



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

How to File a Charge of Employment Discrimination

Note: Federal employees and applicants for federal jobs have a [different complaint process](#).

A charge of discrimination is a signed statement asserting that an organization engaged in employment discrimination. It requests EEOC to take remedial action. The laws enforced by EEOC, except for the Equal Pay Act, require you to [file a charge](#) before you can file a lawsuit for unlawful discrimination. There are strict [time limits for filing a charge](#).

Log into the [EEOC Public Portal](#) to:

- Submit an inquiry online
- Schedule an intake interview

Time Limits for Filing a Charge

Where the discrimination took place can determine [how long you have to file a charge](#). The 180-calendar-day filing deadline is extended to 300- calendar days if a state or local agency enforces a state **or** local law that prohibits employment discrimination on the same basis. The rules are slightly different for age discrimination charges. For age discrimination, the filing deadline is only extended to 300 days if there is a **state** law prohibiting age discrimination in employment **and** a state agency or authority enforcing that law. The deadline is **not** extended if **only** a local law prohibits age discrimination.

Online - Use the EEOC Public Portal to Submit an Inquiry, Schedule an Appointment, and File a Charge

A Charge of Discrimination can be completed through our online system after you submit an online inquiry and we interview you. [EEOC's Public Portal](#) asks you a few questions to help determine whether EEOC is the right federal agency to handle your complaint involving employment discrimination.

In Person at an EEOC Office

Each EEOC office has appointments, which you can schedule online through the [EEOC Public Portal](#). Offices also have walk-in appointments. Go to <https://www.eeoc.gov/field/index.cfm> for information about the office closest to you.

In the EEOC's experience, having the opportunity to discuss your concerns with an EEOC staff member in an interview is the best way to assess how to address your concerns about employment discrimination and determine whether filing a charge of discrimination is the appropriate path for you. In any event, the final decision to file a charge is your own. An EEOC staff member will prepare a charge using the information you provide, which you can review and sign online by logging into your account.

You may file a charge of employment discrimination at the EEOC office closest to where you live, or at any one of the [EEOC's 53 field offices](#). Your charge, however, may be investigated at the EEOC office closest to where the discrimination occurred. If you are a U.S. citizen working for an American company overseas, you should file your charge with the EEOC field office closest to your employer's corporate headquarters.

It is always helpful if you bring with you to the meeting any information or papers that will help us understand your case. For example, if you were fired because of your performance, you might bring with you the letter or notice telling you that you were fired and your performance evaluations. You might also bring with you the names of people who know about what happened and information about how to contact them.

You can bring anyone you want to your meeting, especially if you need language assistance and know someone who can help. You can also bring your lawyer, although you don't have to hire a lawyer to file a charge. If you need special assistance during the meeting, like a sign language or foreign language interpreter, let us know ahead of time so we can arrange for someone to be there for you.

By Telephone

Although we do not take charges over the phone, you can get the process started over the phone. You can call 1-800-669-4000 to discuss your situation. A representative will ask you for some basic information to determine if your situation is covered by the laws we enforce and explain how to file a charge.

At a State or Local Fair Employment Practice Agency

Many states and localities have agencies that enforce laws prohibiting employment discrimination. EEOC refers to these agencies as Fair Employment Practices Agencies (FEPAs). EEOC and some FEPAs have worksharing agreements in place to prevent the duplication of effort in charge processing. According to these agreements, if you file a charge with either EEOC or a FEPA, the charge also will be automatically filed with the other agency. This process, which is defined as [dual filing](#), helps to protect charging party rights under both federal and state or local law. If you file a charge at a state or local agency, you can let them know if you also want your charge filed with the EEOC.

By Mail

If you have 60 days or fewer in which to file a timely charge, the EEOC Public Portal will provide special directions for providing necessary information to the EEOC and how to file your charge quickly.

You can also file a charge by sending us a letter that includes the following information:

- Your name, address, email, and telephone number
- The name, address, email, and telephone number of the employer (or employment agency or union) you want to file your charge against
- The number of employees employed there (if known)
- A short description of the actions you believe were discriminatory (for example, you were fired, demoted, harassed)
- When the discriminatory actions took place
- Why you believe you were discriminated against (for example, because of your race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability, genetic information, or retaliation)
- Your signature

Don't forget to sign your letter. If you don't sign it, we cannot investigate it.

Your letter will be reviewed and if more information is needed, we will contact you to gather that information.