

Washington's Law Against Discrimination protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

In 2006, the State of Washington enacted the landmark **Anderson-Murray Antidiscrimination Law** to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people from discrimination through Washington's Law Against Discrimination (WLAD). If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination because of your sexual orientation or gender expression or identity, WLAD now may protect you and allow you to take action to solve the problem.

Q What does this anti-discrimination law cover?

A **WLAD** forbids sexual orientation and gender expression or identity discrimination in several critical areas.

- ▶ **Employment** in state, municipal and private workplaces with 8 or more employees.
- ▶ **Public accommodations**, meaning places open to the public such as businesses that sell goods or services, recreational facilities, providers of medical services and public schools.
- ▶ **Housing and financial transactions** such as real estate rental and sales, and applications for credit or insurance.

Q When did the new anti-discrimination protections take effect?

A On June 8, 2006. The law prohibits acts of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination after that date.

Q Is my employer required to offer me domestic partner benefits?

A The answer depends on several things, and may involve multiple sources of law. It also may depend upon whether you are a government employee or a private sector employee, and the details of your employer's benefits program. Call Lambda Legal's Help Desk to discuss your situation toll free at 866-542-8336, or contact us by email at LegalHelpDesk@lambdalegal.org.

Q Am I protected from discrimination based on my HIV status?

A Yes. WLAD prohibits employers from discriminating against employees based on their HIV or hepatitis C status, and from requiring employees and prospective employees to take an HIV or hepatitis C test. WLAD also prohibits HIV and hepatitis C discrimination as a form of disability discrimination and provides greater anti-discrimination protection for people with disabilities than federal law does.

Taking Action . . .

What can I do if I think I've been discriminated against based on my sexual orientation or gender identity?

If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination based on your sexual orientation or gender expression or identity, you may (but are not required to) file a claim with the Washington State Human Rights Commission. You also may file a lawsuit in court to seek payment for any damages you have suffered. You may take either one of these steps, or both at the same time.

How do I file a discrimination claim with the Washington State Human Rights Commission?

You can begin by calling the Human Rights Commission at 800-233-3247 or by completing a questionnaire through the Commission's website: www.hum.wa.gov/complaintProcess/index.htm.

Consult with an attorney or Lambda Legal's Help Desk to **determine your deadline** for filing a claim with the Human Rights Commission or a lawsuit in court. If you do not file by the deadline, you may lose your right to file a legal claim. Be aware that **you may have less than 6 months** from the date of the discrimination, or **less than 1 year** in the case of housing discrimination to file a claim with the Human Rights Commission. The deadline for filing a lawsuit is longer, but **it cannot be missed** or your claims may be lost. Keep in mind that WLAD's workplace rules do not apply to the federal government (although federal workers may have other protections), or to tribal and nonprofit religiously controlled employers. Also, it is important to remember that the information in this publication might apply differently for employees who are undocumented or whose immigration status is pending. Please call Lambda Legal's Help Desk for more information about your particular situation.

"When my doctor refused to give me a prescription because of my sexual orientation, it was a painful betrayal. Thanks to Washington's new civil rights law, it also was illegal. Lambda Legal negotiated a settlement for me that required my medical provider to adopt new policies. Now, the clinic will do trainings and post rules to alert its staff that they must treat LGBT patients the same as all other patients."

– Jonathan Shuffield, Eastern Washington

Where can I get help?

Contact Lambda Legal's Western Regional Office Help Desk at 213-382-7600, ext. 330 or toll free at 866-542-8336, or by email at LegalHelpDesk@lambdalegal.org. Hablamos Español.



www.lambdalegal.org

Toll Free Legal Help Desk: 866-542-8336

Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.



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washington

www.equalrightswashington.org

206-324-2570

Equal Rights Washington works to ensure and promote dignity, safety, and equality for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Washingtonians.