

About the Commission

In November of 2019, the City of Bellevue unanimously passed a Fairness Ordinance prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations based on sexual orientation and gender identity becoming the 15th city within the Commonwealth to outlaw discrimination on these bases. The Bellevue Fairness Ordinance builds on existing Kentucky state requirements that provide certain protections based on age, color, disability, familial status, national origin, race, religion, sex and tobacco smoking status.

The city also created a Human Rights Commission of three members and charged it with the responsibility to promote and protect basic human rights for all people within the community. The Commission has the responsibility to initiate and encourage opportunities for business and property owners, civic and community leaders and citizens to develop awareness of diversity and fairness. This is accomplished by proactive programs and activities which encourage fairness and diversity as well as those which promote and address discrimination.

The Commission has a primary goal of creating an environment where complaints of this nature do not occur because of increased awareness and sensitivity to respecting the diversity of others. The goal is to prevent formal complaints through proactive work. Additionally, the Commission can provide mediation services to employers, business owners and property owners when there are instances of alleged discrimination to resolve them before they result in a formal complaint.

The Commission works with the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights to address formal complaints within the City related to of age, color, disability, familial status, national origin, race, religion, sex and tobacco smoking status. For complaints related to sexual orientation or gender identification the commission receives, investigates and processes those concerns.

Protections Under the Law

Housing

Federal and Kentucky fair housing laws provide equal opportunity to all people when buying, selling, renting, financing or insuring housing. Individuals have the right to freely buy or rent homes, condominiums, apartments, trailers or lots. Everyone must comply with this law including property owners and managers, real estate brokers and sales agents, operators, builders and developers, advertisers and advertising media, mortgage lenders, insurers and banks or other financial institutions. Protected classes at the state level include age, color, disability, familial status, national origin, race, religion, sex and tobacco smoking status. The City of Bellevue also includes sexual orientation and gender identification as protected groups.

Employment

It is unlawful to discriminate against any person in employment. Federal and state laws make this is true regardless of their age (40 and over), color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex or tobacco-smoking status. The City of Bellevue has extended these protections to people based on sexual orientation and gender identification. Discrimination includes actions against an individual based on protected status regarding recruiting, hiring and promotion, transfer, work assignments, performance

measures, the work environment, job training, discipline and discharge, wages and benefits and any other term, condition, or privilege of employment. The laws prohibit not only intentional discrimination but include neutral job practices that disproportionately affects persons of a certain protected job class and that are not related to the job and the needs of the business. These restrictions apply to employers of 8 or more people (15 in a disability claim) in businesses, employment agencies, labor organizations, licensing agencies, federal agencies and the Commonwealth of Kentucky and its political subdivisions, including public schools.

Public Accommodations

It is illegal for a place of public accommodation, resort, or amusement to refuse or deny the full and equal enjoyment of goods, facilities and accommodations to any person because of his or her color, disability, national origin, race or religion based on existing state and federal law. The City of Bellevue has extended these protections to people based on their sexual orientation and gender identification. A place of public accommodation includes any place, store, or other establishment, either licensed or unlicensed, which supplies goods and services to the general public, or which solicits or accepts the patronage or trade of the general public of which is directly or indirectly supported by government funds. Stores, restaurants, businesses, theatres, hotels, and medical offices are examples of these kinds of accommodations. In addition, restaurants, hotels, motels, and facilities directly or indirectly supported by government funds are prohibited from denying goods and services on the basis of sex.

Financial Transactions

The denial of credit or financing by a financial institution or person offering credit is illegal when it is based on color, disability, national origin, race, religion, or sex. It is illegal to discriminate for these reasons in the interest rate or monthly payments of a loan, in its terms and payment schedule, points, fees or penalties or in the offer of credit insurance on the loan. These protections are enforced by the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

How to File a Complaint

Complaints that concern a charge of discrimination based on age, color, disability, familial status, national origin, race, religion, sex and tobacco smoking status are filed with the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. They can be made via phone, in person, or by fax or email. Complaints about housing discrimination must be made within a year of the alleged event. Those related to employment or public accommodations but be made within 180 days of the alleged discrimination. You can reach the Kentucky Human Rights Commission at 502-595-4024 or at kchr.mail@ky.gov. Their website is www.kchr.ky.gov.

Complaints related to a charge of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identification will be investigated and resolved by the Bellevue Human Rights Commission. Any complain should be delivered in writing to the Bellevue City Hall, 616 Poplar Street, Bellevue KY 41073.

As an alternative to a formal complaint, mediation services are offered at both the state and local level. Mediation is an informal, voluntary process and provides an opportunity to discuss the complain between you, the other parties involved and a neutral mediator with the aim of quickly resolving the complaint. Participation in mediation does not preclude you from a more formal resolution. If you wish to pursue mediation contact the appropriate Commission for more information.

Education and Training

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights provides a variety of educational programs for the public, including civil rights compliance training to owners and employees of public accommodations, local government officials, training in fair housing to realtors, property owners and manaegrs, equal opportunity compliance training for employers, managers and employees and sexual harassment training for employees. You can contact them for specific information on opportunities for training at kchr.mail@ky.gov .

Training options for Bellevue businesses, organizations and groups that address sexual orientation and gender identification can be facilitated through the Bellevue Human Rights Commission. Contact the Commission at 859-292+4222 or email the City Administrator, frank.warnock@bellevueky.org.

Commissioners

Whayne Herriford, Chairperson. Whayne is a retired human resources executive who is currently working as a licensed mental health therapist in Cincinnati and Newport. He has an MS in clinical mental health from Northern Kentucky University, an MBA from Stanford University and a BA in education from Antioch College. In addition to being licensed in both Kentucky and Ohio as an LPCC, he has certifications as a Diversity Executive and a Cultural Intelligence trainer. He has been a resident of Bellevue for 13 years and lives with his partner Troy and their two dogs. He enjoys reading, listening to music and travel.

Christine Mayhew is a partner at Bonenfant & Mayhew, attorneys at Law, in Newport, KY. Her background is rooted in advocacy, research and service to others, and she practices law in Northern KY. Before earning her Juris Doctorate from Chase College of Law in 2016, Christine graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Northern Kentucky University. She has been a resident of Bellevue for 17 years and lives with her husband, Kirk, and their house critters Skillet the dog and cats Roger and Bikini. She enjoys karaoke, travel, cooking and reading.

Danielle McDonald has been teaching criminal justice at Northern Kentucky University since 2008. She has a PhD. In Criminology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, an MS from Virginia Tech in Sociology and a BA from West Virginia University in Psychology and Sociology. She has published articles on criminal justice in multiple journals and a textbook titled *Race, Gender, Class and Criminal Justice: Examining Barriers to Criminal Justice*. She has been a resident of Bellevue for 11 years and lives with her husband, Scott, and their two sons, Paul and Cormac. She enjoys traveling, going to concerns and spending time with family and friends.

