

Ontario Human Rights Commission



WHAT IS THE ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION?

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (the Commission) was created in 1961 to administer the Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”). The Commission is the largest human rights agency in Canada, and handles the largest number of complaints. The Code protects the people of Ontario against discrimination in employment, accommodation, goods, services and facilities, and membership in vocational associations and trade unions.

HOW IS THE COMMISSION ORGANIZED?

A full-time Chief Commissioner heads the organization, and at least six part-time Commissioners represent the diversity of the province. There are three branches within the organization: the Mediation and Investigation Branch, the Legal Services Branch, and the Policy and Education Branch. The three branches work together to help identify and deal with human rights issues, as well as make sure the rights enjoyed by all Ontarians are protected and developed.

WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

The Commission is committed to the elimination of discrimination in society. We provide the people of Ontario with strong leadership and quality service in the effective enforcement of the Code, and in the promotion and advancement of human rights.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE COMMISSION

Our commitment is to deliver fair, courteous and impartial service. This includes:

- receiving inquiries and investigating complaints of discrimination and harassment
- making efforts to settle complaints
- looking into situations where discrimination exists
- raising awareness about the Code through public education and public policy

The Commission has set up an efficient system for managing complaints. We have centralized our service for receiving and handling new complaints. Specially trained staff provide inquiry and intake, mediation and investigation services. All individuals who file complaints are offered mediation services before a complaint is investigated. On average, almost 75% of complaints in which mediation is attempted are successfully settled.

FILING A COMPLAINT

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you can call the Ontario Human Rights Commission to get more information or file a complaint. When you contact us, we will explain whether the Code applies to your situation and how the complaint procedure works. A complaint should be filed within six months of the last incident of discrimination. When you file a complaint, the Commission will first work with you and the person/company you have filed against, to try and resolve the complaint through mediation.

WHAT ABOUT PREVENTION?

Public education is an important part of the Commission’s work. The Commission has a mandate to develop policies and guidelines, as well as to make documents accessible and understandable. There are many “plain language” documents that provide basic explanations. All publications can be obtained in Braille, large print, audio, and electronic formats.