



**EXPLANATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP**  
**between the**  
**COOK COUNTY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**and the**  
**CITY OF CHICAGO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS**

The Chicago Commission on Human Relations (the ACity Commission@) is charged with administering and enforcing the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance and the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance; its powers are enumerated in the Chicago Commission on Human Relations Enabling Ordinance (collectively, the ACity Ordinances@). The City Ordinances prohibit discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, credit, bonding, and public accommodations in the City of Chicago. The City Ordinances prohibit discrimination based on race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, military discharge status, and source of income.

The Cook County Commission on Human Rights (the ACounty Commission@) is charged with administering and enforcing the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance (the ACounty Ordinance@). The County Ordinance prohibits discrimination and sexual harassment in Cook County or by Cook County contractors in the areas of housing, employment, credit and bonding, public accommodations, and County facilities, services and programs. The County Ordinance prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, source of income, and housing status.

The drafters of the County Ordinance recognized that the City of Chicago and several other municipalities within Cook County have their own human rights and/or fair housing ordinances. In acknowledgment of the importance of these local ordinances and in the interest of minimizing duplication of regulation and enforcement, Article XII was included in the County Ordinance. It provides that to the extent a municipal ordinance regulates conduct prohibited by the County Ordinance and provides remedies, the County Ordinance shall not apply within that municipality with respect to such conduct. In all other circumstances, the County Ordinance shall be enforceable within the municipality.

Because the County Ordinance and the City Ordinances regulate substantially similar conduct and provide remedies, the County Ordinance, in most circumstances, shall not apply to acts of discrimination which occur within the City of Chicago. Accordingly, most complaints of discrimination concerning conduct in the City of Chicago must be filed with the City Commission and cannot be filed with the County Commission.

As described above, **the County Commission accepts complaints about conduct which the City Ordinances do not regulate** and which are prohibited by the County Ordinance even where the incidents occurred within the City of Chicago. These include:

1. Complaints Based on Housing Status. The County Ordinance provides protection from discrimination based on a person=s housing status. Housing status discrimination is not addressed by the City Ordinance. Housing status means the type of housing in which an

individual resides, whether publicly or privately owned; an individual's ownership status with respect to the individual's residence; or the status of having or not having a fixed residence. Cases involving a person's housing status which occur within the City of Chicago may be filed at the County Commission.

2. Aiding and Abetting Violations. The County Ordinance explicitly prohibits aiding and abetting as a separate civil rights violation. The City Ordinances are silent on this matter. Therefore, complaints alleging that a person has aided, abetted, compelled or coerced another person to commit an act of unlawful discrimination within the City of Chicago may be filed with the County Commission.

3. Retaliation in the Housing Area. The County Ordinance prohibits retaliation in housing. The City Fair Housing Ordinance is silent on this matter. Therefore, complaints alleging that a person has retaliated against someone for opposing discrimination in housing within the City of Chicago may be filed with the County Commission.

**There is one situation where cases which the City Commission could have accepted shall instead be filed with the County Commission:**

Complaints Against Cook County Government -- Pursuant to a May 19, 1993 Board of Commissioners resolution, the City Commission adopted a policy that provides that, in the interests of comity and in deference to the County's adoption of a substantially equivalent ordinance, the City Commission will not accept complaints filed against Cook County government after May 21, 1993 (the effective date of the County Ordinance). Consequently, all complaints of discrimination naming the County as respondent, including those occurring within the City of Chicago, must be filed with the County Commission rather than the City Commission.

Further, their respective ordinances allow each Commission to enter into intergovernmental agreements. The Commissions entered into an agreement with each other which addresses **complaints filed against the Commissions themselves**. Specifically, the Commissions agreed that:

1. Complaints of Discrimination Against the City Commission and/or its staff which cannot be filed at other civil rights agencies shall be referred to and accepted by the County Commission for processing under the County Ordinance.
2. Complaints of Discrimination Against the County Commission and/or its staff which cannot be filed at other civil rights agencies shall be referred to and accepted by the Chicago Commission for processing under the Chicago Ordinances.

The rules set forth above do not address and have no impact upon the jurisdiction of the Chicago Commission or the County Commission over other units of government and do not prevent individuals from filing cases at civil rights agencies other than the City and County Commissions, where applicable.