

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Proposed Snohomish County Human Rights Ordinance
Presented by
The Snohomish County Citizens' Committee for Human Rights
July 16, 2008

What is the Snohomish County Human Rights Ordinance?

The Snohomish County Human Rights Ordinance is designed to protect all people who live and work in Snohomish County from discrimination and sexual harassment in employment, public accommodations, housing, credit transactions, County services and County contracting.

What does the ordinance do?

The Snohomish County Human Rights Ordinance prohibits the above forms of discrimination when they are based upon a person's race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military status, military discharge status, source of income, gender identity, or housing status. Terminology used in the ordinance is defined. The ordinance creates the Snohomish County Human Rights Commission and defines its duties.

Why is this ordinance necessary?

This ordinance is necessary to combat the effects of bias and bigotry throughout Snohomish County. For the period January 1, 1999 through December 31, 2007, the Washington State Human Rights Commission received and investigated 690 complaints arising out of Snohomish County. In order to more effectively and efficiently deal with such complaints in a timely manner, a local commission is necessary.

How will the ordinance be enforced?

The ordinance will be enforced by the Snohomish County Human Rights Commission. The commission has the authority to investigate, conciliate and conduct hearings on complaints of discrimination. Decisions of the commission are final and it may order a variety of remedies. The commission decisions may be appealed to the Snohomish County Superior Court. The commission is also authorized to develop and conduct educational programs designed to prevent discrimination before it occurs and to promote improved relations among the County's diverse racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and social groups.

How is the commission established and by whom?

The commission is comprised of seven members, five of whom are appointed by each of the five County Council members. The other two commissioners are appointed by the County Executive and the County Sheriff. All are subject to confirmation by the County Council.