

## Discrimination Prohibited

Discrimination means treating a person differently than another because of a particular characteristic, such as skin color, gender, religion, or disability. The Human Relations Commission was created by City Ordinance to enforce laws of equal opportunity for all Sioux Falls residents and visitors. (Revised Ordinances, Chapter 21-1/2) The Human Relations Commission is also a Fair Employment Practice Agency, which contracts with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to assist in the enforcement of federal employment discrimination.

## Types of Unlawful Discrimination

Discrimination is prohibited under Sioux Falls ordinance, state statute, and/or federal employment laws, in the following areas:

- Employment
- Housing
- Public accommodations
- Financial institutions and insurance companies
- Public services
- Labor organizations

## Who is Protected from Discrimination?

All Sioux Falls residents and visitors are protected from discrimination based on his or her:

- Age: 40 years of age or older (federal law)
- Ancestry
- Color
- Creed
- Disability

- Familial status: *Presence of children under the age of 18, pregnant, or in the process of securing legal custody of a minor (housing only)*
- Marital status
- National origin
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Participation in a protected activity: *Retaliation for filing a charge, testifying, or assisting in the observance and support of City Ordinance, Ch. 21-1/2.*

## How Does the Human Relations Commission Enforce the Law?

The Commission enforces the law by investigating and resolving allegations of illegal discrimination. The role of the Commission is one of being a neutral fact finder. The Commission does not charge a fee for its services.

The authority of the Sioux Falls Human Relations Commission extends to all individuals, businesses, organizations, and corporations within the boundaries of the City of Sioux Falls except complaints against the county, state, or federal government.

## The Complaint Process

An individual who believes that he or she has been discriminated against should contact the Commission office to file a complaint.

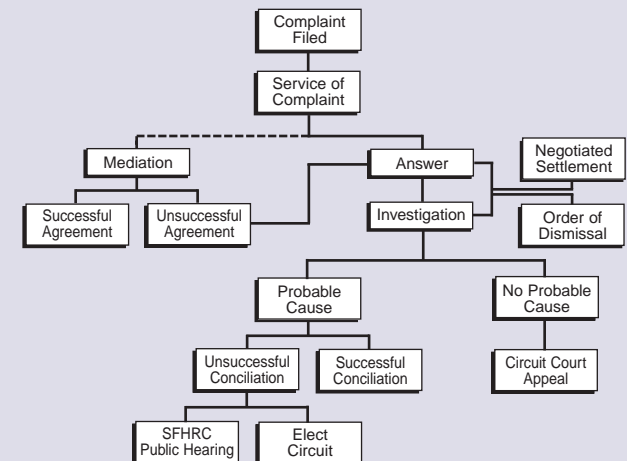
By ordinance, all charges must be filed within six months (180 days) from the alleged unfair discriminatory practice.

If the Commission has jurisdiction in the matter, a complaint is written and signed by the individual(s) alleging discrimination. All complaints are treated in a confidential manner. Mediation is offered as a means of resolution in each charge of discrimination (see “Mediation” section). The investigation is conducted by a staff investigator who collects information from those involved in the complaint.

At any time in the process, the charging party may agree to settle or withdraw his or her complaint.

If information gathered suggests that there is probable cause to conclude that illegal discrimination had occurred, the staff investigator will attempt to assist the parties to resolve the matter through conciliation. If conciliation is not possible, the complaint may be set for public hearing, which will result in the issuance of a legal and binding decision.

## COMPLAINT PROCESS



# Sioux Falls HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

## Mediation

Mediation is offered as an alternative to the traditional investigative or litigation process. Mediation is an informal process in which the Commission provides a neutral third party to assist the opposing parties in reaching a voluntary, negotiated resolution of a charge of discrimination. Mediation gives the parties the opportunity to discuss the issues raised in the charge, clear up misunderstandings, determine the underlying interests or concerns, find areas of agreement, and, ultimately, to incorporate those areas of agreements into resolutions. A mediator does not resolve the charge or impose a decision on the parties. Instead, the mediator helps the parties to agree on a mutually-acceptable resolution. Information disclosed during mediation is strictly confidential. If either party declines to participate in mediation, the charge will be processed through the traditional investigative or litigation process.

## Community Outreach/ Educational Services

If you are an employee, an employer, the manager or operator of a business, or the provider of a service, the Commission provides a variety of educational programs and counseling.

Commission staff will make referrals to appropriate agencies for those individuals the Commission is unable to serve.

If you are interested in learning more about the law and how you can help eliminate discrimination in Sioux Falls, the Commission will provide speakers and other educational materials for any group.

## Contact Information

The Commission is located on the second floor of City Hall on the corner of Ninth Street and Dakota Avenue in Sioux Falls.

### Sioux Falls Human Relations Commission

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justice, equity,  
opportunity,  
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