



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

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Maryland Commission on Civil Rights & Office of the Attorney General Publish *Know Your Rights: A Guide to Understanding and Protecting Your Rights*

BALTIMORE, MD – Maryland Commission on Civil Rights Executive Director Cleveland L. Horton II and Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown announce the publication of ***Know Your Rights: A Guide to Understanding and Protecting Your Rights*** (available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#)). This 37-page resource is designed to give Marylanders critical information about how Maryland law protects their civil rights in a number of different areas:

- Protections against discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, health services, and education;
- The rights of persons with disabilities, immigrants, persons with limited English proficiency, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community; and
- Freedom from hate crimes, and other acts of hate and bias.

Authored jointly by the [Maryland Commission on Civil Rights](#) (“MCCR”) and the [Office of the Attorney General’s](#) (“OAG”) [Civil Rights Division](#) (“CRD”), this booklet combats misinformation about the continuing force of civil rights protections. While federal policy changes create uncertainty and confusion, Maryland law continues to provide robust protections against discrimination while many federal provisions against discrimination remain in effect. This *Know Your Rights* guide was designed to be a **useful tool for Marylanders to better understand their legal rights under the law, as well as information on where they can go should they believe their rights have been violated.**

“In these challenging times, when the fabric of our communities, cities, states, and country is being tested, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights stands as a beacon of hope and a shield of justice,” said **MCCR Executive Director Horton**. “This *Know Your Rights* booklet, a testament to our joint commitment with the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, is more than just a guide; it is a call to action. It is a tool for empowerment, designed to equip every Marylander with the knowledge to understand, assert, and protect their fundamental civil rights. Let us collectively embrace this resource, not just as a defense against discrimination, but as a catalyst for creating a society where respect, integrity, and effective communication pave the way for true equity and opportunity for all.”

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

“As federal policies shift, many Marylanders fear losing the rights that protect them and their families. This guidance makes clear: no Executive Order can erase the state and federal laws that ensure equal access to housing, jobs, and education,” said **Attorney General Brown**. “Every Marylander – including LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, and immigrants – deserves to be seen, heard, and protected. This guide empowers them to stand up for the rights they are guaranteed by law.”

If you believe your rights have been violated, you may contact MCCR (410-767-8600, mccr@maryland.gov, or [Online Complaint Preliminary Questionnaire \(PQ\)](#)) or the OAG’s CRD ([Civil Rights Complaint Form](#)).

About the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

The [Maryland Commission on Civil Rights](#) is the State’s lead independent agency responsible for enforcing Maryland’s laws prohibiting discrimination in [employment](#), [housing](#), [public accommodations](#), [state contracts](#), [commercial leasing](#), and [health services](#) based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical or mental disability. In employment cases, discrimination based on genetic information is prohibited. In housing cases, discrimination based on familial status and source of income are also unlawful. In both employment and housing cases, discrimination based on military status is illegal. In addition to enforcement, MCCR serves individuals, businesses, and communities across the State through vigorous training and outreach initiatives led by the Education & Outreach Unit. MCCR is governed by a [nine-member Commission](#) appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Maryland Senate.

About the Civil Rights Division

On January 1, 2024, Attorney General Anthony G. Brown launched the [Civil Rights Division](#) of the [Office of the Attorney General of Maryland](#). The Division was established to implement the authority given to the Attorney General by the General Assembly to enforce State, federal, and local anti-discrimination laws. This expanded authority is a first in Maryland history and allows the Office, alongside its partners, to protect Marylanders no matter their race, color, religion or creed, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Civil Rights Division is staffed by a team of lawyers, investigators, and paralegals who investigate allegations of civil rights violations and pursue remedies, including changes to policies, practices, and procedures; restitution; and civil penalties. Claims brought by the Division are on behalf of the State of Maryland and will be designed to address discriminatory practices that affect or impact beyond an individual claimant. The Division does not have the authority to address civil rights violations by State or local governments or agencies.

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