

Find out more about your rights  
by contacting:

**Bloomington**

**Human Rights Commission**  
1800 West Old Shakopee Road  
Bloomington MN 55431-3027

Phone: 952-563-8733  
TTY (Teletypewriter): 952-563-8740

**In the Metro area:**

Call the Minnesota Department of  
Human Rights at 651-296-5663.

**In Greater Minnesota:**

Call toll-free 1-800-657-3704  
and ask for  
the Human Rights Department.

TTY: 651-296-1283

# MEDIATION

## Mediating situations of possible discrimination

*If you think you have suffered  
unfair and illegal discrimination  
in Bloomington, you might be  
interested in mediation.*



CITY OF  
**BLOOMINGTON**  
MINNESOTA

**Human Rights Commission**  
City of Bloomington, Minnesota



Human Rights Commission  
City of Bloomington, Minnesota

### How do I know if I've been treated illegally?

The law says that you cannot be treated differently in certain areas because of certain personal characteristics. For instance, you can't be treated differently in employment because of your race. The chart below lists areas in which you are protected and the personal characteristics that cannot be used as a reason to treat you differently.

### Jurisdiction of the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA)

Protected Classes	Area of Protection						
	Employment	Housing	Public Accommodations	Public Service	Education	Credit	Business
Race	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Color	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Creed	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Religion	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
National Origin	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sex	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Marital Status	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Disability	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Public Assistance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sexual Orientation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Familial Status	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Local Human Rights Commission activity	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

### What if I'm not sure?

Call the Bloomington Human Rights Commission. They can advise you on what the law says, and also about mediation for dealing with your problem. It costs nothing.

## WHAT IS MEDIATION?

In mediation, the Bloomington Human Rights Commission (HRC) acts as a neutral mediator between you and the party you think discriminated against you. The HRC tries to negotiate a settlement satisfactory to everyone, but without assigning blame to anyone.

### Is it my only option?

No. You can file a discrimination charge directly with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MnDHR) in St. Paul. Mediation is completely voluntary for all parties.

### What's the advantage?

There are several advantages for all parties:

- For you, there is the chance of a faster settlement before the damage done to you gets too great.
- The party you think discriminated against you might also think better of you for not making a MnDHR case out of it.
- There is less cost to all parties and lots of people just like the idea of settling local problems locally.

### What if it doesn't work? Have I lost anything?

At all times, you still have the right to break off the mediation process and file a charge with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. If no progress is being made, the Bloomington Human Rights Commission will advise you to consider doing just that, well before the time limits are up.

(A charge has to be filed with the MnDHR within one year of the alleged discrimination incident.)

### What outcomes are possible?

There are three possibilities:

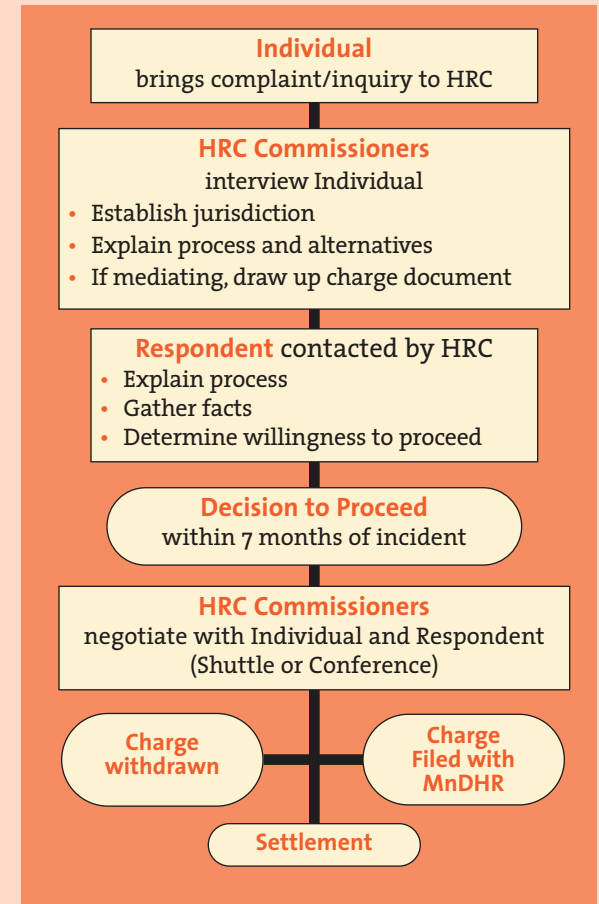
1. You may reach agreement on a settlement.
2. You may decide the mediation process is not working, and file a charge directly with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.
3. You may decide to drop the complaint entirely.

## How does mediation work?

1. First you call the Bloomington Human Rights Commission and talk over what happened to you.
2. If, after that discussion, you decide to go ahead with mediation, the Commissioner(s) you are working with will help you write a one-paragraph statement of what happened to you.
3. The Commissioner(s) will contact the respondent (the party you think discriminated against you), hear their side of the story, and see if they are also willing to enter the mediation process. Remember, the Commissioner(s) will be neutral; they are just as concerned with stopping unfair charges of discrimination as with stopping unfair discrimination.
4. The Commissioner(s) will then either shuttle back and forth between you and the other party, or they might bring you all together, whichever seems best for reaching a settlement.

## What kinds of settlement are possible?

Mediation aims to reach an agreement satisfying both parties. This might involve restoring what you feel you lost because of the discrimination, a change in the other party's operating procedures, an agreement by them to stop doing something, or obtaining training in human rights. There are many other possibilities, since the process is informal and flexible. Once a settlement is reached, you will agree not to file a formal charge with the MnDHR – unless the settlement agreement is broken.



## Can the person I charge with discrimination retaliate against me for using mediation?

That's called "reprisal" and it's against the law. You could file another separate charge of discrimination for that.

## Can someone force you to violate the law?

Aiding in a violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act, coercing a person to violate the law, obstructing compliance or interfering with the MnDHR performance of its duties are prohibited.