



ANTI-BLACK RACISM PROTECTIONS

What is Anti-Black Racism

According to Boston University’s publication, “Anti-Blackness/Colorism,” “anti-Black racism is a specific kind of racial prejudice directed towards Black people, or those perceived to be Black.

“More than merely a product of a few bad actors or individual prejudice, anti-Black racism is systematic and structural. It systematically marginalizes Black people and communities, and devalues Blackness in all contexts.”

There must be intentionality in our acknowledgment of the specific harm caused by “anti-Black racism” and not flatten, minimize, or distort the Black experience in America for Black people and the many that encompass that population including Black families, trans Black people, Black youth, etc.

Protected Classes

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of:

- race (including traits associated with race, hair texture and protective hairstyles (it does not infringe on employers’ rights to implement workplace safety standards).
- color

Under the PHRA protections are available in employment, housing, commercial property, public accommodations and educational institutions.

Under the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act (PFEOA), protections are available for most post-secondary schools. Coverage may otherwise be available under the PHRA, except those schools that are distinctly private.

What if I believe it’s a hate crime?

- In Pennsylvania, a hate crime is defined as a criminal act, such as assault or property damage, motivated by ill will or hatred. If you are reporting a hate crime, contact the police.
- The PHRC does not charge or investigate hate crimes or criminal offenses. However, we do track incidents reported to us to inform the Pennsylvania Interagency Task Force on Community Activities and Relations.
- The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) Civil Rights Outreach Division addresses civil tensions, conflicts, and incidents in communities across the Commonwealth and promotes anti-racism through education and outreach.

Examples

- Discrimination against individuals based on their skin tone and upholding Eurocentric beauty standards (ex: lighter skin, narrower nose, straighter hair) opposed to Afrocentric physical features (ex: darker skin, broader nose, more coarse hair).
- Taking action on the assumption that the notion to be Black is to be inferior, incapable, unworthy, less than human, and most importantly, deserving of the physical and psychological mistreatment and marginalization.
- Taking actions based on the longstanding inequalities making it impossible for Black and brown communities to compete or close the educational or wealth gap.
- Allowing biases to affect the decision-making process in Black communities holding individuals back from education, employment, housing and health care opportunities.
- Targeting African Americans to be the center of racially charged physical violence.
- Harassing or discriminating against Black individuals verbally or through racial slurs.

What do I do if I believe that I have been discriminated against?

- If you believe that you have experienced illegal discrimination, file a complaint with the PHRC.
- A dedicated, neutral PHRC investigator will walk you through the process and help prepare your complaint.
- You will not incur any attorney fees during the PHRC’s investigatory process, although you have the right to obtain private legal counsel if you choose.
- Complaints of discrimination must be filed with the PHRC within **180 days** of the alleged act of harm.
- Pennsylvania law also protects you from retaliation. This means taking certain actions against you for filing a complaint, opposing unlawful activity, or helping with an investigation is against the law.

Learn more about the PHRC at www.pa.gov/agencies/PHRC



To file a complaint, call 717-787-4410 (717-787-7279 TTY) or contact the regional office nearest you:

Harrisburg

717-787-9780 | 717-787-7279 (TTY)

Philadelphia

215-560-2496 | 215-560-3599 (TTY)

Pittsburgh

412-545-5395 | 412-565-5711 (TTY)



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