



IMMIGRANT PROTECTIONS UNDER THE PHRA



Protected Classes

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

- age
- color
- race
- sex
- familial status (only housing)
- disability and the use, handling, or training of support or guide animals
- ancestry
- national origin
- religious creed
- retaliation

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.

Examples

- Verbal harassment, shunning, slurs, and physical attacks.
- Taking action on the assumption a person cannot speak English, criticism for speaking a language other than English, or criticism for speaking English with an accent.
- Students harass or bully a peer because of their race, color, religious creed, national origin, or ancestry and the school district does not address these behaviors.
- Lowering someone's pay or paying them less than a coworker with a comparable job if the pay difference is based on factors other than job performance.
- Saying a home is rented when it is still available because the owner does not want to rent to someone of the applicant's race, color, ancestry, or national origin.
- A restaurant owner refuses to serve a customer wearing religious headgear.
- A delivery service will not deliver to a largely minority neighborhood but serves surrounding non-minority neighborhoods.

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

- File a complaint with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission within **180 days** of the date of the act of discrimination.
- Preserve any evidence that you may have to support your complaint (e.g., text messages, pictures, receipts, etc.)
- You have the right to obtain private legal services at your own expense, but this is not required.
- Pennsylvania law also protects you from retaliation. This means no one is allowed to take any action against you for filing a complaint, opposing unlawful activity, or helping with an investigation.

What does the PHRC do?

- Enforces the PHRA and the PFEOA
- Investigates and remedies claims of discrimination
- Holds public hearings
- Facilitates mediations
- Holds townhall meetings and community summits
- Facilitates education and outreach events and training
- Conducts social justice initiatives

To file a complaint, visit www.pa.gov/agencies/PHRC, 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)

Follow us:

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

