

Turn to Us

Autumn 2021



**Independent Contractors
& Workplace
Discrimination**

No matter the type of workplace, workers expect that they will have protection from harassment and abuse. Unfortunately, many workers who have sought out more freedom in the “Gig Economy” are finding out that as independent contractors, they do not receive the same protections that traditional employees have from discriminatory conduct by their employers. Anti-discrimination laws in the United States protect employees from discriminatory conduct by their employers based on their age, sex, race, religion, national origin, disabilities, and other characteristics, by local, state, and federal laws. Independent contractors do not enjoy the benefits of these protections. Likewise, many social safety net programs like workers’ compensation and unemployment compensation are unavailable to independent contractors. While there are certainly potential benefits to having alternative work arrangements than traditional employer/employee relationships, workers should also carefully consider the loss of legal protection from companies they work for as independent contractors.