

# HOW TO File a Complaint with the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights



## ABOUT DCR

The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR) is the state agency charged with enforcing New Jersey's civil rights laws, including the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD) and the New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA). The mission of DCR is to protect the people of New Jersey from discrimination and bias-based harassment in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

The LAD prohibits discrimination based on actual or perceived race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability and other protected characteristics.

This law applies to employment, housing, and places of public accommodation (places open to the public, such as businesses, restaurants, schools, summer camps, medical providers, government offices and agencies, etc.).

## HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT

- 1** In order to file a complaint with DCR, you must first submit an intake form. You can submit the intake form:
  - ▶ Online by creating an account and using the NJ Bias Investigation Access System (NJBIAS) at [NJCivilRights.gov](http://NJCivilRights.gov)
  - ▶ By calling 1.833.NJDCR4U and asking a DCR receptionist to assist you in filling out the form on the NJ Bias Investigation Access System (NJBIAS)
- 2** A DCR investigator will contact you to conduct an intake interview to determine whether DCR has jurisdiction over your complaint (i.e., whether you are alleging a violation of the LAD that occurred within the past 180 days and if they can help).
  - ▶ If so, DCR will prepare a verified complaint form for your signature. Once you sign the verified complaint, you are known as the Complainant.
- 3** DCR will serve your complaint on the Respondent—the party that may have violated your civil rights. The Respondent has a chance to respond with their version of events.
- 4** DCR then conducts an investigation, which may include:
  - ▶ Interviews with you, the Respondent, and witnesses
  - ▶ Review of relevant documents, photos, video recordings
  - ▶ It is important that you preserve all relevant evidence, including electronically stored evidence such as text and email messages, until your case has concluded.

At the end of the investigation, DCR will determine whether there is probable cause to believe a violation of the law occurred.

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION

DCR also offers free dispute resolution services to parties who wish to resolve the complaint on mutually agreeable terms. A voluntary resolution can be negotiated at any time during the complaint or investigation process.



VOICE  
HOTLINE **1.833.NJDCR4U**  
(653-2748)

RELAY  
SERVICE **711**

DCR  
EMAIL **NJDCR4U@NJCivilRights.gov**



[www.NJCivilRights.gov](http://www.NJCivilRights.gov)

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