

216.5 Powers and duties.

The commission shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To prescribe the duties of a director and appoint and prescribe the duties of such investigators and other employees and agents as the commission shall deem necessary for the enforcement of [this chapter](#).
2. To receive, investigate, mediate, and finally determine the merits of complaints alleging unfair or discriminatory practices.
3. To investigate and study the existence, character, causes, and extent of discrimination in public accommodations, employment, apprenticeship programs, on-the-job training programs, vocational schools, career and technical education programs, credit practices, and housing in this state and to attempt the elimination of such discrimination by education and conciliation.
4. To seek a temporary injunction against a respondent when it appears that a complainant may suffer irreparable injury as a result of an alleged violation of [this chapter](#). A temporary injunction may only be issued ex parte, if the complaint filed with the commission alleges discrimination in housing. In all other cases a temporary injunction may be issued only after the respondent has been notified and afforded the opportunity to be heard.
5. To hold hearings upon any complaint made against a person, an employer, an employment agency, or a labor organization, or the employees or members thereof, to subpoena witnesses and compel their attendance at such hearings, to administer oaths and take the testimony of any person under oath, and to compel such person, employer, employment agency, or labor organization, or employees or members thereof to produce for examination any books and papers relating to any matter involved in such complaint. The commission shall issue subpoenas for witnesses in the same manner and for the same purposes on behalf of the respondent upon the respondent's request. Such hearings may be held by the commission, by any commissioner, or by any hearing examiner appointed by the commission. If a witness either fails or refuses to obey a subpoena issued by the commission, the commission may petition the district court having jurisdiction for issuance of a subpoena and the court shall in a proper case issue the subpoena. Refusal to obey such subpoena shall be subject to punishment for contempt.
6. To issue such publications and reports of investigations and research as in the judgment of the commission shall tend to promote goodwill among the various racial, religious, and ethnic groups of the state and which shall tend to minimize or eliminate discrimination in public accommodations, employment, apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs, vocational schools, career and technical education programs, or housing because of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, ancestry, or disability.
7. To prepare and transmit to the governor and to the general assembly from time to time, but not less often than once each year, reports describing its proceedings, investigations, hearings conducted and the outcome thereof, decisions rendered, and the other work performed by the commission.
8. To make recommendations to the general assembly for such further legislation concerning discrimination because of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, ancestry, or disability as it may deem necessary and desirable.
9. To cooperate, within the limits of any appropriations made for its operation, with other agencies or organizations, both public and private, whose purposes are consistent with those of [this chapter](#), and in the planning and conducting of programs designed to eliminate racial, religious, cultural, and intergroup tensions.
10. To adopt, publish, amend, and rescind commission rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) consistent with and necessary for the enforcement of [this chapter](#).
11. To receive, administer, dispense and account for any funds that may be voluntarily contributed to the commission and any grants that may be awarded the commission for furthering the purposes of [this chapter](#).

12. To defer a complaint to a local civil rights commission under commission rules promulgated pursuant to [chapter 17A](#).

13. To issue subpoenas and order discovery as provided by [this section](#) in aid of investigations and hearings of alleged unfair or discriminatory housing or real property practices. The subpoenas and discovery may be ordered to the same extent and are subject to the same limitations as subpoenas and discovery in a civil action in district court.

14. To defer proceedings and refer a complaint to a local commission that has been recognized by the United States department of housing and urban development as having adopted ordinances providing fair housing rights and remedies that are substantially equivalent to those granted under federal law.

15. To utilize volunteers to aid in the conduct of the commission's business including case processing functions such as intake, screening, investigation, and mediation.

[C66, 71, §105A.5; C73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §601A.5]

[86 Acts, ch 1245, §1991](#); [91 Acts, ch 184, §2](#)

C93, §216.5

[95 Acts, ch 129, §3, 4](#); [2007 Acts, ch 191, §2](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1108, §19](#); [2019 Acts, ch 59, §60](#)