

FORT DODGE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION COMPLAINT PROCESS

To: Respondent

You have been served with a charge of discrimination. The local Human Rights Commission, acting under City and County ordinances, is empowered to receive and investigate complaints alleging discrimination. The process is enumerated below.

1. You must submit a position statement within 15 days from receipt of notice of complaint. A position statement is your response to the allegations made in the complaint and could include documents and/or witness statements to support your actions.
2. The local commission is an investigating, fact-finding agency. The case will be turned over to three (3) commission members and the Director of the agency. They will be known as the investigating, fact-finding committee. Their role is that of neutral fact-finders. They will not take sides during the investigation process.
3. You have a right to be represented by an attorney, but it is not mandatory; however, it would be at your own cost.
4. Mediation is sometimes attempted to settle the case before the investigation is completed. This is a voluntary process which carries no-fault terms, should a settlement be negotiated.
5. The investigating, fact-finding committee may require the parties to appear at a fact-finding hearing. The purpose of this hearing is to gather as much information as possible through witnesses, both the Respondent and Complainant and all documents which you believe would be pertinent to your case when you meet with the fact-finding committee at the hearing.
6. After the fact-finding hearing the committee will present a summary report to the Commission with either a Probable Cause or a No Probable Cause recommendation.
7. In the event of a no probable cause decision the complainant will be given the opportunity to petition the Commission, in writing, for reopening of the case. If the complainant petitions, you will be given the opportunity to contest or give a reason why the case should not be reopened. The Commission will make the decision whether to reopen the case or not. Upon reinvestigation, if probable cause is found we would proceed with the procedures in item 8.
8. If there is a finding of Probable Cause the investigating, fact-finding committee will be appointed to act as a conciliation committee, whose function is to seek agreement between the parties on a remedy. If the conciliation is a success the case is closed. If the conciliation should fail the next step is a public hearing.
9. A public hearing is held after conciliation efforts have failed. The case will be held

before a hearing officer. The City Attorney will present the complainant's case on behalf of the commission. You will have the opportunity to have an attorney of your choice present your case. You may present documents and/or witnesses to further support your case. Subsequent to the hearing, the hearing officer will present his findings of facts and conclusions to the commission, which will make a final decision.

If you have further questions please feel free to contact the Human Rights Office at the Municipal Building, 819 First Avenue South, Fort Dodge, Iowa, 50501, or call (515) 576-2201.