

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Number of Protected Traits in DC Just Went Up to 23

New laws prohibit discrimination based on homeless status and sealed eviction record

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – The [DC Office of Human Rights](#) (OHR) began enforcing two new protected traits as of October 1, 2022.* Through the enactment of the [Human Rights Act Enhancement Amendment Act of 2022](#) (the “Act”) and the [Eviction Record Sealing Authority and Fairness in Renting Amendment Act of 2022](#) (“ERSFRA”), **homeless status** and **sealed eviction record** were added as protected traits in the DC Human Rights Act, expanding the total number of protected traits to 23 in the District. You can find the list of all protected traits and their definitions on [this handout](#) or at [this OHR webpage](#), which houses links to the handout translated into the top six non-English languages.

“This expansion means that people can’t be treated differently because of their homeless status or because of a sealed eviction record,” said OHR Director Hnin Khaing. “This expansion creates more equitable access across DC and I’m proud to live in a city where our DC Values guide us to continually advance in ways that models what it means to be a human rights city.”

The new homeless status addition protects individuals’ and families’ homeless status from discrimination in all four of OHR’s enforcement areas: employment, housing, public accommodation and government services and educational institutions.

ERSFRA enhances fair housing protections and provides DC Superior Court the ability to seal eviction records in certain circumstances. Further, it prohibits housing providers from making housing determinations regarding any real estate transaction based on an individual’s sealed eviction record, hence adding a 23rd protected trait to the Human Rights Act.

To educate the public about these new laws and their implications, OHR has already published a fact sheet for the two new protected traits, which can be found [here](#). OHR hosted its first Open House on December 15, 2022; you can watch the recorded presentation on FY23 new laws, including the two new protected traits, at the OHR YouTube channel [here](#). In the coming months, OHR will engage in a variety of outreach - targeting both the general public and businesses/housing providers – that will educate on these new protections.

** The DC Office of Human Rights investigates complaints of discrimination and if a violation is found, remedies may include corrective actions as well as financial fees and costs. Please note, OHR will not start issuing fines on housing providers for violations of the Eviction Record Sealing Authority and Fairness in Renting Amendment Act of 2022 until March 2023.*

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About the District of Columbia Office of Human Rights

The District of Columbia Office of Human Rights (OHR) was established to eradicate discrimination, increase equal opportunity and protect human rights for persons who live in or visit the District of Columbia. The agency enforces local and federal human rights laws, including the DC Human Rights Act, by providing a legal process to those who believe they have been discriminated against. OHR also proactively enforces human rights in the District through Director's Inquiries, which allow it to identify and investigate practices and policies that may be discriminatory.

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