

About the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations

Anyone who lives in, works in, or visits Pittsburgh has a legal right to equal opportunity and access to housing, employment, public accommodations, and city services. The Commission on Human Relations (PghCHR) investigates instances of discrimination and facilitates resolutions for people who have experienced harm because of discrimination. We are more than just an agency that enforces laws. We work with communities, as well as public and private organizations, to proactively educate people about equal rights and opportunities.

The PghCHR has the power to take legal action, but our Commissioners recognize that constructive resolutions, such as mandating trainings and policy changes, are more likely to lead to changes in behavior and changes in practice. We are dedicated to creating positive change and promoting equality, which stands out in our efforts to proactively work with communities, businesses, and organizations to prevent and recognize discrimination.



Education Collaboration Enforcement



Contact Us



908 City-County Building
414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 255-2600 (phone) / (412) 255-2288 (fax)
www.pittsburghpa.gov/chr
human.relations@pittsburghpa.gov
@PghCHR



Know Your Rights:

Guide to the Protected Class
of Status as a Survivor of
Domestic Violence



**Pittsburgh Commission
On Human Relations**
Education · Collaboration · Enforcement

Guide to the Protected Class: Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence

The City of Pittsburgh's **fair housing** and **fair employment** ordinances* protect you from illegal discrimination because of your status as a survivor of domestic violence.

An employer may not refuse to hire a person because of status as a survivor of domestic violence; that employers may not treat employees less favorably because of their status as survivors; that employers (including employment agencies and unions) may not announce or follow a policy limiting or denying employment or membership because of a person's status as a survivor of domestic violence; and that employers (including employment agencies and unions) may not deny employment, membership, or participation in a program because of a person's survivorship.

A housing provider may not deny equal opportunity to purchase, sell, lease, sublease, rent, assign, or otherwise transfer housing based on survivorship. This includes refusal to negotiate, false representation that property is not available, providing different terms, conditions, or privileges in the use or occupancy of a housing unit, and denial of financing, mortgage loan guarantee or other funds for the purchase, construction, rehabilitation, repair or maintenance of any housing unit because of a person's status as a survivor of domestic violence. Also prohibited is the posting or use of notices, statements, advertisements, or making of any record or inquiry which specifies any discriminatory limitation related to a person's survivorship (ex. "no victims of domestic violence," "no couples with drama").

* Chapters 659.03 & 659.02 of the Pittsburgh City Code

What are Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications?



A reasonable accommodation in **employment** is an change to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done. In **housing**, examples may include changes to lease terms or physical changes to your living space. These modifications and accommodations enable an individual who is a survivor of domestic violence to have an equal opportunity to get a job and to successfully perform their job tasks, as well as live safely at their home and be able to enjoy the same housing privileges as people who are not survivors of domestic violence.

Examples of reasonable accommodations and modifications related to survivorship include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Modifying the layout of a workspace
- Adjusting work schedules
- Allowing for leave for survivors of domestic violence
- Enhancing policies to ensure security
- Transfer or reassignment
- Change of a telephone number or email
- Installation of a lock/security devices or equipment
- Developing code words to allow employees to safely signal a need for help such as security or police
- Changing physical locks on housing units
- Moving to an otherwise comparable unit
- Early lease termination

Examples of Illegal Discrimination Related to Survivor of Domestic Violence

- A landlord refuses to change the locks after a survivor's separation from their abuser.
- An employer refuses a request to move the physical desk location of an employee to the back of the office for their safety.
- An employer refuses to give an employee a new work cell phone number after they tell their employer that their abuser is harassing them on their work phone.
- A landlord denies a survivor's rental application, citing that they do not want to risk the abuser coming to their property.
- An employer refuses an employee's request for a work schedule change so that they can better avoid their abuser.
- A landlord charges a higher security deposit to survivors of domestic violence because of worries related to increased damages to the property.
- A landlord allows a survivor to flee but charges early lease termination fees
- A landlord tries to collect nuisance fees from a survivor due to frequent calls to emergency services.

