



# WASHINGTON STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

## OLYMPIA HEADQUARTERS

711 South Capitol Way, Suite 402  
P.O. Box 42490  
Olympia, Washington 98504-2490  
360-753-6770

## SATELLITE OFFICES:

### SPOKANE

Rock Pointe Plaza III  
1330 North Washington Street, Suite 2460  
Spokane, Washington 99201  
509-568-3196

### EVERETT

729 100<sup>th</sup> Street SE  
Everett, WA 98208

### VANCOUVER

312 SE Stonemill Dr., Bldg 120  
Vancouver, WA 98684

### YAKIMA

15 West Yakima Ave., Ste 100  
Yakima, WA 98902

### EAST WENATCHEE

519 Grant Rd  
East Wenatchee, WA 98802

WEBSITE: [www.hum.wa.gov](http://www.hum.wa.gov)

TOLL FREE: 1-800-233-3247

TTY: (360) 586-2585

*Se Habla Español*

*Please let us know if you need an interpreter or reasonable accommodation.*

*To obtain this publication in alternate format, please contact the Headquarters Office.*

# Welcome to the WASHINGTON STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Washington State Human Rights Commission is to prevent and eliminate discrimination through the fair application of the law, the efficient use of resources, and the establishment of productive partnerships in the community.

## LEGISLATIVE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

“This Chapter shall be known as the law against discrimination. It is an exercise of the police power of the state for the protection of the public welfare, health, and peace of the people of this state, and in fulfillment of the provisions of the Constitution of this state concerning civil rights. The legislature hereby finds and declares that practices of discrimination against any of its inhabitants because of...[protected class]... are a matter of state concern, that such discrimination threatens not only the rights and proper privileges of its inhabitants but menaces the institutions and foundation of a free democratic state.” RCW 49.60.010

Established in 1949 by the Washington State Legislature, the Washington State Human Rights Commission is responsible for administering and enforcing the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD), Chapter 49.60 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).



The agency works to prevent and eliminate discrimination through complaint investigation, alternative dispute resolution, and education, training and outreach activities.

**Discriminatory practices on the basis of protected class are illegal in the areas of:**

Employment; Housing; Places of Public Accommodation; Real Estate and Credit Transactions; and Insurance

**Protected Classes include:**

Race/Color;  
National Origin;  
Creed;  
Sex/Pregnancy;  
Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity;  
Veteran/Military Status;  
The presence of any sensory, mental, or physical actual Disability or perceived Disability;  
Use of a Service Animal;  
HIV or Hepatitis C;  
Marital Status (except in public accommodation);  
Breastfeeding (in public accommodation);  
Age (40+, employment only);  
Families with Children (housing only); and  
State Employee Whistleblower.

It is also **illegal to retaliate** against any individual who files or participates in a discrimination complaint.



**FAIR APPLICATION OF THE LAW**

The Washington State Human Rights Commission is a neutral, fact-finding law enforcement agency; it does not act as an advocate for any party during an investigation, but advocates for the law in the interest of preventing and eliminating discrimination.



**COMPLAINT PROCESS**

Everyone has an obligation to comply with the law and a right to seek redress for alleged violations. Complaints must be filed within six months of the date of the alleged harm; in housing, complaints must be filed within one year; and two years in Whistleblower complaints. Investigations are conducted to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that a violation of the law has occurred and to take action to correct discriminatory practices or policies. Complaints may be resolved during an investigation subject to agreement between the parties and the Washington State Human Rights Commission. Investigations in which a violation of the law is found are referred to the Attorney General's Office for prosecution if settlement cannot be reached between the parties. To obtain additional information about the complaint process, visit our website or contact our office. *Please let us know if you need an interpreter or reasonable accommodation.*

**EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

Proactive education and training is a powerful tool in preventing and eliminating discrimination. Knowing the law facilitates compliance and exercise of individual rights. Everyone benefits from a clear understanding of rights and responsibilities under the law. The Washington State Human Rights Commission may provide speakers who conduct educational forums, direct and specialized trainings, and provides publications, and brochures on the law against discrimination. For more information or to inquire about arranging for a guest speaker, please contact the Headquarters Office.



**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The Washington State Human Rights Commission also provides technical assistance to government agencies, employers, businesses, human resource professionals, attorneys and the public. If you have questions about the Washington Law Against Discrimination or related matters, please contact the Headquarters Office.