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Ageism and Employment Discrimination

Age Discrimination Act of 1975

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Act, which applies to all ages, permits the use of certain age distinctions and factors other than age that meet the Act's requirements. The Age Discrimination Act is enforced by the [Civil Rights Center](#).

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) protects certain applicants and employees 40 years of age and older from discrimination on the basis of age in hiring, promotion, discharge, compensation, or terms, conditions or privileges of employment. The ADEA is enforced by the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#).

[Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 \(WIA\)](#) prohibits discrimination against applicants, employees and participants in WIA Title I-financially assisted programs and activities, and programs that are part of the One-Stop system, on the grounds of age. In addition, WIA prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in a WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. Section 188 of WIA is enforced by the [Civil Rights Center](#).

Filing a Charge of Employment Discrimination

Who Can File a Charge of Discrimination?

- Any individual who believes that his or her employment rights have been violated may file a charge of discrimination with EEOC.
- In addition, an individual, organization, or agency may file a charge on behalf of another person in order to protect the aggrieved person's identity.

How Is a Charge of Discrimination Filed?

- A charge may be filed by mail or in person at the [nearest EEOC office](#).
- Individuals who need an accommodation in order to file a charge (e.g., sign language interpreter, print materials in an accessible format) should inform the EEOC field office so appropriate arrangements can be made.
- Federal employees or applicants for employment should see [Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Processing](#).

What Information Must Be Provided to File a Charge?

- The complaining party's name, address, and telephone number;
- The name, address, and telephone number of the respondent employer, employment agency, or union that is alleged to have discriminated, and number of employees (or union members), if known;
- A short description of the alleged violation (the event that caused the complaining party to believe that his or her rights were violated); and
- The date(s) of the alleged violation(s).
- Federal employees or applicants for employment should see [Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Processing](#).

What Are the Time Limits for Filing a Charge of Discrimination?

All laws enforced by EEOC, except the Equal Pay Act, require filing a charge with EEOC before a private lawsuit may be filed in court. There are strict time limits within which charges must be filed:

- A charge must be filed with EEOC within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation, in order to protect the charging party's rights.
- This 180-day filing deadline is extended to 300 days if the charge also is covered by a state or local anti-discrimination law. For ADEA charges, only state laws extend the filing limit to 300 days.
- These time limits do not apply to claims under the Equal Pay Act, because under that Act persons do not have to first file a charge with EEOC in order to have the right to go to court. However, since many EPA claims also raise Title VII sex discrimination issues, it may be advisable to file charges under both laws within the time limits indicated.
- To protect legal rights, it is always best to contact EEOC promptly when discrimination is suspected.

- Federal employees or applicants for employment should see [Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Processing](#).

What Agency Handles a Charge that is also Covered by State or Local Law?

Many states and localities have anti-discrimination laws and agencies responsible for enforcing those laws. EEOC refers to these agencies as "Fair Employment Practices Agencies (FEPAs)." Through the use of "work sharing agreements," EEOC and the FEPAs avoid duplication of effort while at the same time ensuring that a charging party's rights are protected under both federal and state law.

- If a charge is filed with a FEPA and is also covered by federal law, the FEPA "dual files" the charge with EEOC to protect federal rights. The charge usually will be retained by the FEPA for handling.
- If a charge is filed with EEOC and also is covered by state or local law, EEOC "dual files" the charge with the state or local FEPA, but ordinarily retains the charge for handling.

How Is a Charge Filed for Discrimination Outside the United States?

U.S.-based companies that employ U.S. citizens outside the United States or its territories are covered under EEO laws, with certain exceptions. An individual alleging an EEO violation outside the U.S. should file a charge with the district office closest to his or her employer's headquarters. However, if you are unsure where to file, you may file a charge with any EEOC office.

For answers to common questions about how EEO laws apply to multinational employers, please see:

- [The Equal Employment Opportunity Responsibilities of Multinational Employers](#)
- [Employee Rights When Working for Multinational Employers](#)

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