

What is the Iowa Civil Rights Commission?

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission is a neutral, fact-finding, administrative agency that enforces the “Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965,” Iowa’s anti-discrimination law. We do not provide legal representation.

The Commission addresses discrimination in the following ways:

- Case resolution through intake, screening, mediation, investigation, conciliation, and public hearings
- Conducting a multi-faceted public education program
- Testing to determine the extent of discrimination in Iowa
- Support of civil rights and diversity programs/projects throughout Iowa
- Providing consultation and direction for communities wanting to identify and resolve diversity and discrimination issues locally.

What is discrimination?

The “Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965” prohibits discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and education.

Discrimination (different treatment) and harassment, is illegal if based on race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, physical disability, mental disability, age (in employment and credit), familial status (in housing and credit) or marital status (in credit)

Who may file a complaint?

Any person who claims to be aggrieved or wronged by a discriminatory or unfair practice, as defined by the Iowa Civil Rights Act.

How is a complaint filed?

A complaint is filed when received by the commission. To file a complaint, or to ask questions about filing a complaint, call 515-281-4121 or 800-457-4416 or visit www.state.ia.us/government/crc. There is no charge for filing a complaint.

Is there a filing limitations period?

Yes. Under Iowa law, a complaint usually must be filed within **300 days** of the alleged discriminatory practice.

What happens after a complaint is filed (for most non-housing cases)?

A copy of the complaint is sent to the Respondent. Usually a questionnaire is mailed to both parties. The Commission staff will review the complaint, the answers to the questionnaires and any other collected information, and will then make a decision as to whether further investigation is warranted.

If the complaint warrants further investigation, the parties are offered an opportunity to resolve the complaint through a voluntary mediation process.

The mediator is a neutral and impartial Commission staff member who assists the parties to negotiate a no-fault resolution of the dispute. If an agreement is not reached, the complaint will be put in line for investigation.

When a complaint is assigned to an investigator, an impartial and thorough investigation will be conducted. All relevant information is considered by the investigator.

Following an investigation, an administrative law judge reviews the collected information and decides: **probable cause** (discrimination probably occurred) or **no probable cause** (discrimination probably did not occur). If the decision is “no probable cause, the complaint is dismissed.

If **probable cause** is found, the Commission attempts to negotiate the best settlement for the complainant and the people of Iowa. The Commission does not become an advocate during the complaint process unless a determination of **probable cause** has been made. If negotiation fails, a decision is made whether to proceed to public hearing. With notice of public hearing, the complaint is no longer confidential. After hearing, the Commission makes a final decision whether discrimination occurred. If the Commission determines the Respondent violated the **Iowa Civil Rights Act**, the Commission will order appropriate “make whole” relief. Examples of Commission-ordered relief are: back pay and interest; actual expenses; an order to cease discriminatory practices; emotional distress damages, and reasonable attorney’s fees.

How does the ICRC educate the public?

The Commission conducts workshops, seminars, and training sessions on a variety of civil rights topics, publishes and distributes materials on civil rights, and offers an extensive video lending library.

What materials are available to the public?

The Commission offers free materials: fact sheets; posters and brochures; **Fair Housing Guides**; **Annual Reports**; and many other educational materials. These are also available from our website. Call the Commission at **800-457-4416** or **515-281-4121** to request a speaker or materials.

What can I do to fight discrimination?

- Learn what discrimination is and how it harms the individual and society.
- Challenge stereotypes.
- Speak-up against discrimination.
- Learn to appreciate diversity, and advocate for greater diversity everywhere.
- Talk to people about the evils of discrimination and the value of diversity.
- Help start diversity appreciation teams in your community, at work, and in the schools; and then participate.
- Participate in Study Circles in your community.

Iowa Local Commissions

Ames Human Relations Commission
515-239-5101
Bettendorf Human Rights Commission
563-344-4470
Burlington Human Rights Commission
319-753-8178
Cedar Falls Human Rights Commission
319-268-5113
Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission
319-286-5036
Clinton Human Rights Commission
563-242-3207
Council Bluffs Civil Rights Commission
712-328-4618
Davenport Civil Rights Commission
563-326-7888
Decorah Human Rights Commission
563-382-3651
Des Moines Human Rights Commission
515-283-4284
Dubuque Human Rights Commission
563-589-4190
Fort Dodge Human Rights Commission
515-576-2201
Fort Madison Human Rights Commission
319-372-7700
Grinnell Human Rights Commission
641-236-2600
Indianola Human Relations Commission
515-961-9410
Iowa City Human Rights Commission
319-356-5022
Keokuk Human Rights Commission
319-524-2050
Marshalltown Human Rights Commission
641-754-5712
Mason City Human Rights Commission
641-421-3618
Mount Pleasant Human Rights Commission
319-385-1470
Muscatine Human Rights Commission
563-264-1550
Ottumwa Human Rights Commission
641-683-0600
Sioux City Human Rights Commission
712-279-6985
Urbandale Civil Rights Commission
515-331-6703
Waterloo Commission on Human Rights
319-291-4441
West Des Moines Human Rights Commission
515-273-0633

Iowa Civil Rights Commission



Grimes State Office Building
400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319

515-281-4121

800-457-4416

FAX: 515-242-5840

<http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc>

*Our Vision is a state free of
discrimination.*

*Our Mission is enforcing civil rights
laws through compliance, mediation,
advocacy, and education.*