

### What is OCR's Role?

**OCR does not represent either the Charging Parties or the Respondents.** We investigate and resolve cases as a neutral party – we do not take sides. OCR investigators act as impartial fact-finders. We cannot offer personal or legal advice. Any party may choose to be represented by an attorney.

### How long are investigations?

Our goal is to resolve all cases as quickly as possible. By ordinance, most housing investigations are completed within 100 days. Employment and public accommodations cases take longer to complete.

### Will the details of my case be made public?

OCR investigative files are covered by the state Public Disclosure law. Information will only be released if allowed under law.

### What if someone takes action against the person who files a complaint?

That would be retaliation, which is illegal. If it occurs, another complaint can be filed. OCR investigates complaints involving retaliation and harassment regardless of the outcome of the original complaint.

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**King County**

## Office of Civil Rights

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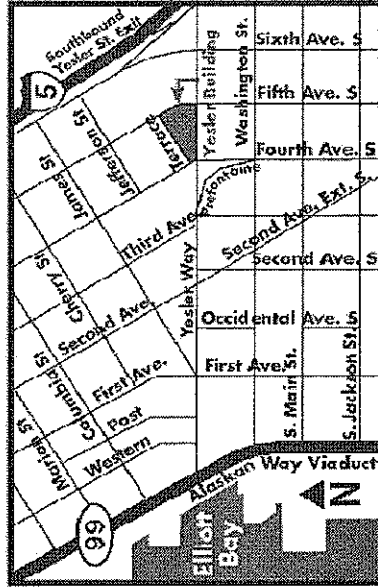
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**OCR provides accommodations for people with disabilities upon request.**

Foreign language interpreters available.

# Office of Civil Rights (OCR)

## Investigations and Resolutions

## A Step by Step Guide



**King County**

# OCR Investigations and Resolutions: Step by Step

## 1. Someone contacts OCR

An OCR investigator discusses the situation with the person and determines whether King County discrimination laws apply.

### Referral

If the case does not qualify for OCR investigation, we may refer the person to another agency for help.

## 2. The person files a complaint

- OCR prepares an official complaint based on the information supplied by the Charging Party (the person who files a complaint).
- The Charging Party signs the complaint.
- OCR sends a copy of the filed complaint to the Respondents (the person, department or business being charged with discrimination).

## 3. OCR investigates or resolves the case

- The Respondents submit a written response to OCR about the issues in the complaint.
- The OCR investigator conducts interviews and on-site visits to gather evidence.
- OCR writes and issues a finding (a written summary of the evidence and conclusion about whether discrimination occurred).

### Resolution Option

At the beginning of the process and at any time during the investigation, OCR can help the Charging Party and Respondents to settle the case through a facilitated resolution process.

## 4. Possible case outcomes

- "Reasonable Cause" – OCR finds that the evidence supports the claim of discrimination
- "No Reasonable Cause" – OCR finds that there is not enough evidence to support the claim of discrimination.
- Settlement – The parties sign a negotiated agreement which includes remedies.
- Withdrawal – The Charging Party withdraws the complaint.
- Administrative Closure – OCR closes the case if we cannot complete the investigation, or if the Charging Party chooses to file the case in court or with another government agency.

### Remedies

If OCR finds reasonable cause, we work with the parties to decide the best remedies for the case. Remedies can include payment of back rent or wages, mandatory training for management and employees, a policy allowing service animals, etc.

### Appeal

If OCR finds no reasonable cause, the Charging Party can appeal the decision within 30 days to the OCR Director.

If OCR finds reasonable cause, either party can appeal.