



**SERVING YOU SINCE 1963**

**Tennessee Human Rights Commission**

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**OUR MISSION**

SAFEGUARDING INDIVIDUALS  
FROM DISCRIMINATION THROUGH  
EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

**ABOUT THRC**

The Tennessee Human Rights Commission ("the Commission"), is an independent state agency responsible for enforcing the Tennessee Human Rights Act and the Tennessee Disability Act and coordinates the compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These laws prohibits discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations and state agencies who receive federal financial assistance based on race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, disability, familial status (housing only), and age (40 and over in employment).



**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Is there a time limit to file a complaint?** Yes. An individual has 180 days from the date of discriminatory act to file a complaint with the Commission. If more than 180 days but less than a year has passed you may file with the Commission and we will refer to applicable federal partners.

**Is this a lawsuit in court?** No. The filing of a complaint with the Commission is an administrative process.

**Do I need an attorney?** No, you are not required to have an attorney, but you are allowed to obtain one at anytime. If an attorney is obtained, complainants must inform their investigator. All further communication should proceed through the representative.

**Does the Commission represent me?** No. The Commission is a neutral fact-finding agency charged to investigate each complaint of discrimination to determine if a violation of the law has occurred.

**FILING A COMPLAINT**

An individual who feels that they have been discriminated against in employment, housing, public accommodations or in services delivered by a state agency, should file a complaint with the Commission.

Complaint forms can be completed online, printed and mailed to our offices, requested by mail, or picked up at our offices.

**COMPLAINT PROCESS**

- The Commission receives, reviews and access discrimination complaints for jurisdiction and investigation.
- Respondents are notified when a complaint is jurisdictional.
- Mediation is offered to all parties to reach a mutually acceptable resolution. If an agreement is obtained, the case is resolved. If no agreement is obtained, the complaint is assigned for investigation. Mediation is confidential and free of charge.
- After a thorough investigation, if the Commission finds no reasonable cause that discrimination has occurred, the case is closed.
- Complainants receive a final letter outlining up to three options for appeal should she or he wish to pursue the matter further.
- If the Commission finds reasonable cause that discrimination has occurred, conciliation attempts to negotiate terms to end the discriminatory practice.
- If conciliation fails, the Commission will present the case before an administrative law judge who issues a final order.

## EMPLOYMENT

It is illegal to discriminate in employment based on: race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, disability and age (40 and over).

The Tennessee Human Rights Act & Tennessee Disability Act prohibit discrimination related to employment actions can include: advertisement, benefits, discipline, compensation, discharge, harassment, hiring, layoff, leave, promotion, suspension and training.



## HOUSING

It is illegal for housing providers to discriminate in housing actions based on: race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, disability and familial status.

The Tennessee Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination related to housing. The law applies to: associations, builders, brokers, developers, insurance agents, financial institutions, landlords, managers, operators and owners.

### **TITLE VI NOTICE:**

*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 United States Code § 2000d) and Tennessee Code Annotated § 4-21-904 provide that any entity receiving federal financial assistance may not discriminate against their program beneficiaries or participants based on their color, national origin or race. The Tennessee Human Rights Commission does not discriminate against any person based on race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, disability, age, familial status or on any basis legally prohibited or protected by federal or state law.*

## PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

It is illegal for a place of public accommodation to refuse or deny the full and equal enjoyment of goods, facilities and accommodations based on: race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, and age (40 and over).

The Tennessee Human Rights Act applies to any business, accommodation, refreshment, entertainment, recreation or transportation facility, licensed or not, whose goods, services, facilities and privileges are extended, offered, sold or otherwise made available to the public.

This law includes prohibitions on publishing, circulating or displaying any material that communicates that any person is unwelcome on the basis of unlawful discrimination.



## TITLE VI COMPLIANCE

The core responsibility is to verify that all state government entities receiving federal financial assistance (FFA) are in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

According to the Tennessee Human Rights Act (Tenn. Code Ann. §4-21-203), the Commission is authorized to periodically and systematically review, evaluate and report on Title VI compliance efforts and outcomes for each state department and agency.

## MEDIATION

Mediation is strongly encouraged by the Commission after a complaint has been filed and throughout the entire complaint process. Mediation is an informal negotiation process for settling disputes. The goal is to assist both parties in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution of the issue. It is a free and voluntary service offered by the Commission. Regardless of the outcome, discussions during mediation remain confidential.



## EDUCATION & OUTREACH

The Commission provides education & outreach to bring awareness about the work we do. The Commission educates the public, employers, housing providers, state and federal agencies and others about their rights and responsibilities under the laws the Commission enforce.

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