

Information about the Madison Equal Opportunities Division

Ordinance Coverage

Employment*

“Denial of equal opportunity in employment deprives the community of the fullest productive capacity of those of its members so discriminated against and denies them the sufficiency of earnings necessary to maintain the standards of living consistent with their abilities and talents.”

Section 39.03(1), Madison General Ordinances

The Equal Opportunities Ordinance prohibits discrimination by employers in accepting applications, hiring, tenure, general conditions and privileges of employment and discharge.

Labor unions may not discriminate against any member or applicant for membership.

Employment agencies may not discriminate in referrals for employment.

Housing*

“Denial of equal opportunity in housing compels individuals and families who are discriminated against to live in dwellings below the standards to which they are entitled.”

Section 39.03(1), Madison General Ordinances

All housing in Madison that is placed on the market for sale or rent must be offered to anyone without regard to a person’s membership in a protected class. The housing section of the Ordinance applies to landlords, property owners, Realtors and agents of the owner, and persons including neighbors. Eviction, failure to renew a lease, and terms and conditions of housing are covered.

Publishing or printing any communication that suggests discriminatory restrictions for housing is also unlawful.

The Ordinance includes requirements that multi-family dwellings intended for first occupancy after March 13, 1991 must include certain design features to allow units to be adaptable for persons with disabilities.

Exceptions are included in the Ordinance:

1. The selection of roommates to share a dwelling unit is not covered by the Ordinance.**
2. Housing for older persons (as defined by the Ordinance) may exclude children.

Public Accommodations*

“Denial of equal opportunity to public accommodations subjects those discriminated against to embarrassment and creates distress and unrest within the community.”

Section 39.03(1), Madison General Ordinances

Public places of accommodation or amusement may not charge a higher price for the use of facilities or deny access to facilities because of someone’s membership in a protected class.

**It is prohibited to refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services for persons with disabilities.*

***It should be noted that the prohibition on discriminatory advertising still applies to roommate selection.*

It is unlawful to advertise or distribute any communication to the effect that any public place of accommodation does discriminate.

All persons are entitled to full and equal enjoyment of places of public accommodations regardless of membership in any of the protected classes.

Public places of accommodation include, but are not limited to, hotels, motels, restaurants, taverns, stores, barber and beauty shops, and other business establishments that offer a service to the general public.

Special services, rates or benefits may be provided to any person 50 years old or older.

Organizations that sell family memberships must provide family rates to domestic partners (unmarried, gay and lesbian couples that meet certain Ordinance requirements).

Exempted are facilities reasonably intended, arranged or designed for use by one sex, such as restrooms.

Credit

“Denial of equal opportunities to credit worthy customers deprives them of the right to secure desired goods and services.”

Section 39.03(1), Madison General Ordinances

It is unlawful to discriminate against any person in regard to invitations to apply for credit, applications for credit, extension of credit or credit sales because of a person’s membership in a protected class as previously listed.

Creditors may consider whether a person’s source of income is reliable and sufficient to repay a loan.

The EOD does not process complaints against City agencies if the State of Wisconsin’s Equal Rights Division has jurisdiction. To find out if the EOD can accept a complaint, call the EOD at (608) 266-4910, TTY (866) 704-2314 or e-mail to dcr@cityofmadison.com.

Agency Administration

The Ordinance provides for a 13 member Commission made up of volunteers who are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council. Daily operations are carried out by agency staff who are City employees.

Educational/Outreach Services

At no charge, the Division provides training and outreach services to the community. Prevention is always preferable to litigation. The EOD is committed to reaching advocacy agencies/groups, community-based organizations, employers, property owners and managers, civic groups and individuals through its community education and outreach services.

By providing training geared toward eliminating or reducing discrimination, we hope to increase the awareness of members of the community and businesses. A public more aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding equal opportunities and civil rights is the first step in reducing occurrences of discrimination. Training is geared to the needs of groups and organizations. Topics that might be covered include: sexual and general harassment; fair housing, diversity, minimum wage requirements and fair employment practices.

Our outreach efforts include dissemination of information through booths at various community events, meetings and forums; as well as technical assistance to employers, housing providers, places of public accommodations and individuals.

Staff members serve as liaisons to local community groups, organizations and boards to enhance our outreach efforts.

Internet Access

Information about the EOD may be obtained at www.cityofmadison.com/dcr.

You may send e-mail to dcr@cityofmadison.com.

If you send an e-mail request, information and a complaint of discrimination form will be sent to you.

Please note: If you need an accommodation in order to access this service, please contact the Equal Opportunities Division. Also, if you need materials in Braille, large print or an alternate format, please contact our office:

(608) 266-4910 (Voice)
(866) 704-2314 (TTY/Textnet)
(608) 266-6514 (FAX)

DCR
DCR

City of Madison Department of Civil Rights

DCR

Equal Opportunities Division

David J. Cieslewicz, Mayor
Lucía Nuñez, Director
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Rm. 523
Madison, Wisconsin 53703-3346
(608) 266-4910 (Voice)
(866) 704-2314 (TTY/Textnet)
(608) 266-6514 (FAX)
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MISSION

Equal Opportunities Division



The City of Madison believes that discrimination is wrong and that it must be eliminated. Therefore, the EOD is charged with the mission of enabling individuals to live and work free of discrimination.

The EOD is the primary City agency that has the responsibility for the remedy of discrimination complaints brought by individuals. Any remedy pursued by the EOD will be based on the enforcement authority of the Equal Opportunities Ordinance which provides a fair and impartial process for resolving charges of discrimination.

The EOD also provides community education and technical assistance in order for people to know and understand their rights and responsibilities under the law.

David J. Cieslewicz
Mayor, City of Madison

Lucía Nuñez
Director

The Equal Opportunities Ordinance

In 1963 the Madison Common Council adopted an Equal Opportunities Ordinance which prohibits discrimination in housing, employment, the denial of credit and in the use of public accommodations and City facilities. Coverage includes:

- ◆ sex
- ◆ age
- ◆ race
- ◆ color
- ◆ religion
- ◆ arrest record
- ◆ marital status
- ◆ familial status*
- ◆ the fact that you are a student
- ◆ national origin or ancestry
- ◆ physical appearance
- ◆ handicap/disability
- ◆ domestic partners**
- ◆ sexual orientation
- ◆ conviction record
- ◆ political beliefs
- ◆ source of income
- ◆ less than honorable discharge from the military
- ◆ refusal to disclose Social Security Number***

The Ordinance also provides protection against retaliation for a person who files a complaint or provides testimony or evidence in regard to a complaint.

*covered only in regard to housing

**covered only regarding memberships in public accommodations

***covered only in regard to rental housing and public accommodations

Filing a Complaint

If you believe you have been discriminated against you may be able to file a complaint with the Equal Opportunities Division (210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Room 523, Madison).

The complaint must meet certain requirements:

1. Housing complaints must have occurred within one year. Minimum wage complaints must have occurred within two years. All other complaints must have occurred within 300 days.
2. The housing, business or individual you wish to file your complaint against must be located within the Madison City limits (there are exceptions regarding claims under the minimum wage ordinance).
3. Your complaint must state a prima facie case of discrimination (a legal standard established by law).

It is recommended that you call for an appointment (608.266.4910, TTY 866.704.2314) or you may call to have a complaint form mailed to you.