



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

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## Filing A Charge of Discrimination

If you believe that you have been discriminated against at work because of your race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information, you can file a **Charge of Discrimination**. All of the laws enforced by EEOC, except for the Equal Pay Act, require you to file a Charge of Discrimination with us before you can [file a job discrimination lawsuit](#) against your employer. In addition, an individual, organization, or agency may file a charge on behalf of another person in order to protect the aggrieved person's identity. There are [time limits](#) for filing a charge.

*Note:* Federal employees and job applicants have similar protections, but a [different complaint process](#).

If you file a charge, you may be asked to try to settle the dispute through [mediation](#). Mediation is an informal and confidential way to resolve disputes with the help of a neutral mediator. If the case is not sent to mediation, or if mediation doesn't resolve the problem, the charge will be given to an investigator.

If an investigation finds no violation of the law, you will be given a Notice of Right to Sue. This notice gives you permission to file suit in a court of law. If a violation is found, we will attempt to reach a voluntary settlement with the employer. If we cannot reach a settlement, your case will be referred to our legal staff (or the Department of Justice in certain cases), who will decide whether or not the agency should file a lawsuit. If we decide not to file a lawsuit, we will give you a Notice of Right to Sue.

In some cases, if a charge appears to have little chance of success, or if it is something that we don't have the authority to investigate, we may dismiss the charge without doing an investigation or offering mediation.

Many states and local jurisdictions have their own anti-discrimination laws, and agencies responsible for enforcing those laws ([Fair Employment Practices Agencies](#), or FEPAs). If you file a charge with a FEPA, it will automatically be "dual-filed" with EEOC if federal laws apply. You do not need to file with both agencies.

- [How to File a Charge](#)
- [EEOC's Charge Handling Process](#)
- [Confidentiality](#)
- [Mediation](#)
- [Remedies](#)
- [Existing Charges](#)