

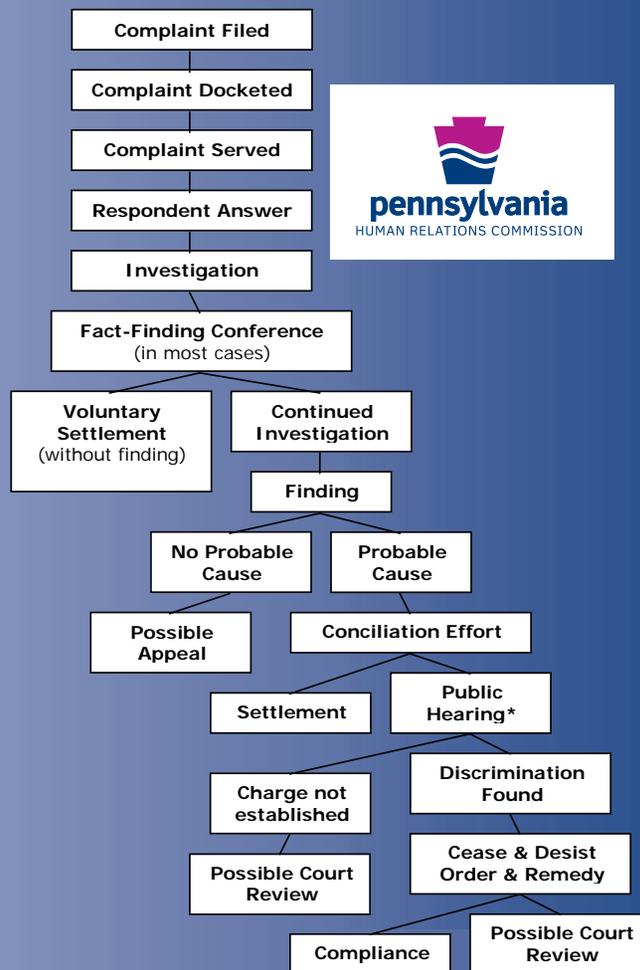
THE PUBLIC HEARING

If there is no settlement after a probable cause finding, PHRC may hold a public hearing. At a hearing, both sides present testimony under oath. The commission will then review the record, render a decision and issue a legally enforceable order. This order may be appealed to Commonwealth Court.

ACCESSIBILITY & LANGUAGE TRANSLATION

If you require accommodation for a disability, have questions about accessibility, or require language translation, please contact the regional office that serves you (listed below) for assistance with any proceeding.

The Complaint Process



Illegal Discrimination & Your Civil Rights: How to file a discrimination complaint in Pennsylvania

File complaints with the regional office serving your county:

Harrisburg Regional Office • Riverfront Office Ctr., 5th Floor • 1101-1125 S. Front St., Harrisburg, PA 17104 • 717.787.9780 • serves Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Bradford, Cambria, Carbon, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mifflin, Monroe, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Pike, Schuylkill, Snyder, Somerset, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne, Wyoming and York counties

Philadelphia Regional Office • 110 N. 8th St. Suite 501 • Philadelphia, PA 19107 • 215.560.2496 • serves Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties

Pittsburgh Regional Office • 301 5th Ave., Suite 390, Piatt Place • Pittsburgh, PA 15222 • 412.565.5395 • serves Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Greene, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, Warren, Washington and Westmoreland counties

*In certain housing cases, parties can elect court action.

General inquiries:

• PA Human Relations Commission •
 Central Office • 301 Chestnut St., Suite 300
 • Harrisburg, PA 17101 • 717.787-4410 •



The Complaint Process

THE LAW

The PA Human Relations Commission enforces Pennsylvania's anti-discrimination laws.

In general, the PA Human Relations Act makes it unlawful in employment to discharge, refuse to hire, refuse to contract with certain independent contractors, or otherwise discriminate in any term or condition of employment because of race, color, religion, ancestry, age (40 and above), sex, national origin, non-job-related disability, association with a person with a disability or because a person holds a high school diploma based on a GED.

In housing, commercial property and public accommodation, it is unlawful to refuse or deny housing or public accommodation, or to make different conditions because of a person's race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, association with a person with a disability, use of a guide or support animal due to blindness, deafness or physical disability, or because the user is a handler or trainer of such animals.

In housing and commercial property cases, a person's age and familial status are also protected.

PA Law also protects you from retaliation. This means no one is allowed to take any action (such as firing or eviction) against you for filing a complaint, opposing unlawful activity OR helping with an investigation.

THE COMPLAINT

If you believe you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination, you may discuss your concerns with a PHRC staff member

who will answer your questions and help you decide whether you should file a complaint.

Our staff can help you draft your complaint and prepare it for your verified signature. Before you sign the complaint, make sure it is an accurate account of what happened to you, to the best of your knowledge and belief.

You must file your complaint within 180 days of the alleged act of discrimination, unless you are able to convince the commission you are legally justified in not filing within this period.

You have the right to be represented by a private attorney, but it is not required. Your complaint will be assigned a case number and sent to the respondent (the person or company named in your complaint as responsible) within 30 days after it is docketed. The respondent will be required to answer your complaint within 30 days of the date it was received and provide you with a copy of their answer.

THE INVESTIGATION

PHRC staff will investigate. Please remember to:

- Give all relevant facts and details to your investigator, including names, dates and addresses.
- Answer all questions you are asked, even if you think the answer might weaken your complaint.
- Provide any witnesses or documents, such as a payroll slip or rent receipt, which may substantiate your charges.
- Inform your investigator of any change in your address or phone number, or those of your attorney.

PHRC has the power to subpoena relevant witnesses or documents if it becomes necessary to do so.

FACT-FINDING CONFERENCES & FURTHER INVESTIGATION

PHRC often holds a Fact-Finding Conference at which you and the respondent present evidence and documents. This is designed to speed up the investigation and possibly help reach a fair settlement of your complaint.

A Fact-Finding Conference may not be held in your case for any of these reasons:

- The case settles.
- Either party refuses to participate.
- The investigator determines a conference is not necessary based on the circumstances.

At a conference, the investigator interviews the respondent and any other relevant witnesses, and reviews all pertinent records and documents. You may be asked to clarify your complaint in light of new information, or respond to the respondent's answers. If you learn or remember additional information, notify your investigator immediately.

If your complaint is not resolved at the Fact-Finding Conference, or if one is not held, the investigation will continue.

RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The investigation may conclude with a finding of **no probable cause** to credit the allegations or **probable cause**. PHRC may close the case after a no probable cause finding, a voluntary settlement prior to a finding, a court filing, lack of jurisdiction or other administrative reason.

if PHRC dismisses your case, you will be notified by mail and informed of your appeal rights. If your complaint has not been dismissed or resolved one year after it was filed, you can pursue court action in a Court of Common Pleas.

THE CONCILIATION

If the investigation finds probable cause, PHRC will attempt to settle the complaint as soon as possible by asking the respondent to, 1) stop the specific discriminatory act named in the complaint, and 2) take whatever corrective actions necessary to correct the discrimination found in the investigation.