

## What is Seattle's Fair Contracting Practices Ordinance?

The ordinance prohibits discrimination in contracting within the City of Seattle. Individuals who believe they have been illegally discriminated against can contact the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) to file a discrimination charge.

### Who is covered by the Ordinance?

The law applies to all contracts with a value of more than \$5,000 between business entities operating within the City of Seattle. The alleged violation must have occurred within the Seattle city limits, and within the last 180 days.

### What can the Seattle Office for Civil Rights do?

If a formal charge is filed, SOCR can investigate the allegation to determine if illegal discrimination has occurred. SOCR also can work with all parties to resolve their differences.



**Seattle Office for Civil Rights**  
810 3rd Ave., Suite 750  
Seattle WA 98104

(206) 684-4500 Voice  
(206) 684-4503 TTY



Information can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

## A law for doing business

# Fair Contracting in the City of Seattle



## Does this sound familiar? Did someone ...

Turn down your subcontracting bid due to bias in the bidding process?

Break a contract based on your race, gender, disability, or other protected class – *and* for no valid business reason?

Withhold contractual payments to your business out of personal prejudice?

## In the City of Seattle, it is illegal to discriminate in a contract agreement

on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation and other protected classes.

## An even playing field for business

Under Seattle's Fair Contracting Practices Ordinance, parties may choose to contract based on valid business decisions. But they cannot make contractual decisions based on the following protected classes:

- Race
- Color
- Sex
- Religion
- Age
- Creed
- Ancestry
- Political ideology
- National origin
- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Gender identity
- Military status or veteran

If your experience occurred in the last 180 days within the Seattle city limits, SOCR may be able to investigate.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Seattle's Fair Contracting Practices Ordinance

### How long do I have to file a claim under the ordinance?

You must file your claim within 180 days of the most recent incident.

### Does the Fair Contracting Ordinance cover the bidding process?

Yes, the ordinance covers all aspects of contracting, including the bidding process.

### My company is based in Seattle, but I do business all over King County. Does the ordinance cover my contracts throughout the County?

No, the City of Seattle's ordinance covers contracts for business and/or service only within the city itself. If your company is headquartered elsewhere, the ordinance still covers all contracts and services within the City of Seattle.

### If I file a Fair Contracting Practices charge, what issues will your office investigate?

It depends on the issues contained in the formal charge. SOCR can investigate alleged discrimination both in the awarding and/or the execution of a contract. SOCR will not investigate issues that fall outside the scope of the charge.

### Most of my contracts are for less than \$5,000. Can I still qualify?

No. Seattle's ordinance only covers contracts that exceed \$5,000.

### How long will a Fair Contracting Practices complaint take to investigate and resolve?

The length of an investigation depends on the specifics and complexity of the allegations. SOCR's investigations can range from 3 months to more than a year.

### I have stopped payment to one of my subcontractors for substandard work. Now he plans to file a discrimination charge against me. What are my options?

There are a variety of valid business reasons to terminate a contract. A charge of discrimination may apply only if a contract was cancelled or breached because of a person's protected class status.

### What can I do if I think I've been discriminated against in a contract?

Contact the Seattle Office for Civil Rights at (206) 684-4500. We'll help you explore your options under the law.

## The City of Seattle also prevents discrimination in:

### Employment

- hiring/firing
- promotion
- advertising
- training
- wages
- discipline
- hostile work environment

### Public Accommodations

- hotels
- government services
- private schools
- restaurants
- recreational facilities
- theaters

### Housing

- sales/rentals of houses/apartments/condos/lots, etc.
- disability accommodations or modifications
- harassment, interference, criminal intimidation

The law also protects you from harassment and retaliation.

For more information, call the Seattle Office for Civil Rights

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[www.seattle.gov/civilrights](http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights)