followed.

Whether your case is resolved by conciliation, mediation, or hearing, if you have been the victim of discrimination, you may be entitled to:

1. Reinstatement in employment
2. Back pay, front pay
3. A cease and desist order stopping the unlawful discriminatory practice
4. Compensatory damages including mental anguish for harm caused by the discriminatory conduct.

How do I know if I should file?

If you think you have been treated unfairly or in a discriminatory manner or that your rights may have been violated, you should call the Westchester County Human Rights Commission.

When should I file a human rights complaint?

The Westchester County Human Rights Law states that a complaint must be filed within one year of the alleged discriminatory act. Complaints must be based on unlawful discriminatory conduct which occurred no longer than one year prior to filing the complaint or conduct which may have started more than a year ago but is continuing.

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.

For more information please visit our website

www.westchestergov.com/humanrightscommission

or call (914) 995-7710

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:
112 East Post Road, Third Floor, White Plains, New York 10601**



Human Rights Commission Members

Delores Scott Brathwaite, Esq., Executive Director
Jerrice Duckette Epps, Esq., Deputy Director

Mayo G. Bartlett, Esq., Chair
Olivia M. King, Vice Chair

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Karen Cheeks-Lomax, Esq.

Paul Ryan

Eugene F. Conroy

Tejash Sanchala, Esq.

Irene R. Delgado

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Shelley M. Klein, Ph.D.

Rosemary J. Uzzo