
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2024

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2023



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Iowa Civil Rights Commission

Purpose and History

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission is charged with enforcing Iowa's [Civil Rights Act of 1965](#). Under contracts with the federal government, the Commission is also required to assist in enforcement of housing and employment discrimination laws. The Act prohibits discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, credit, public accommodation, and education. Discrimination based on race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, physical disability, mental disability, retaliation (for filing a discrimination complaint), age (in employment and credit only), familial status (in housing and credit only), and marital status (in credit only) is prohibited. The statute of limitations for filing a complaint with the Commission is 300 days from the date of the last discriminatory act.

The purpose of the Commission is to function as a neutral, fact-finding administrative agency that enforces Iowa's Civil Rights Act of 1965. The Commission addresses discrimination by providing case resolution through intake, screening, mediation, investigation, conciliation, and public hearings; conducting statewide public education and training programs to prevent and respond to discrimination; and performing tests to determine the existence or extent of discrimination in Iowa.

Employment is the largest area of complaints filed, followed by housing and accommodation. Retaliation, disability, race, and sex are the most frequently named bases (personal characteristics) for discrimination in non-housing cases. Disability and race are the most frequently named bases for discrimination in housing cases.

In regard to housing, testing by the Commission helps to ensure that Iowa landlords are aware of their rights and responsibilities under fair housing laws. Housing cases are primarily resolved through settlements that include training of the landlords and an end to the discriminatory policy.

State Government Alignment

Under 2023 Iowa Acts, [Senate File 514](#) (State Government Alignment Act), the Commission was moved under the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL). The Commission was instructed to utilize investigators already employed by the DIAL to conduct the initial intake and screening of complaints to aid in improving case response times.

Funding

Funding for the Commission varies annually. Funding is provided by approximately 50.0% General Fund appropriations and 50.0% federal funds. The Commission contracts with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Commission receives federal funding for approximately 900 EEOC cases per year and 130 HUD cases per year.

More Information

Iowa Civil Rights Commission: icrc.iowa.gov
LSA Staff Contact: Xavier Leonard (515.725.0509) xavier.leonard@legis.iowa.gov

The Commission employs volunteer attorneys statewide to conduct mediation. More than 20 Iowa lawyers volunteer to help the Commission resolve complaints through alternative dispute resolution.

Local Commissions

The Commission partners with local human rights and civil rights commissions to provide education, shared office space for mediation of cases, the use of volunteers, and website links. Complaints are cross-filed between the State and local agencies, and the Commission has contracts with local agencies to process and investigate cases. The Commission's data system ensures that cases that are cross-filed at the federal, State, and local level are investigated by only one agency.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapters [216](#), [729](#), and [729A](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [161](#)

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