



## Know Your Rights

# Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: Non-Discrimination in Public Accommodations

Federal civil rights law—Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—prohibits places of public accommodation from discriminating against people because of:

- *Race*
- *Color*
- *Religion*
- *National Origin*

Public accommodations are privately-owned spaces that serve and are open to the general public, including restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and places of exhibition or entertainment (such as a bar with live music, a sports stadium, or a movie theater). Title II does not cover all businesses open to the public; for example, retail stores that do not contain public areas where customers can buy and consume food are not covered.

## Your Civil Rights Under Title II

- You have the right to full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and arrangements in any place of public accommodation.
- A place of public accommodation cannot treat you worse than other patrons because of your race, color, religion, or national origin.
- You have the right to bring your own lawsuit when you believe you have been discriminated against by a place of public accommodation. Title II allows you to get a court order to stop the discrimination; you cannot get money damages under Title II.
- The Civil Rights Division can bring a Title II lawsuit where there is a pattern or practice of discrimination.

## Contact Us

If you believe you have been denied access to or equal enjoyment of a public accommodation because of race, color, religion, or national origin, and there is a pattern or practice of this type of discrimination, you can contact the Justice Department:



by phone at:  
**202-514-4713** or  
**800-896-7743**,



by e-mail at:  
[fairhousing@usdoj.gov](mailto:fairhousing@usdoj.gov),  
or



using our online portal:  
[civilrights.justice.gov](https://civilrights.justice.gov).



## Title II Enforcement Examples

- *Hotel and sports bar discriminated against Native American customers*

In *United States v. Retsel Corporation* (2023), the Division filed a [lawsuit](#) against owners of a hotel and bar for making public comments that Native Americans were not allowed on the property and turning away Native Americans who tried to book hotel rooms. The [settlement](#) required the owners to adopt a non-discrimination policy, barred one of the owners from leading the company or managing the hotel for four years, and required the owners to issue a public apology to tribal organizations in South Dakota and the Great Plains region.

- *Sports bar admission practices discouraged and denied entrance based on race and national origin*

In *United States v. Jarrah* (2018), the Division sued a sports bar for discriminatory admission practices. The sports bar owners explicitly instructed employees to deny admission to Black, Hispanic and Asian-American patrons, and issued the instruction using racial slurs. Under the [settlement](#), the owners were required to ensure that the bar's employees followed Title II's anti-discrimination provisions. The settlement also required the owners to create a system for receiving and investigating complaints of discrimination.

- *Hotel revoked offer to host annual convention based on national origin*

The Midwest Federation of American Syrian-Lebanese Clubs complained that Marriott International violated Title II on the afternoon of September 11, 2001, when Marriott revoked its previous offer to host the Midwest Federation's 2002 annual convention in Des Moines. In a [settlement](#) with the United States, Marriott agreed to issue a formal written apology for its conduct and agreed to other relief.

### *These situations could also violate Title II:*

- A hotel charges Black guests higher rates than white guests or denies Black guests but not white guests the right to rent luxury suites.
- A bar turns away Sikh patrons because they are wearing turbans. The bar tells the patrons that the only types of headwear it allows are baseball caps and cowboy hats.
- A public beach club advises its members that the club does not admit Jews and that members may not invite Jewish guests to use the club's facilities.
- In a restaurant, Asian American customers wait for an hour to be served, while white customers are routinely served promptly.