

REPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT ABUSE

A GUIDE FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE



Transgender Law Center



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DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this guide is not legal advice. If you have questions or concerns about a specific situation, you should speak to an attorney in your area. The information contained in this guide is as up-to-date and accurate as possible at the time of publication, but laws and circumstances are constantly changing. If you have questions specific to your situation, contact Transgender Law Center’s Legal Information Helpdesk at www.transgenderlawcenter.org/legalinfo.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTES ABOUT THIS GUIDE

You have a right to report harassment, abuse, and discriminatory treatment by law enforcement. There are many things to consider and filing a formal complaint may not be right for everyone. Surviving a negative, harmful, or violent encounter with law enforcement can be traumatic and you may need time to recover and process what happened. However, if you do decide to file a complaint, you should **avoid delay**—many places require complaints to be filed within a specific period of time (often within 60 or 90 days) in order for them to be actively investigated.

This guide is intended to briefly provide guidance on some ways you may be able to formally address abuse by law enforcement. This guide is designed for transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming people, but a lot of the information will be helpful to others. If you are interested in information that could help you prepare for interacting with law enforcement, Transgender Law Center has created a guide to assist you— **Transgender People & Law Enforcement Interactions: Rights & Realities**.



WHY FILE A COMPLAINT?

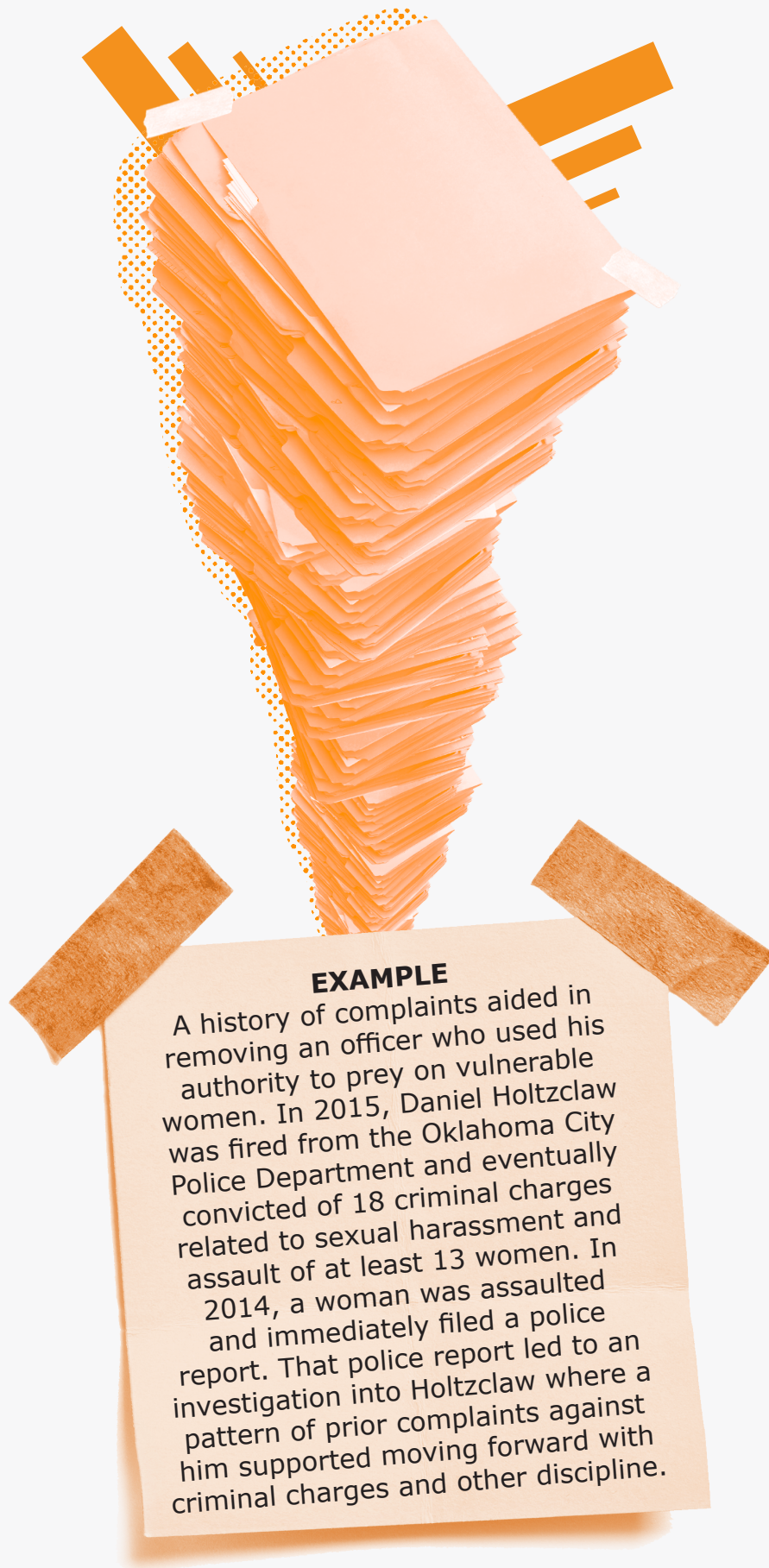
The police, and other law enforcement officers, regularly abuse their authority. Sometimes their abuses are directed at the communities they allegedly serve. Common law enforcement officer abuses include:

- ✘ Misgendering
- ✘ Verbal harassment
- ✘ Unnecessary and invasive questions about someone’s gender
- ✘ Arrest for no reason or for a made-up reason
- ✘ Physical attack or use of unnecessary or excessive force
- ✘ Sexual assault or harassment

Many cities and states, and in some cases, federal agencies have procedures to file complaints against a government official who has violated your rights or treated you inappropriately. While the results of filing a complaint can be inadequate, there are reasons you may want to file a complaint.

Filing a complaint creates a record.

Even if nothing immediately happens in response to your complaint, it is possible people will file similar complaints in the future and someone will take notice of a pattern of illegal behavior. That next person will benefit from the fact that they, or their lawyer, can say, **“this officer has had prior complaints.”**



EXAMPLE

A history of complaints aided in removing an officer who used his authority to prey on vulnerable women. In 2015, Daniel Holtzclaw was fired from the Oklahoma City Police Department and eventually convicted of 18 criminal charges related to sexual harassment and assault of at least 13 women. In 2014, a woman was assaulted and immediately filed a police report. That police report led to an investigation into Holtzclaw where a pattern of prior complaints against him supported moving forward with criminal charges and other discipline.

YOUR OPTIONS FOR FILING A COMPLAINT

The following is an overview of some avenues you may have to address wrongdoing by law enforcement. In addition to the legal protections you might have under federal and state laws, there may be additional options in your area, such as local police complaint review boards. For example, in New York City, an independent agency, the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) can receive complaints against New York City police officers, assign investigators to take statements from the complainant and witnesses, gather evidence, and interview the police officers involved. If the CCRB determines that an officer committed misconduct, it can recommend the officer be disciplined.

Not everyone will want or need to use every tactic, and some strategies may actually be inappropriate for some people. For instance, if you live in a small town and know a complaint filed directly with the law enforcement agency will not be handled fairly, it may be more effective to file a complaint with a state or federal agency.

While you may have additional options, this guide will discuss **1) Preparing to File Your Complaint; 2) Filing a Complaint with a Local Civilian Review Board; 3) Filing a Complaint with a State or Local Law Enforcement Agency; 4) Filing a Complaint with Federal Agencies; and 5) Additional Options.**

If you have any doubts or are considering legal action, consult an attorney you trust before taking action. Transgender Law Center may be able to direct you to a local attorney who could advise you if you decide to take legal action; contact our Legal Information Helpdesk at www.transgenderlawcenter.org/legalinfo.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH A CRIME

Your defense attorney is the best person to answer questions about due process and arrest procedures (use of search warrants, forced confessions, Miranda, entrapment, etc.). All information about the circumstances of your arrest should be shared with your attorney—that information could affect the outcome of your case. **You should not take any of the other steps described in this guide until you have consulted with your criminal defense attorneys.** This is important because whatever you say to a law enforcement officer could be used against you in court. If you cannot afford a lawyer and are charged with a crime that could result in jail time, you are entitled to a public defender.

If you have a criminal case against you and would like to file a complaint, speak to your lawyer. Many public defender offices have an established procedure for accepting and investigating complaints.

We know that, unfortunately, many transgender people encounter bias and misunderstanding even from the attorneys who are supposed to serve as their advocates. For detailed information about responding to ineffective or biased attorneys or court officials, please read pages 13 and 14 of this guide.

PREPARING TO FILE YOUR COMPLAINT

The information below is meant to be as comprehensive and exhaustive as possible. You may not be able to do everything listed and you may not want to. For some people, calling the law enforcement agency and making a complaint over the phone may be enough—you know what makes sense for you. **You do not have to do this alone.** If you have a lawyer, speak with them. Reach out to trusted friends, family, and community organizations for support.

Organize Your Information

Before you file a complaint, it will be useful to **review all the information you have gathered related to the incident.** It can be helpful to write out a timeline of events to be clear about how the incident unfolded. Do your best to write a thorough summary of what happened—include as much detail as possible and reference any supporting documentation such as witness statements, medical records, and/or audio or video recordings taken of the incident.

When possible, **contact anyone who witnessed the incident.** Ask them to provide you a detailed, written statement about what they witnessed and, if possible, have that statement notarized. **Gather any photographic or video evidence related to the incident** and make copies to submit along with



your complaint. It is important to note that it is okay if you do not have any photos or witness statements—you can still file a complaint!

Incident Report

The law enforcement agency should have an 'incident report' related to your interaction with them. Although there may be a specific process for requesting the incident report, it should be readily available to you. You can call the general information line for the agency and ask where and how you can obtain a copy of your incident report. If you are having trouble, consider filing an open records/freedom of information request for the incident report. Ballotpedia.org has a useful, comprehensive guide to assist people filing public records requests at https://ballotpedia.org/Requesting_copies_of_public_records.

Additional Public Records

After obtaining the incident report, you may become aware of additional documents that would support your complaint; some examples are listed in the next section. Most states have an open records/freedom of information law that the public can use to access government information, though the law may have a specific name in your state. In many states it is possible to file an open records request online or by email.

Possible Records Checklist



Your complaint is more likely to be taken seriously if you are able to provide as much information as possible and organize that information into an understandable story. Collecting this information could also be useful if you decide to speak with an attorney about a possible lawsuit, discuss the incident with public officials, or take your story to the media.





CAUTION

Records requests can often take months, or longer, to receive a response. It is likely that your complaint must be filed within a certain amount of time (often within 60 or 90 days); do not wait on a response to your records requests to file your complaint. Be sure to submit your complaint within any specified time limits. You can make a note on your complaint that you have outstanding records requests and request the opportunity to provide additional information if the requests have useful information.



Deciding Where to File Your Complaint

This guide provides information on filing your complaint with a local civilian review board, state or local law enforcement agencies, and the United States Department of Justice (for both civil and criminal matters), and state or local law enforcement agencies. The chart below provides general information you can use to determine which option might be best for you. You can file a complaint with more than one place at a time. If you are considering a lawsuit, you should speak with an attorney before filing your complaint.

| | WHY FILE HERE? | PROS | CONS |
|---|--|--|--|
|  <p>Civilian Review Board (city or county)</p> | <p>You want an independent agency to investigate your complaint and make a determination and/or recommendation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Independent from law enforcement ✓ May have staff to assist you to file ✓ Purpose is to investigate complaints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ May take a long time to complete investigation ✗ May not exist in your area |
|  <p>State or Local Agency (state, city, or county)</p> | <p>You want a local agency to be aware of the incident, to investigate, and to take action</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Likely to have more direct information about the incident | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Agencies rarely hold themselves or their officers accountable ✗ May not receive update on investigation |
|  <p>US Department of Justice – Civil Rights Division (federal)</p> | <p>Your rights were violated and you want the federal government to be aware and/or investigate.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Independent from local law enforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Unlikely to receive any update on investigation |
|  <p>US Department of Justice – Criminal Section of Civil Rights Division / FBI(federal)</p> | <p>You believe officers or an agency acted illegally and want the federal government to be aware and/or investigate.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Independent from local law enforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Unlikely to receive any update on investigation |

FILING A COMPLAINT WITH A LOCAL CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARD

Increasingly, law enforcement agencies have citizen committees or review boards that evaluate law enforcement policies and complaints against officers. For example, the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) in New York City mentioned above under 'Why File a Complaint?' If the agency you are filing a complaint about has one of these committees or review boards, send copies of the complaint you created to them as well.

The National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement has developed a fairly comprehensive list of independent agencies and civilian boards that provide oversight for particular police departments. The list is available at nacole.org/police-oversight-by-jurisdiction-usa.

You can search for a similar organization in your area. Try searching for "citizens committee" or "civilian review board" and the name of the law enforcement agency in your area.

FILING A COMPLAINT WITH A STATE OR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

Many law enforcement agencies have an internal affairs department (IAD), or similar department, that is tasked with investigating allegations of misconduct and illegal activity by its officers. Depending on the size of the agency, there may not be a separate investigatory department, but someone at the agency should be able to advise you on where and how to file your complaint. Additionally, many state attorney general offices have departments or units that accept complaints about law enforcement officers in the state. In general, it is best if you file your initial complaint in writing rather than over the phone.

Transgender Law Center has compiled a resource list with information and links related to state and large city police complaint forms and/or instructions for filing complaints (where available). The list also provides links to local resources and information on laws related to false complaints. [Link to State Police Complaint Resource](#). [Link to Large City Police Complaint Resource](#). Another helpful source for information on filing a complaint directly with a local agency is OpenPolice.org.

Compose & Send Your Complaint

First, check to see if the agency where you intend to file your complaint has a standard form. Often, a standard complaint form will be available on the agency's website, or you can do an internet search for "[agency's name] complaint form" and see if something useful turns up. If the agency has a specific form, or requests specific information, be sure to include it with your complaint.

Write a letter explaining that you are filing a complaint and want the complaint to be fully investigated. If possible, have your written account of the incident notarized. Attach your written record of the incident and include as much detail as possible such as names and statements of witnesses or photographs and video related to the incident.

Be sure to make copies of your letter, written record, and other supporting documents. Keep a copy of everything you send as part of your complaint. Send your complaint by certified mail, if possible. With certified mail you will receive a tracking number and will have proof of when it was sent and delivered.

Possible Interview

After receiving your written complaint, investigators may want to interview you face-to-face. Consider taking someone you trust with you—a friend, family member, or preferably, a lawyer. Having someone you trust will help you feel more comfortable and lessen the chances that you will feel intimidated.

Before the interview, reread the documents you sent so you remember what you said in your complaint. Take a copy of your written record and supporting documents to help you stay focused during the interview. Pause before answering each question and ask yourself, **“Did I include this information in my written record?”** Keep going back to your written record to answer questions and guide the conversation.

It is important to know that memory can change over time. It is normal for memories to fade, for you to remember additional details of an event later on, or for your perception of an event to change over time. This is one reason why it is helpful to write down what happened while the incident is fresh in your mind and to refer back to those notes.

When answering questions about the incident it is important to provide information and details consistent with your written account or previous answers, but to also be truthful. If you do not know the answer to a question, or do not clearly remember details about what is being asked, it is okay to say, **“that information is in my written complaint”** or **“I’m having difficulty remembering right now.”** It is better to not answer a question than to try to fill in the gaps by guessing or trying to force yourself to remember.

Remember that you are not the subject of the investigation and discourage questions that are not directly related to the incident you have reported. Do not answer questions that seem unreasonable or are invasive about you and your background. Remain polite, but firm—**“I’m here to provide information about the incident in my complaint, not so that you can investigate me. I would appreciate if we could continue to talk about the incident. Do you have any more questions about my complaint, the incident, or the officers involved?”** Leave when the investigator has no more questions on those topics.

You have the right to refuse to answer any questions that seem irrelevant or seem designed to incriminate or shift the blame for what happened to you. Before the interview begins, you may want to ask if you can record the conversation for your records. You do not have the same rights to record the interview as you would with a law enforcement officer in a public setting, so getting permission beforehand is advisable.



Potential Problems

Some people have been aggressively dissuaded from filing a complaint. Most states have laws related to filing false complaints with or against law enforcement agencies and there have been instances of complainants being threatened with arrest or other sanctions for filing a complaint. Transgender Law Center’s **Police Complaint Resource List** provides information on many of these laws.

It is possible that law enforcement officers will target or harass you, or people you know, after you have filed a complaint. There are numerous, well-documented cases of people who filed complaints being followed, surveilled, and harassed by law enforcement officers. People have been pressured to withdraw or change their complaints and have sometimes been subject to retaliatory arrest.

If you are intimidated or harassed in the process of making a complaint, you can use the same strategies related to handling other negative interactions with law enforcement—remain calm and gather as much information as possible. If it is safe, ask for names, badge numbers, and make a note of the date, time, and location. Do not argue with officers who are harassing you about your complaint. If possible, consult with an attorney. You may wish to file an additional complaint related to the harassment.

Ultimately it is your decision whether or not to file a complaint. Not filing a complaint makes it less likely the incident will ever be formally addressed or that any officers involved will be required to answer for what they have done to you.

FILING A COMPLAINT WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES

There are a number of federal laws that prohibit law enforcement officers from intentionally depriving anyone of their rights, which includes a broad spectrum of misconduct. The United States Department of Justice’s (DOJ) website discusses these laws in some detail at <https://www.justice.gov/crt/addressing-police-misconduct-laws-enforced-department-justice>.

Note: Generally, the complaints to federal agencies discussed below must be filed within 180 days of the incident.

Some of the applicable laws are criminal laws and others are civil laws. The [DOJ’s website](#) explains the difference between criminal and civil laws addressing police misconduct and how they are enforced. Civil laws and criminal laws are different in important ways and those differences can be confusing.

Difference Between Criminal and Civil Cases

A single incident can be the basis for the DOJ to start both a civil and criminal case. In a **criminal case**, the DOJ can bring a case against law enforcement officers who have been accused of committing crimes that deprive individuals of their rights (i.e. excessive force, sexual assault, false arrest, theft, or falsifying evidence). In a **civil case**, the DOJ can bring a case or otherwise investigate a government or law enforcement agency.

In a **criminal case**, the DOJ attempts to punish someone for violating criminal laws and usually seeks imprisonment or some other punishment. In a **civil case**, the DOJ attempts

to change law enforcement practices and policies that contribute to officer misconduct. In a **civil case**, the DOJ may also require a government or law enforcement agency to pay a victim of the agency's misconduct.

You have a right to file a criminal or civil complaint against a law enforcement officer, even if you have already filed a complaint directly with the law enforcement agency. While different federal offices handle civil and criminal complaints, your complaint may be forwarded to another office if the office you report the incident to is unable to take action. Remember, regardless of which federal office you submit the complaint to, you generally need to file the complaint within 180 days of the incident.

Submitting Your Complaint to the DOJ

The Civil Rights Division of the DOJ (responsible for investigating civil complaints) has an online form that will guide you through the complaint process and allow you to submit your complaint online. The form allows you to submit the complaint anonymously. You can access the form at <https://civilrights.justice.gov/report>.

Unfortunately, the DOJ does not currently have a standard, online form for submitting criminal complaints. The suggestions below can be used to file either a civil or criminal complaint. Below you will also find the various addresses you can send your complaint to.

It can be helpful to write a short cover letter explaining that you are filing a complaint and want the complaint to be fully investigated. If possible, have your written account of the incident notarized. Attach your written record

of the incident and include as much detail as possible such as names and statements of witnesses or photographs and video related to the incident.

The DOJ website asks that your complaint include:

- Your name, address, and telephone number(s).
- The name(s) of the law enforcement agency (or agencies) involved.
- A description of the conduct you believe violated the law, with as many details as possible. You should include: the dates and times of incident(s); any injuries sustained; the name(s), or other identifying information, of the officer(s) involved (if possible); and any other examples of similar misconduct.
- The names and telephone numbers of witnesses who can support your allegations.
- If you believe that the misconduct is based on your race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability, you should identify the basis and explain what led you to believe that you were treated in a discriminatory manner (i.e., differently from persons of another race, sex, etc.).



Be sure to make copies of your letter, written record, and other supporting documents. Keep a copy of everything you send as part of your complaint. You can still submit a complaint even if the only evidence you have is your written statement of what happened. Send your complaint by certified mail, if possible. With certified mail you will receive a tracking number and will have proof of when it was sent and delivered.

Criminal Enforcement

If you would like to file a complaint against a law enforcement officer or agency alleging a violation of criminal laws, you may contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which is responsible for investigating allegations of criminal denials of your civil rights. You may also contact the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) in your district. The FBI and USAOs have offices in most major cities and have publicly listed phone numbers. You can find your local office at <https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us>.

Remember: If you have an active criminal case against you, talk to your lawyer before moving forward.

In addition, you may send a written complaint to:

Criminal Section
Civil Rights Division
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., PHB
Washington, D.C. 20530

Civil Enforcement

If you would like to file a complaint alleging violations of the Police Misconduct Statute (34 U.S.C. § 12601), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.), or the Office of Justice Programs Statute (34 U.S.C. § 10228), you may send a written complaint to:

Federal Coordination and Compliance Section
Civil Rights Division
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., NWB
Washington, D.C. 20530

You may also call the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section's toll-free number for information and a complaint form, at (888) TITLE-06 (848-5306) (voice and TDD).

DOJ's Special Litigation Section

DOJ's Special Litigation Section receives complaints of law enforcement agencies engaging in discrimination, including sex discrimination. Other agencies may forward them complaints, but you may also file a complaint with them directly by writing to this address:

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Special Litigation Section - 4CON
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Special Litigation Section can be reached by telephone: (202) 514-6255 or toll-free at (877) 218-5228.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

Get Involved

There are local and national groups across the country working to increase accountability for law enforcement and to change the ways we think about safety and policing. Getting involved locally or teaming up with a national campaign can connect you to work for change that is often more impactful than the change we can obtain through the courts. The 'Additional Resources' section of this guide lists a few organizations that can connect you to this work.

File a Civil Lawsuit

If you have been injured by or otherwise had your rights violated by a law enforcement officer, you may be able to file a lawsuit against the individual officer(s), the law enforcement agency, and/or other entities. The remedies available through a civil lawsuit include money, an order from the court instructing a person or organization to change their policies, give trainings, or an order to do or not do something.

Common issues in civil suits against law enforcement:

- ✘ False arrest or detaining someone for an unreasonable amount of time;
- ✘ Use of force that is excessive and unreasonable given the circumstances;
- ✘ Unlawful search and seizure;
- ✘ Physical, sexual, or verbal abuse; or
- ✘ Discrimination due to race, sex, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, or religion.

Filing a civil lawsuit against law enforcement is a long process but must be started within a specific amount of time (these time limits are called statutes of limitations) and there are often other notification requirements. Before filing a case, you should speak with an attorney in your area who has experience with these types of cases.

Pursue Criminal Charges

While some of the complaint procedures outlined in this guide can ultimately lead to criminal charges, you may also wish to directly advocate for charges to be brought against a law enforcement officer who has committed a crime. You can directly contact your local district attorney's office to share your complaint and ask that the office to investigate the incident as a crime.

Again, if you currently have an open case against you, speaking with a prosecutor, especially one who is trying to convict you of a crime, should only be done in consultation with an attorney or knowledgeable advocate. It is important to note that while prosecutors are supposed to be separate from law enforcement agencies, they often work very closely together and have strong ties. It is very rare for a prosecutor's office to charge law enforcement officers with crimes.

ISSUES WITH YOUR ATTORNEY OR COURT OFFICIALS

If you have hired a private attorney to defend you and do not believe they are doing a good job representing you, you have the right to find and hire a different attorney. If you alert the court to the issue, you will likely be given some time to look for a new attorney.

If you are having issues with a public defender, your options for addressing the issues will depend on where you are located. In many cases, your public defender will work for a state or county public defender office, which should have an established procedure for accepting and investigating complaints against its attorneys.

While many public defender organizations are underfunded and individual public defenders often have many clients at one time, you and your case are important,

and your attorney has an ethical obligation to keep you informed about the status of your case. If your lawyer treats you in an inappropriate or discriminatory way, such as refusing to use your stated name and pronouns or making derogatory comments about your gender, it should be taken seriously.

Transgender Law Center created **Tips for Lawyers Working with Transgender Clients and Coworkers** to assist lawyers who may not have experience representing transgender people. Additionally, TLC may be able to provide technical assistance on specific issues if a lawyer reaches out to our Legal Information Helpdesk at www.transgenderlawcenter.org/legalinfo.

If your concerns about discrimination are not taken seriously and you believe it is negatively impacting your case, it is important to make that clear. It may be necessary to alert the judge in your case.

EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL

When you are the accused in a criminal case that could lead to time in jail or prison, you have a constitutional right to be represented by a lawyer. As part of that right, your lawyer must provide you 'effective assistance,' meaning they must take reasonable actions to defend you. If a lawyer holds discriminatory views against their client, that could lead them to take unreasonable actions in representing their client—including failing to challenge discrimination by the judge, opposing counsel, or witnesses; failing to call expert witnesses or introduce evidence that could strengthen your defense; or generally failing to work diligently on your behalf.

DUE PROCESS & RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL

'Due process' is the requirement that people be treated fairly, and that a case be decided using established rules and procedures. There is no complete list of what does and does not make a 'fair trial'—it depends on the unique circumstances of each case. If your lawyer, or someone else involved with your case, is openly discriminatory or hostile toward you because you are transgender, that could impact whether your trial is fair.



You should explain that your attorney holds discriminatory views about transgender people and those discriminatory views are depriving you of “effective assistance of counsel,” “due process,” and your “right to a fair trial” under the constitution of the United States, and likely your state’s constitution.

In some cases, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas, a judge may be responsible for assigning you an attorney instead of a public defender’s office. This situation can make raising concerns about your lawyer and having those concerns addressed more difficult.

Another avenue for making a complaint against a lawyer is to contact the local agency responsible for attorney discipline. The American Bar Association maintains a [list of each state’s agency responsible for disciplining lawyers](#) where you can file a complaint against an attorney.

If a judge is discriminating against you, you should alert your lawyer and ask them to address it. If your attorney is unable or unwilling to intervene and challenge the discrimination, you can file a complaint with the state’s judicial conduct commission. Lambda Legal maintains a [list of each state’s agency responsible for receiving complaints about judges](#). Additional information and support related to judicial bias is available through Lambda Legal’s Fair Courts Project.

There are a variety of ways to make a complaint against an attorney. How to make a complaint will depend on where you are located and what you hope to achieve. It is important to note that a complaint about your lawyer could result in the assignment of a new attorney to your case which could delay the final resolution of your case.

If your goal is to get a new lawyer, tell the judge on your case that you wish to fire your lawyer. The judge will likely ask some questions and you can share your concerns. Be clear about why you do not believe your lawyer can effectively represent you. Keep in mind that in some places, especially smaller cities and towns, the judge may be responsible for assigning lawyers. Judges may also act discriminatorily and lodging a complaint could negatively impact the outcome of your case.

If your goal is to correct your lawyer’s behavior or have the lawyer disciplined, you can direct your complaints to the lawyer’s employer and/or the bar association in your area. Your lawyer’s employer is more likely to speak to them directly and try to correct the behavior. A bar association or similar organization could potentially fine the lawyer, require them to attend training, or in severe cases suspend the lawyer’s license to practice. These complaints take a long time to resolve, often longer than your court case. The American Bar Association maintains a [list of each state’s agency responsible for disciplining lawyers](#).



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Surviving a negative encounter with law enforcement can be harrowing and you may need time to recover and process what happened. Your health and safety are priorities. Below are a few resources you can access if you need support. Reaching out to community, friends, and family can help break the isolation that people often feel after a traumatic event. You are important and deserve to be taken care of and supported.



IMMEDIATE SUPPORT

TRANS LIFELINE

877-565-8860
<https://translifeline.org/>

NATIONAL COALITION OF ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

<https://avp.org/ncavp-members/>

FORGE

<https://forge-forward.org/>

CENTERLINK LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER DIRECTORY

<https://www.lgbtcenters.org/LGBTCenters>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#8TOABOLITION

<https://www.8toabolition.com/>

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION (ACLU)

<https://www.aclu.org/>

ACLU AFFILIATES (FIND YOUR LOCAL AFFILIATE)

<https://www.aclu.org/about/affiliates>

ACLU – PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT (PREA) TOOLKIT: END THE ABUSE – PROTECTING LGBTI PRISONERS FROM SEXUAL ASSAULT

<https://www.aclu.org/other/prison-rape-elimination-act-prea-toolkit-end-abuse-protecting-lgbti-prisoners-sexual-assault>

BLACK & PINK

<https://www.blackandpink.org/>

CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

<https://ccrjustice.org/>

CREATING LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY & RESPONSIBILITY (CLEAR) PROJECT

<https://www.cunyclear.org/>

CRITICAL RESISTANCE

<http://criticalresistance.org/>

MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES

<https://m4bl.org/>

NATIONAL BAIL FUND NETWORK – DIRECTORY OF COMMUNITY BAIL FUNDS

<https://www.communityjusticeexchange.org/nbfn-directory>

NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD – KNOW YOUR RIGHTS RESOURCES

<https://www.nlg.org/know-your-rights/>

NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDERS GROUP’S LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS ADDRESSING POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

<https://www.nfg.org/resources/organizations-addressing-police-accountability-and-racial-justice-0>

SOLITARY WATCH – SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND THE LAW FACT SHEET

<https://solitarywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/FACT-SHEET-Solitary-Confinement-and-the-Law1.pdf>

TGI JUSTICE PROJECT

<http://www.tgijp.org/>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT – PRISONS AND JAIL STANDARDS

<https://www.prearesourcecenter.org/sites/default/files/library/prisonsandjailsfinalstandards.pdf>