



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Seattle Office for Civil Rights

Germaine W. Covington, Director

“Fair Contracting Practices Ordinance” Fact Sheet

The Fair Contracting Practices Ordinance prohibits discrimination in contracting between business entities doing business in the City of Seattle. It also provides remedies for victims of discrimination. Modeled after traditional anti-discrimination laws in housing and employment, the ordinance applies to private and public contracting and establishes monetary penalties for violations.

The ordinance protects any person from practices of discrimination in public or private contracting on the basis of race, color, sex, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, political ideology, age, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability.

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) serves as the City’s administrative and enforcement agency. SOCR:

- Investigates and issue findings with respect to complaints of unfair contracting practices;
- Settles or otherwise resolve disputes between charging parties and respondents; and
- Monitors and enforces any agreements resulting from discrimination claims.

Anyone who claims to have been injured by an unfair contracting practice has the option to file a private civil action in court, whether or not an administrative charge had been filed with our office, unless the charging party has signed a settlement or conciliation agreement.

Once a complaint has been filed with SOCR, the possible relief available to correct or remedy proven discrimination in contracting includes, but is not limited to, hiring, reinstatement, lost profits (for a period of up to two years prior to the complaint), damages for humiliation and mental suffering of up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00), attorney's fees, admittance or restoration to membership in a trade association, admittance to participation in a training, or such other action.

If SOCR finds reasonable cause to support the charges and the case is not settled, the complaint will be referred to the City Attorney to enforce the charges at the Office of the Hearing Examiner. In the event that the Hearing Examiner determines that a respondent has committed an unfair contracting practice, the Hearing Examiner will have the authority to impose penalties and disqualify respondents from participating in City contracts for up to five years.