



## Ohio Revised Code

### Section 4112.05 Filing a charge of unlawful discriminatory practice.

Effective: April 15, 2021

Legislation: House Bill 352 - 133rd General Assembly

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(A)(1) With the exception of unlawful discriminatory practices relating to employment, the commission, as provided in this section, shall prevent any person from engaging in unlawful discriminatory practices.

(2) The commission may at any time attempt to resolve allegations of unlawful discriminatory practices other than allegations concerning unlawful discriminatory practices relating to employment by the use of alternative dispute resolution, provided that, before instituting the formal hearing authorized by division (B) of this section, it shall attempt, by informal methods of conference, conciliation, and persuasion, to induce compliance with this chapter.

(B)(1) Any person may file a charge with the commission alleging that another person has engaged or is engaging in an unlawful discriminatory practice. In the case of a charge alleging an unlawful discriminatory practice that is not an unlawful discriminatory practice relating to employment and that is described in division (G), (I), or (J) of section 4112.02 or in section 4112.021 or 4112.022 of the Revised Code, the charge shall be in writing and under oath and shall be filed with the commission within six months after the alleged unlawful discriminatory practice was committed. In the case of a charge alleging an unlawful discriminatory practice described in division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code, the charge shall be in writing and under oath and shall be filed with the commission within one year after the alleged unlawful discriminatory practice was committed.

(a) An oath under this section may be made in any form of affirmation the person deems binding on the person's conscience. Acceptable forms include, but are not limited to, declarations made under penalty of perjury.

(b) Any charge timely received, via facsimile, postal mail, electronic mail, or otherwise, may be signed under oath after the limitations period for filing set forth under division (B)(1) of this section and will relate back to the original filing date.



(2) Upon receiving a charge other than a charge concerning unlawful discriminatory practices relating to employment, the commission may initiate a preliminary investigation to determine whether it is probable that an unlawful discriminatory practice has been or is being engaged in. The commission also may conduct, upon its own initiative and independent of the filing of any charges, a preliminary investigation relating to any of the unlawful discriminatory practices that are not unlawful discriminatory practices relating to employment and that are described in division (I) or (J) of section 4112.02 or in section 4112.021 or 4112.022 of the Revised Code. Prior to a notification of a complainant under division (B)(4) of this section or prior to the commencement of informal methods of conference, conciliation, and persuasion, or alternative dispute resolution, under that division, the members of the commission and the officers and employees of the commission shall not make public in any manner and shall retain as confidential all information that was obtained as a result of or that otherwise pertains to a preliminary investigation other than one described in division (B)(3) of this section.

(3)(a) Unless it is impracticable to do so and subject to its authority under division (B)(3)(d) of this section, the commission shall complete a preliminary investigation of a charge filed pursuant to division (B)(1) of this section that alleges an unlawful discriminatory practice described in division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code, and shall take one of the following actions, within one hundred days after the filing of the charge:

(i) Notify the complainant and the respondent that it is not probable that an unlawful discriminatory practice described in division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code has been or is being engaged in and that the commission will not issue a complaint in the matter;

(ii) Initiate a complaint and schedule it for informal methods of conference, conciliation, and persuasion, or alternative dispute resolution;

(iii) Initiate a complaint and refer it to the attorney general with a recommendation to seek a temporary or permanent injunction or a temporary restraining order. If this action is taken, the attorney general shall apply, as expeditiously as possible after receipt of the complaint, to the court of common pleas of the county in which the unlawful discriminatory practice allegedly occurred for the appropriate injunction or order, and the court shall hear and determine the application as expeditiously as possible.



(b) If it is not practicable to comply with the requirements of division (B)(3)(a) of this section within the one-hundred-day period described in that division, the commission shall notify the complainant and the respondent in writing of the reasons for the noncompliance.

(c) Prior to the issuance of a complaint under division (B)(3)(a)(ii) or (iii) of this section or prior to a notification of the complainant and the respondent under division (B)(3)(a)(i) of this section, the members of the commission and the officers and employees of the commission shall not make public in any manner and shall retain as confidential all information that was obtained as a result of or that otherwise pertains to a preliminary investigation of a charge filed pursuant to division (B)(1) of this section that alleges an unlawful discriminatory practice described in division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code.

(d) Notwithstanding the types of action described in divisions (B)(3)(a)(ii) and (iii) of this section, prior to the issuance of a complaint or the referral of a complaint to the attorney general and prior to endeavoring to eliminate an unlawful discriminatory practice described in division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code by informal methods of conference, conciliation, and persuasion, or by alternative dispute resolution, the commission may seek a temporary or permanent injunction or a temporary restraining order in the court of common pleas of the county in which the unlawful discriminatory practice allegedly occurred.

(4) If the commission determines after a preliminary investigation other than one concerning an alleged unlawful discriminatory practice relating to employment or one described in division (B)(3) of this section that it is not probable that an unlawful discriminatory practice has been or is being engaged in, it shall notify any complainant under division (B)(1) of this section that it has so determined and that it will not issue a complaint in the matter. If the commission determines after a preliminary investigation other than one concerning an alleged unlawful discriminatory practice relating to employment or one described in division (B)(3) of this section that it is probable that an unlawful discriminatory practice has been or is being engaged in, it shall endeavor to eliminate the practice by informal methods of conference, conciliation, and persuasion, or by alternative dispute resolution.

(5) Nothing said or done during informal methods of conference, conciliation, and persuasion, or



during alternative dispute resolution, under this section shall be disclosed by any member of the commission or its staff or be used as evidence in any subsequent hearing or other proceeding. If, after a preliminary investigation and the use of informal methods of conference, conciliation, and persuasion, or alternative dispute resolution, under this section, the commission is satisfied that any unlawful discriminatory practice will be eliminated, it may treat the charge involved as being conciliated and enter that disposition on the records of the commission. If the commission fails to effect the elimination of an unlawful discriminatory practice by informal methods of conference, conciliation, and persuasion, or by alternative dispute resolution under this section and to obtain voluntary compliance with this chapter, the commission shall issue and cause to be served upon any person, including the respondent against whom a complainant has filed a charge pursuant to division (B)(1) of this section, a complaint stating the charges involved and containing a notice of an opportunity for a hearing before the commission, a member of the commission, or a hearing examiner at a place that is stated in the notice and that is located within the county in which the alleged unlawful discriminatory practice has occurred or is occurring or in which the respondent resides or transacts business. The hearing shall be held not less than thirty days after the service of the complaint upon the complainant, the aggrieved persons other than the complainant on whose behalf the complaint is issued, and the respondent, unless the complainant, an aggrieved person, or the respondent elects to proceed under division (A)(2) of section 4112.055 of the Revised Code when that division is applicable. If a complaint pertains to an alleged unlawful discriminatory practice described in division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code, the complaint shall notify the complainant, an aggrieved person, and the respondent of the right of the complainant, an aggrieved person, or the respondent to elect to proceed with the administrative hearing process under this section or to proceed under division (A)(2) of section 4112.055 of the Revised Code.

(6) The attorney general shall represent the commission at any hearing held pursuant to division (B)(5) of this section and shall present the evidence in support of the complaint.

(7) Any complaint issued pursuant to division (B)(5) of this section after the filing of a charge under division (B)(1) of this section shall be so issued within one year after the complainant filed the charge with respect to an alleged unlawful discriminatory practice.

(C)(1) Any complaint issued pursuant to division (B) of this section may be amended by the commission, a member of the commission, or the hearing examiner conducting a hearing under



division (B) of this section.

(a) Except as provided in division (C)(1)(b) of this section, a complaint issued pursuant to division (B) of this section may be amended at any time prior to or during the hearing.

(b) If a complaint issued pursuant to division (B) of this section alleges an unlawful discriminatory practice described in division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code, the complaint may be amended at any time up to seven days prior to the hearing and not thereafter.

(2) The respondent has the right to file an answer or an amended answer to the original and amended complaints and to appear at the hearing in person, by attorney, or otherwise to examine and cross-examine witnesses.

(D) The complainant shall be a party to a hearing under division (B) of this section, and any person who is an indispensable party to a complete determination or settlement of a question involved in the hearing shall be joined. Any aggrieved person who has or claims an interest in the subject of the hearing and in obtaining or preventing relief against the unlawful discriminatory practices complained of shall be permitted to appear only for the presentation of oral or written arguments, to present evidence, perform direct and cross-examination, and be represented by counsel. The commission shall adopt rules, in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code governing the authority granted under this division.

(E) In any hearing under division (B) of this section, the commission, a member of the commission, or the hearing examiner shall not be bound by the Rules of Evidence but, in ascertaining the practices followed by the respondent, shall take into account all reliable, probative, and substantial statistical or other evidence produced at the hearing that may tend to prove the existence of a predetermined pattern of employment or membership, provided that nothing contained in this section shall be construed to authorize or require any person to observe the proportion that persons of any race, color, religion, sex, military status, familial status, national origin, disability, age, or ancestry bear to the total population or in accordance with any criterion other than the individual qualifications of the applicant.

(F) The testimony taken at a hearing under division (B) of this section shall be under oath and shall



be reduced to writing and filed with the commission. Thereafter, in its discretion, the commission, upon the service of a notice upon the complainant and the respondent that indicates an opportunity to be present, may take further testimony or hear argument.

(G)(1)(a) If, upon all reliable, probative, and substantial evidence presented at a hearing under division (B) of this section, the commission determines that the respondent has engaged in, or is engaging in, any unlawful discriminatory practice, whether against the complainant or others, the commission shall state its findings of fact and conclusions of law and shall issue and, subject to the provisions of Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, cause to be served on the respondent an order requiring the respondent to do all of the following:

- (i) Cease and desist from the unlawful discriminatory practice;
- (ii) Take any further affirmative or other action that will effectuate the purposes of this chapter, including, but not limited to, hiring, reinstatement, or upgrading of employees with or without back pay, or admission or restoration to union membership;
- (iii) Report to the commission the manner of compliance.

If the commission directs payment of back pay, it shall make allowance for interim earnings.

(b) If the commission finds a violation of division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code, in addition to the action described in division (G)(1)(a) of this section, the commission additionally may require the respondent to undergo remediation in the form of a class, seminar, or any other type of remediation approved by the commission, may require the respondent to pay actual damages and reasonable attorney's fees, and may, to vindicate the public interest, assess a civil penalty against the respondent as follows:

- (i) If division (G)(1)(b)(ii) or (iii) of this section does not apply, a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars;
- (ii) If division (G)(1)(b)(iii) of this section does not apply and if the respondent has been determined by a final order of the commission or by a final judgment of a court to have committed one violation



of division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code during the five-year period immediately preceding the date on which a complaint was issued pursuant to division (B) of this section, a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars;

(iii) If the respondent has been determined by a final order of the commission or by a final judgment of a court to have committed two or more violations of division (H) of section 4112.02 of the Revised Code during the seven-year period immediately preceding the date on which a complaint was issued pursuant to division (B) of this section, a civil penalty damages in an amount not to exceed fifty thousand dollars.

(2) Upon the submission of reports of compliance, the commission may issue a declaratory order stating that the respondent has ceased to engage in particular unlawful discriminatory practices.

(H) If the commission finds that no probable cause exists for crediting charges of unlawful discriminatory practices or if, upon all the evidence presented at a hearing under division (B) of this section on a charge, the commission finds that a respondent has not engaged in any unlawful discriminatory practice against the complainant or others, it shall state its findings of fact and shall issue and cause to be served on the complainant an order dismissing the complaint as to the respondent. A copy of the order shall be delivered in all cases to the attorney general and any other public officers whom the commission considers proper.

If, upon all the evidence presented at a hearing under division (B) of this section on a charge, the commission finds that a respondent has not engaged in any unlawful discriminatory practice against the complainant or others, it may award to the respondent reasonable attorney's fees to the extent provided in 5 U.S.C. 504 and accompanying regulations.

(I) Until the time period for appeal set forth in division (H) of section 4112.06 of the Revised Code expires, the commission, subject to the provisions of Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, at any time, upon reasonable notice, and in the manner it considers proper, may modify or set aside, in whole or in part, any finding or order made by it under this section.