



***“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world.
And you have to do it all the time.” ~ Angela Davis***

We, the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR), are dedicated to protecting the people of New Jersey from discrimination and bias-based harassment in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation. Achieving full civil rights and eliminating discrimination is not only our goal, but our mission.

For far too long, people of color, particularly members of the Black community, have been underserved, victimized, marginalized, and oppressed by many institutions in our state and nation. It is for this reason that it is important to state unequivocally that DCR stands with Black lives and pronounces that Black Lives Matter.

But words are not enough. Commitments cannot be performative and must be more than a promise. The first of many steps towards anti-racist work is *acknowledgement*. Thus, we begin by acknowledging the history of the land we call New Jersey. New Jersey was originally the land of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Indian Tribe, Powhatan Renape Nation, and Ramapough Lenape Indian Nation. Hundreds of years later, New Jersey was the last Northern state to abolish the institution of slavery in 1804. Even today, New Jersey has the nation’s worst racial disparities between Black and white people when it comes to incarceration rates for both adults and children; maternal, fetal and general health outcomes; and wealth and wage gaps. New Jersey also has the 4th largest number of hate groups in the country.

The second step is *assessment*. This year DCR celebrates the 77th anniversary of the Law Against Discrimination (LAD), the first state level civil rights statute to go into effect in the United States after Reconstruction. The last two years have exposed two pandemics: COVID-19 and systemic racism. As of January 31, 2022, COVID-19 has already taken 28, 506 lives in New Jersey alone, including 4,599 Black lives, and it has laid bare devastating racial and ethnic health disparities in Black and Brown communities. At the same time, the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others were a reminder that Black communities and communities of color continue to be subjected to violence.

This must end. Differential treatment based on race, in both the law enforcement and healthcare settings, violates the LAD. That means it is unlawful in New Jersey for a doctor to prescribe pain medication to a white patient who presents with certain symptoms, but then refuse to prescribe pain medication to a Black patient who presents with those exact same symptoms, because of the patient’s race. And it is unlawful for a law enforcement officer to pull over a Black driver for specific conduct, rather than a white driver who engaged in the exact same conduct, because of the driver’s race.

Addressing these dual pandemics requires a third step, *action*. DCR is committed to fighting racism and systemic injustice. We are committed to doing the real work – real hard work, real community work, real institutional and systemic work, required to advance equity and justice. But even that is not enough, without centering the voices, experiences, and expertise of those from the communities most impacted by systemic racism in our initiatives, programs, projects, outreach, training, and events.

The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR) is committed to the following concrete actions in 2022:

- Enforcing the Fair Chance in Housing Act, which went into effect on January 1, 2022, to ensure people with past criminal histories have a fair shot at accessing safe and affordable housing.
- Conducting ongoing community needs assessments to center the community’s voice in all of DCR’s proactive work, and using those community needs assessments to inform new investigations to address discrimination in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation.
- Continuing to center racial justice and recognize the impact of systemic racism & unconscious bias as we conduct civil rights investigations and strengthening NJBIAS to ensure that all NJ residents can access justice through DCR.
- Through our Community Relations Unit and bias incident response team, continuing to implement strategic partnerships, community engagement, and outreach efforts, including restorative justice, trauma informed practices, community mediation services, and anti-racist programming.
- Through our Education & Training Unit, continuing to create and provide high quality trainings on the Law Against Discrimination and Fair Chance in Housing Act, unconscious bias, microaggressions, bystander intervention, and other important civil rights issues.
- Implementing a Mediation Unit to work with parties to reach mutually agreeable resolutions of their cases where possible, including in Fair Chance in Housing Act cases.
- Continuing to partner with stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the Youth Bias Task Force, which were crafted to combat systemic and interpersonal biases among our state’s young people, and continuing to work with the Attorney General, Governor, and the Legislature to ensure that our civil rights laws remain at the forefront of civil rights legislation nationwide.
- Ensuring that persons who live or work in New Jersey are treated in accordance with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination and that employers, housing providers, and places of public accommodation are held accountable when discrimination or bias- based harassment occurs.

***Our only request is that you hold us accountable.
DCR is here to protect and secure your rights.***

Ways to contact us:

- **Phone:** 1-833-NJDCR4U (711 relay)
- **Online:** [NJCivilRights.gov](https://njjcivilrights.gov) and <https://bias.njjcivilrights.gov> to file a complaint
- **Email:** CommunityRelations@NJCivilRights.gov
- **Social Media:** Facebook and Twitter @CivilRightsNJ #CivilRightsNJ #StopTheHate