

**216.17A Civil proceedings — housing.**

1. *a.* If timely election is made under [section 216.16A, subsection 1](#), the commission shall authorize, and not later than thirty days after the election is made, the attorney general shall file a civil action on behalf of the aggrieved person in a district court seeking relief.

*b.* Venue for an action under [this section](#) is in the county in which the respondent resides or has its principal place of business, or in the county in which the alleged discriminatory housing or real estate practice occurred.

*c.* An aggrieved person may intervene in the action.

*d.* If the district court finds that a discriminatory housing or real estate practice has occurred or is about to occur, the district court may grant as relief any relief that a court may grant in a civil action under [subsection 6](#).

*e.* If monetary relief is sought for the benefit of an aggrieved person who does not intervene in the civil action, the district court shall not award the monetary relief if that aggrieved person has not complied with discovery orders entered by the district court.

2. A commission order under [section 216.15A, subsection 11](#), and a commission order that has been substantially affirmed by judicial review, do not affect a contract, sale, encumbrance, or lease that was consummated before the commission issued the order and involved a bona fide purchaser, encumbrancer, or tenant who did not have actual notice of the charge issued under [this chapter](#).

3. If the commission issues an order with respect to a discriminatory housing practice that occurred in the course of a business subject to a licensing or regulation by a governmental agency, the commission, not later than thirty days after the date of issuance of the order, shall do all of the following:

*a.* Send copies of the findings and the order to the governmental agency.

*b.* Recommend to the governmental agency appropriate disciplinary action.

4. If the commission issues an order against a respondent against whom another order was issued within the preceding five years under [section 216.15A, subsection 11](#), the commission shall send a copy of each order issued under that section to the attorney general.

5. On application by a person alleging a discriminatory housing practice or by a person against whom a discriminatory practice is alleged, the district court may appoint an attorney for the person.

6. In an action under [subsection 1](#) and [section 216.16A, subsection 2](#), if the district court finds that a discriminatory housing or real estate practice has occurred or is about to occur, the district court may award or issue to the plaintiff one or more of the following:

*a.* Actual and punitive damages.

*b.* Reasonable attorney's fees.

*c.* Court costs.

*d.* Subject to [subsection 7](#), any permanent or temporary injunction, temporary restraining order, or other order, including an order enjoining the defendant from engaging in the practice or ordering appropriate affirmative action.

7. Relief granted under [this section](#) does not affect a contract, sale, encumbrance, or lease that was consummated before the granting of the relief and involved a bona fide purchaser, encumbrancer, or tenant who did not have actual notice of the filing of a complaint under [this chapter](#) or a civil action under [this section](#).

8. *a.* On the request of the commission, the attorney general may intervene in an action under [section 216.16A, subsection 2](#), if the commission certifies that the case is of general public importance.

*b.* The attorney general may obtain the same relief available to the attorney general under [subsection 9](#).

9. *a.* On the request of the commission, the attorney general may file a civil action in district court for appropriate relief if the commission has reasonable cause to believe that any of the following applies:

(1) A person is engaged in a pattern or practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of any housing right granted by [this chapter](#).

(2) A person has been denied any housing right granted by [this chapter](#) and that denial raises an issue of general public importance.

b. In an action under [this subsection](#) and [subsection 8](#), the district court may do any of the following:

(1) Order preventive relief, including a permanent or temporary injunction, restraining order, or other order against the person responsible for a violation of housing rights as necessary to assure the full enjoyment of the housing rights granted by [this chapter](#).

(2) Order another appropriate relief, including the awarding of monetary damages, reasonable attorney's fees, and court costs.

(3) To vindicate the public interest, assess a civil penalty against the respondent in an amount that does not exceed any of the following:

(a) Fifty thousand dollars for a first violation.

(b) One hundred thousand dollars for a second or subsequent violation.

c. A person may intervene in an action under [this section](#) if the person is any of the following:

(1) An aggrieved person to the discriminatory housing or real estate practice.

(2) A party to a mediation agreement concerning the discriminatory housing or real estate practice.

10. The attorney general, on behalf of the commission or other party at whose request a subpoena is issued, may enforce the subpoena in appropriate proceedings in district court.

11. A court in a civil action brought under [this section](#) or the commission in an administrative hearing under [section 216.15A, subsection 11](#), may award reasonable attorney's fees to the prevailing party and assess court costs against the nonprevailing party.

[91 Acts, ch 184, §11](#)

[CS91, §601A.17A](#)

[92 Acts, ch 1129, §16, 17](#)

[C93, §216.17A](#)

[95 Acts, ch 129, §15 – 17](#)

Referred to in [§216.15A, 216.16A](#)