

Resource: The Ontario *Human Rights Code*

Ontario Human Rights Code

Ontario's Human Rights Code, the first in Canada, was enacted in 1962. The Code protects people in Ontario against discrimination in employment, accommodation, goods, services and facilities, and membership in vocational associations and trade unions.

There are seventeen grounds of discrimination under the Code:

1. race
2. ancestry
3. place of origin
4. colour
5. ethnic origin
6. citizenship
7. creed (religion)
8. sex (including pregnancy)
9. sexual orientation
10. disability
11. age
12. marital status (including same sex partners)
13. family status
14. gender identity
15. gender expression
16. receipt of public assistance (in accommodation only)
17. record of offences (in employment only)

Ontario Human Rights Commission

The Ontario Human Rights Commission was established as an arm's length agency of government in 1961 to prevent discrimination and to promote and advance human rights in Ontario. The OHRC is one pillar of Ontario's human rights system, alongside the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and the Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC).

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's mission is to promote and enforce human rights, to engage in relationships that embody the principles of dignity and respect, and to create a culture of human rights compliance and accountability. We act as a driver for social change based on principles of substantive equality. We accomplish our mission by exposing, challenging and ending entrenched and widespread structures and systems of discrimination through education, policy development, public inquiries and litigation.

The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO)

The HRTO resolves claims of discrimination and harassment brought under the *Human Rights Code* in a fair, just and timely way. The HRTO first offers parties the opportunity to settle the dispute through mediation. If the parties do not agree to mediation, or mediation does not resolve the application, the HRTO holds a hearing.

The HRTO is one of the 13 tribunals that make up Tribunals Ontario.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre

The HRLSC services are offered individually at each stage of a human rights dispute. They offer legal advice and support services to clients looking for early resolutions. They advise clients looking to file a human rights application on the HRTO process and the merits of individual cases. The HRLSC provides legal representation at various proceedings at the HRTO and through judicial reviews.