

The Life of a Housing Charge of Discrimination with the South Bend Human Rights Commission

Screening

Persons that believe their rights have been violated call the Commission and are screened by a Staff member. A determination is made whether the issue falls into the Commission's jurisdiction. If the issue is within the Commission's jurisdiction, the caller is scheduled for an intake.

Refer to Another Agency

If the issue is outside of the Commission's jurisdiction, the caller is referred to another agency that can better assist them.

Intake

Information is gathered from a person who believes their rights have been violated. Once that information is gathered, an official housing charge of discrimination is filed with the Commission, making the person a Complainant. Once a charge has been filed, the Respondent (the person the charge was filed against) is notified of the charge and given a set amount of time to respond.

Investigation

During the investigation, the Commission will interview the Complainant, the Respondent, and pertinent witnesses. The investigator will collect relevant documents.

Throughout the investigation, the option to conciliate is available. (see conciliation)

Conciliation

Conciliation is an attempt to bring the parties together and resolve the issues amicably for all parties. The choice to conciliate the complaint is completely voluntary on the part of both parties. Conciliation is offered throughout the investigation. If the parties sign a conciliation agreement, the Commission will end its investigation and close the case.

If a case is found to be Probable Cause by the Commission, it will move into formal conciliation.

Determining a Finding

The information gathered throughout the investigation is submitted to the board of Commissioners of the Commission for them to review the information and make an unbiased decision.

No Probable Cause

If, after a thorough investigation, the Commission finds no reasonable cause to believe that housing discrimination has occurred or is about to occur, the Commission will order a determination of No Probable Cause and close the case.

Probable Cause

If the investigation produces reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred or is about to occur, the Commission will issue a determination of Probable Cause. The case will then move into formal conciliation. If conciliation fails, the case will be filed in a local U.S. district court.

Case is Closed