

**HAVE YOU** been told that an apartment complex has a “no kids” policy?

**WERE YOU** denied a job or apartment because you look or sound “foreign?”

**HAVE YOU** been called names or harassed in your apartment complex, place of employment, or by local businesses’ managers or staff because of your ethnic background?

**ARE YOU** paid less than a U.S. citizen for doing the same job?

If so, you may be a victim of discrimination.

## WE CAN HELP YOU

**Call The Equal Rights Center (ERC) today!** We will investigate your complaint and determine whether a violation has occurred. If appropriate, the ERC will assist you in pursuing administrative and legal remedies. **All ERC services are provided free of charge and are fully confidential.**

### File a complaint today:

- Call the ERC directly at (202) 234-3062, or
- Complete the ERC Complaint Form online at [www.equalrightscenter.org/complaint](http://www.equalrightscenter.org/complaint).

### Stay an informed resident by becoming an ERC member today:

- Call the ERC directly at (202) 234-3062, or
- Complete the ERC Membership Form online at [www.equalrightscenter.org/membership](http://www.equalrightscenter.org/membership).



[www.equalrightscenter.org](http://www.equalrightscenter.org)



The Equal Rights Center (ERC) is a comprehensive non-profit civil rights organization dedicated to identifying, challenging, and eliminating discrimination. With more than 25 years of advancing civil rights, today the ERC and our thousands of members address issues of discrimination in six areas: fair housing, fair employment, disability rights, access to public accommodations, access to government services, and immigrant rights.

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## HAVE YOU BEEN A VICTIM OF DISCRIMINATION BECAUSE YOU ARE AN IMMIGRANT?



**EQUAL RIGHTS CENTER**  
ADVANCING CIVIL RIGHTS

## THE NEED FOR CHANGE

In 2007, the number of immigrants in the United States was estimated to be 37.2 million – over one-tenth of our total population.

The D.C. metropolitan area, in particular, has one of the largest immigrant populations in the United States, with about 20 percent of residents being foreign born, compared to 12.5 percent nationwide.

Yet because of language differences, cultural unfamiliarity, distrust and fear of government, apprehensions about filing complaints, lack of knowledge of civil rights, and lack of documentation, immigrants are particularly vulnerable to civil rights violations. These barriers prevent immigrants from fully exercising their civil rights.



## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Civil rights laws protect ALL people from illegal discrimination in housing, employment, places of business, and government services, regardless of what your immigration status may be.

This means that based on your country of origin, whether you have an accent, or how you look, employers, places of business, landlords, and property managers cannot:

- 1) **Deny you a job, housing, or services,**
- 2) **Provide you with worse services, housing options, or wages,**
- 3) **Physically or sexually assault you, tell offensive jokes, call you names, or intimidate you, or**
- 4) **In any other way discriminate against you.**

Of the seven federally protected classes, immigrants most often find protection under one of four classes:

- 1) **National Origin** refers to the country in which a person was born, or from which the person's ancestors came. Examples include, but are not limited to: Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander.
- 2) **Race** refers to physical attributes. Examples include, but are not limited to: white, black, and American Indian.
- 3) **Familial Status** refers to families with one or more children under age 18.
- 4) **Religion** refers to one's beliefs and practices, including prayer, dress, and rituals. Examples include, but are not limited to: Islam, Judaism and Buddhism.

Federally protected classes include:

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Sex
- Religion
- Whether one has children
- Mental or Physical Disability

State or locally protected classes may also include:

- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Marital Status
- Source of Income
- Domestic Violence Survivor
- Age

## THE ERC IMPACT

- When Manassas, Va.'s "occupancy inspections" began targeting Latino residents, the ERC and 11 Latinos sued the City of Manassas for national origin discrimination. The suit resulted in a settlement that included sweeping changes to City policies to protect Manassas' Latino population and everyone's fair housing rights.
- Four families from El Salvador complained that their landlord was discriminating against them based on their national origin. Their requests went unanswered, and they were verbally assaulted and threatened with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The ERC mediated a settlement in favor of the four families.

*"The staff of the ERC was helpful in explaining our rights and eventually helping us find justice. The bilingual and expert staff demonstrated professionalism and thoroughness throughout the investigative process... We feel very fortunate to have found the services of the ERC."*

- Orlando Argueta, ERC client