

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION IS THE LAW

The **Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission** enforces Pennsylvania anti-discrimination laws:

- **Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA)** prohibits discrimination in education, employment, housing, commercial property, and public accommodations.
- **Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act (PFEOA)** is specific to postsecondary education and secondary vocational and trade schools.

In general, Pennsylvania law prohibits discrimination based on **race; color; religious creed; ancestry; age (40 and over); sex; national origin; familial status (only in housing); disability; or the use, handling, or training of support or guide animals for disability.**

Pennsylvania Law also protects you from retaliation.

This means no one is allowed to take any action (such as firing or eviction) against you for filing a complaint, opposing unlawful activity, or helping with an investigation.

TO FILE A COMPLAINT

A PHRC staff member is available to help decide whether you would like to file a complaint. Staff can help draft the complaint and prepare it in legal form for your verified signature.

You have the right to be represented by a private attorney, but it is not required. Your complaint will be assigned a case number and sent to the Respondent (the person or company named in your complaint as responsible) within 30 days after it is docketed. The Respondent is required to answer your complaint within 30 days of the date it was received and provide you with a copy of their answer.

Contact the Regional Office Closest to You:

Harrisburg
333 Market St. 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-787-9780
717-787-7279 (TTY)

Philadelphia
110 N. 8th St. Suite 501
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-560-2496
215-560-3599 (TTY)

Pittsburgh
301 5th Ave. Suite 390
Piatt Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-565-5395
412-565-5711 (TTY)

To File A Complaint Call
717-787-4410



phrc@pa.gov



www.pa.gov/agencies/PHRC

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Pennsylvania
Human Relations Commission

ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION & YOUR CIVIL RIGHTS

HOW TO FILE A DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT
IN PENNSYLVANIA

THE INVESTIGATION

PHRC staff will investigate. Please remember to:

- Give all relevant facts and details to your investigator, including names, dates and addresses.
- Answer all questions you are asked, even if you think the answer might weaken your complaint.
- Provide any witnesses or documents, such as a payroll slip or lease, which may substantiate your charges.
- Inform your investigator of any change in your address or phone number, or those of your attorney.

PHRC has the power to subpoena relevant witnesses or documents if it becomes necessary to do so.

FACT-FINDING CONFERENCE & FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Complainant & Respondent present evidence and documents, but these are not hearings. When offered, the conferences may speed up the investigation or possibly help reach a fair settlement of the complaint.

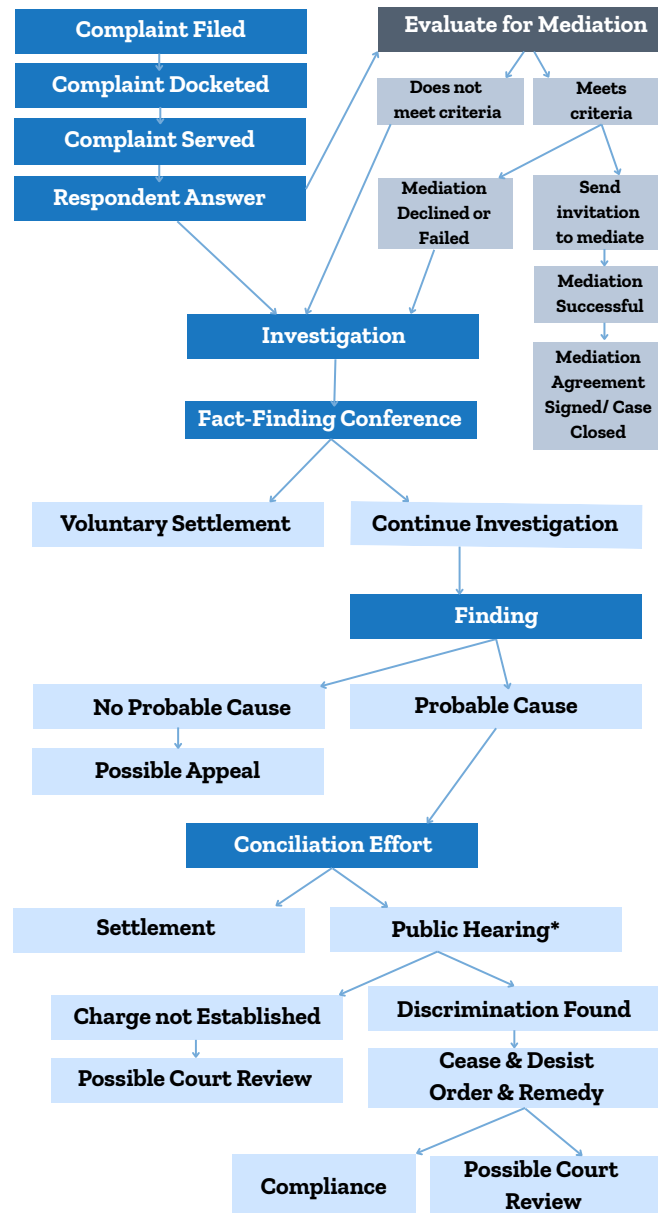
A Fact-Finding Conference may not be held in your case for any of these reasons:

- The case settles
- Either party refuses to participate
- The investigator determines a conference is not necessary based on the circumstances.

At a conference, the investigator interviews the respondent and any other relevant witnesses, and reviews all pertinent records and documents. You may be asked to clarify your complaint in light of new information, or respond to the respondent's answers. If you learn or remember additional information, notify your investigator immediately.

If your complaint is not resolved at the Fact-Finding Conference, or if one is not held, the investigation will continue.

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS



If you feel you have experienced illegal discrimination, in general, **you have 180 days from when the alleged discrimination happened**, to file a complaint or report a bias incident to the PHRC.

RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATION

After investigating, PHRC may find either **No Probable Cause** (no legal violation found) to credit the allegations or **Probable Cause** (a likely violation occurred). A Probable Cause finding is **not** a final decision—conciliation efforts begin at that point.

PHRC may also close a case for other reasons, such as a voluntary settlement, lack of jurisdiction, a court filing, or administrative closure.

If your case is dismissed, you'll be notified by mail and informed of your appeal rights. If unresolved or not dismissed after one year, you may file in a Court of Common Pleas.

THE CONCILIATION

If the investigation finds probable cause, PHRC will attempt to settle the complaint as soon as possible by asking the respondent to:

1. Stop the specific discriminatory act named in the complaint.
2. take whatever corrective actions necessary to correct the discrimination found in the investigation.

THE PUBLIC HEARING

If there is no settlement after a probable cause finding, PHRC may hold a public hearing. At a hearing, both sides present testimony under oath. The Commission will then review the record, render a decision and issue a legally enforceable order. This order may be appealed to Commonwealth Court.

ACCESSIBILITY & LANGUAGE TRANSLATION

If you require accommodation for a disability, have questions about accessibility, or require language translation, please contact the regional office that serves you, for assistance with any proceeding.