



Commission On
Human Rights

New York City Commission on Human Rights

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2/6/25

Protections Based on Immigration Status and National Origin

In New York City, you cannot be discriminated against because of your actual or perceived immigration status or your national origin in employment, housing, and public spaces such stores, hospitals, and movie theaters. You have rights regardless of your immigration status:

- It is illegal for a person's employer, coworkers, or housing provider such as landlords to use derogatory or offensive terms to intimidate, humiliate, or degrade people, including by using the term "illegal alien," where its use is intended to demean, humiliate, or offend another person.
- It is illegal for employers to pay workers lower wages or no wages or threaten to call Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to harass, scare, or intimidate workers because of their immigration status.
- Under federal law, employers must ask potential employees for certain documents to prove work authorization. However, it is illegal for employers to demand additional documents to prove work authorization because of assumptions about a worker's immigration status or national origin.
- It is NOT illegal for an employer to refuse to hire someone because they do not have work authorization. However, employers may not require different or additional documentation for job applicants based on their immigration status or national origin.
- It is illegal for landlords or other housing providers to refuse to sell, rent, or lease housing—or to do so with different terms, conditions, or privileges—because of someone's immigration status or national origin.
- It is illegal for landlords or other housing providers to harass tenants because of a tenant's immigration status or national origin.
- It is illegal for landlords or other housing providers to refuse to do repairs or to provide substandard housing conditions because of a tenant's immigration status or national origin.
- It is illegal for landlords or other housing providers to threaten to call ICE to harass, scare, or intimidate tenants because of their immigration status.
- It is illegal for restaurants, stores, hospitals, or any other public accommodation to refuse to serve people or make them feel unwelcome because of their immigration status or national origin. Discriminating against customers because of their accent, limited English proficiency, or use of another language is illegal.

- It is illegal to punish or retaliate against someone because they took action against discriminatory practices, such as complaining at their workplace, or filing a complaint with the NYC Commission on Human Rights or another agency.

If you believe you have been discriminated against because of your immigration status, national origin, or membership in another protected class, please contact the Commission at (212) 416-0197 to file a complaint of discrimination.