

# DEPARTMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL



**DANA NESSEL, ATTORNEY GENERAL**

G. Mennen Williams Building  
P.O. Box 30212, Lansing, MI 48909  
[www.michigan.gov/ag](http://www.michigan.gov/ag)

The Attorney General is a constitutional officer, the chief law enforcement officer of the state and the head of the state's executive branch Department of Attorney General. The duties of the Attorney General are prescribed by constitution, statute, court decisions, and tradition. The department predates statehood, having been established by an 1807 territorial act and it has been preserved in every constitution of this state since then.

The Attorney General is the lawyer for the state of Michigan. When public legal matters arise, she renders opinions on matters of law and provides legal counsel for the Legislature and for each officer, department, board and commission of state government. She provides legal representation in court actions and assists in the conduct of official hearings held by state agencies.

The Attorney General's Office is also the People's Law Firm and may intervene in any lawsuit, criminal or civil, when the interest of the people of the state of Michigan require. She advises and supervises prosecuting attorneys throughout Michigan and possesses certain investigative powers, including the power to investigate allegations of election fraud and complaints for the removal of public officials. She also may request grand jury investigations of crime in Michigan.

By virtue of the office, the Attorney General is a member of various state boards and commissions, including, but not limited to, the State Administrative Board, State Employees' Retirement Board, Judges' Retirement Board and the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards.

While the Attorney General is responsible for representing various state agencies and officials, there is no law that authorizes her to provide legal services to private individuals or appear in court on their behalf.

To assist in the myriad functions of the department, the Attorney General employs a staff of more than 500 people. This includes assistant attorneys general, who must be members of the State Bar of Michigan and appointed under Michigan Civil Service rules, and more than 125 investigators and support staff to assist in carrying out the mandate of the office. All legal work is performed by the assistant attorneys general, including drafting of opinions and legal documents and representation of client agencies, is done in the name of the Attorney General and with her approval or the approval of her designee.

The department is organized into five bureaus: Criminal Justice, Consumer Protection, Civil Rights and Civil Litigation, Environmental and Real Property, and State Government. It also has four newly established units, including the Hate Crimes Unit, Payroll Fraud Unit, Auto-Insurance Fraud Unit, and Conviction Integrity Unit. Additionally, the department includes the Prosecuting Attorneys Coordinating Council, an autonomous entity.

The Attorney General maintains offices in Lansing and Detroit.

# DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS



**JOHN E. JOHNSON JR., DIRECTOR**

3054 W. Grand Boulevard, Suite 3-600  
Detroit, MI 48202  
[www.michigan.gov/mdcr](http://www.michigan.gov/mdcr)

The Michigan Civil Rights Commission was created by the Michigan Constitution of 1963 to carry out the guarantees against discrimination articulated in Article I, Section 2. As further stated in Art. V, Sec. 29, the state constitution directs the commission to investigate alleged discrimination against any person because of religion, race, color, or national origin and to "secure the equal protection of such civil rights without such discrimination." Public Acts 453 and 220 of 1976 and subsequent amendments have added sex, age, marital status, height, weight, arrest record, genetic disposition, and physical and mental disabilities to the original four protected categories.

The Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) was established in 1965 to provide a staff complement to the policy-making responsibilities of the commission. In 1991, the department was expanded when the Michigan Women's Commission was transferred from the Department of Management and Budget to this agency by executive order. In April 2011, the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, the Hispanic/Latino Commission and the Division on Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing were moved to MDCR, also through executive order. In 2014, the State Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance Director and staff were transferred to MDCR from the Department of Technology, Management and Budget.

The Department of Civil Rights enforces the state's protections against illegal discrimination primarily by investigating discrimination complaints. The department works to prevent discrimination through programs that promote voluntary compliance with civil rights laws and provides information and services to businesses on diversity initiatives, procurement opportunities and equal employment law. Staff and allies also work to prevent discrimination through statewide educational initiatives on bullying awareness, eradicating hate crimes, building community response to bias-related incidents, improving living and working conditions for migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and through the Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust groups across Michigan.

The department has offices in Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Marquette. A complaint may be filed at any of the department's offices, if the alleged discrimination has occurred within the past 180 days; complaints may also be filed online.