A Message from
Illinois Attorney General

LISA MADIGAN

Equality is an essential principle of our nation and the State of Illinois, requiring fair and equal treatment, rights and opportunities for every individual.

Our state and federal laws guarantee Illinois residents the right to live free of unlawful discrimination based on race, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and other protected characteristics. I am committed to the work of upholding these rights and fighting for equality for all Illinois residents.

My office's Civil Rights Bureau works with local, state and federal agencies, as well as with civil rights and community groups, to identify patterns and practices of discrimination. The bureau vigorously enforces the law to prohibit discrimination and ensure equality.

Please review this brochure to learn more about unlawful discrimination and how my office defends your rights. For additional information, please visit our website at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov.

Lisa Madigan
Attorney General

Filing a Complaint

If you believe you have been a victim of unlawful discrimination, you may file a complaint by:

1. Calling the Civil Rights Bureau at **1-877-581-3692**;

2. Filling out a complaint form on the Illinois Attorney General's website (http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/civrights_compform.pdf) and sending it by e-mail or printing and mailing it to the Civil Rights Bureau at **100 W. Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60601** or faxing it to **(312) 814-3212**; or

3. Filling out a complaint form in-person at **100 W. Randolph St., 11th Floor, Chicago, IL 60601**.

NOTE: The Illinois Attorney General represents the People of the State of Illinois, not the individual making a complaint. Filing a complaint with the Illinois Attorney General is not a substitute for bringing an individual lawsuit in court, and it does not affect any of the filing deadlines or other administrative prerequisites for filing a lawsuit in court or with other government agencies.

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois. 06/2016
This material is available in alternate format upon request.

CIVIL RIGHTS BUREAU

DEFENDING YOUR RIGHTS

LISA MADIGAN
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

What is discrimination in housing?

It is a civil rights violation for an owner, real estate agent or any person involved in a housing transaction to discriminate on the basis of a protected category.* Examples include:

- Refusing to rent, sell, finance or insure housing.
- Changing the terms or conditions of a housing transaction.
- Refusing to rent to families with children.
- Using advertisements expressing intent to unlawfully discriminate.

It is a civil rights violation to coerce, intimidate, threaten or interfere with any person's exercise of his or her civil rights in housing.

What is discrimination in employment?

It is a civil rights violation for any employer, employment agency or labor organization to discriminate in hiring or the terms and conditions of employment on the basis of a protected category.* Examples include:

- Failing or refusing to hire or promote.
- Discharging or demoting.
- Providing different pay or benefits.
- Failing to provide a reasonable accommodation for pregnant employees.
- Segregating jobs or work sites.
- Instituting "English-only" workplace policies.

Retaliation is a civil rights violation. Employers cannot retaliate by punishing employees who complain of discrimination or sexual harassment or cooperate in an investigation.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwanted, deliberate or repeated sexual conduct. Illinois law prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace and in education, including elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and higher education institutions.

What is discrimination in public accommodations?

It is a civil rights violation for any person in a protected category* to be denied the full and equal enjoyment of a place of public accommodation for a discriminatory reason.

Public accommodations include, but are not limited to: hotels, restaurants, theaters, retail stores, laundromats, banks, hospitals, museums, parks, gyms and the offices of an accountant or lawyer.

What is discrimination by financial institutions?

It is a civil rights violation for banks, credit unions, insurance companies, mortgage banking companies and savings and loan associations to deny or modify services or terms on the basis of unlawful discrimination. Examples include:

- Requiring a greater down payment or charging a higher interest rate than is usual.
- Denying or changing the loan terms without fully considering the income of each person who would be liable for repayment.
- Refusing to issue a credit card to an otherwise eligible applicant.

What does the Civil Rights Bureau do?

The Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau enforces civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination, including all rights existing under constitutional, statutory, administrative and common law. The bureau also advocates for legislation to strengthen the laws and participates in community outreach programs.

The bureau investigates complaints of "pattern and practice" discrimination—discrimination that is the standard policy or operating procedure rather than an isolated incident—in housing, public accommodations, employment and financial matters. Sexual harassment in elementary, secondary and higher education is also prohibited.

The bureau:

- Reviews and responds to complaints involving civil rights issues;
- Conducts investigations of possible civil rights violations based upon a pattern or practice of discrimination;
- Files lawsuits if necessary; and
- Monitors and proposes legislation and administrative rules involving civil rights.

Civil Rights Bureau
Office of the Attorney General
James R. Thompson Center, 11th floor
100 W. Randolph St.
Chicago, IL 60601
1-877-581-3692

*Protected categories include: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age (40 and above), physical or mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation (including gender-related identity), order of protection status, unfavorable discharge from military service and military status. Unlawful discrimination in employment also includes discrimination based on citizenship status and arrest record. In housing, discrimination on the basis of familial status is also prohibited.