

## Racial or Ethnic Discrimination - Your Rights

The Westchester County Human Rights Law, Chapter 700 of the Laws of Westchester County, prohibits discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, or national origin, in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation or credit.

It is against the law for an employer, a provider of housing, a place of public accommodation, or a financial lending institution to treat you differently or harass you because of your race, color, ethnicity, or national origin.

### Employment:

You have the right to apply for and be fairly considered for any job, apprenticeship, or traineeship no matter what your race or color, and no matter which country you come from. You may not be discriminated against:

- When you apply for a job.
- During the course of your employment.
- When being terminated.

Labor unions may not discriminate on the basis of a person's race, color or national origin in admission, training programs or any other union benefit.

It is against the law for employers and/or employment agencies to print, publish, or circulate any advertisement specifying a preference based on a person's race, color, ethnicity, or national origin regarding:

- Employment opportunities.
- Job openings
- Union membership
- Apprenticeship programs
- Job training programs

Any such action is in violation of the Westchester County Human Rights Law.

### Housing:

It is against the law for any owner, real estate broker, salesperson, or his/her employees to:

- refuse to sell, rent, lease, or offer for sale any property to any person or group of persons, or refuse to negotiate for

the sale of any property because of a person's race, color, ethnicity, or national origin.

- discriminate against any person because of a person's race, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale, rental, lease, or sublease, or in the furnishing of facilities or services that accompany the property.
- advertise or use any application for the purchase, rental, lease or sublease of any property or to make an inquiry, which expresses any limitation, specification or discrimination as to race, color, ethnicity or national origin.

It is also against the law:

- for any person, bank, banking organization, mortgage company, insurance company, or any other financial institution (where you apply for a loan or credit extension for the purchase, construction or improvement of any property) to discriminate against you because of your race, color, ethnicity, or national origin. Such financial institutions may not discriminate against you when granting, withholding, extending, modifying, or renewing loans, credit or financial assistance nor act in a discriminatory way during the application process.
- real estate brokers, salespersons, or their employees to indicate when trying to sell you property that a neighborhood has changed with respect to race, color, or national origin. Furthermore, the salesperson cannot indicate that this change will or may result in undesirable consequences, including lower property values, an increase in crime and anti-social behavior, or a decline in the quality of schools or public facilities.

- for newspapers published in Westchester County to publish any advertisement which expresses any limitation specification, or discrimination in the sale, rental or lease of property.

### **Public Accommodation:**

It is against the law to discriminate on the basis of a person's race, color, ethnicity or national origin when providing any public accommodation, services, facilities, benefit or privileges in any place where an invitation is extended to the general public, such as:

- Hotels
- Day Camps
- Restaurants
- Public transportation
- Places of entertainment
- Banks
- Professional offices
- State and local government offices
- Shops

You have the right to obtain goods and service in the same way everyone else does. You cannot be:

- refused service because of your race, color, ethnicity or national origin.
- turned away because of your race, color, ethnicity or national origin.
- because of your race, color, ethnicity, or national origin.
- asked to pay more or to meet more difficult requirements or standards than other people seeking the same accommodation because of your race, color, ethnicity or national origin.

### **Credit Transactions:**

The law protects individuals from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or national origin by any person, bank, financial organization, mortgage company, or any lending institution or business where you apply for credit.

### **Steps You May Take:**

Read through this fact sheet carefully to determine whether what has happened to you seems to be against the law. If you are unsure, call or visit the Westchester County Human Rights Commission to make certain of your rights. Our services are free and our address and phone number is at the end of this fact sheet.

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 first try to help you and the person or organization you are complaining about reach a settlement. Mediation by an impartial mediator is also available. Conciliation and mediation will depend upon the circumstances of your case. Conciliation and mediation could result in, among other things, monetary compensation, consideration for a job, promotion, reinstatement, receiving benefits or services, obtaining housing or other remedies.

If your complaint is not conciliated or mediated, you may go to a hearing before the Westchester County Human Rights Commission – a legal proceeding held before an Administrative Law Judge. After the hearing, a final order will be issued which must be followed.

Alternatively, if you do not want the Commission to handle your complaint you may file a lawsuit in state court or with the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission if you have been discriminated against in employment.

**Remember, it is also against the law for anyone to take any action against you because you have complained.**

**Any complaint of discrimination or unlawful treatment must have occurred and be filed within one (1) year of the alleged act.**

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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