

60 Years of the Civil Rights Act of 1964



2024 Annual Report

Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations

Probe Police, Mayor Asks Racial Council

**Brutality Charge
At Hill District
Meeting Cited**

(Continued from Page 1)

proper investigation and action would of course have followed.

"As mayor, I am asking the (Civic Unity) Council to examine into the situation if it actually exists, and to report to me its findings."

Spaulding, a Hill District Negro, was arrested on the night of March 25 after a bullet fired from his gun felled Patrolman William Heagy. Heagy died on the operating table in Mercy Hospital later that night.

At 9:30 p. m. on March 28, Spaulding, who had been lodged in Central Station pending investigation of robberies perhaps committed by him, was found strangling to death in a noose made of a three-foot iron chain broken from his bunk.

He was pronounced dead on arrival at Allegheny General Hospital at 9:50 p. m.

Last week a meeting in the Hill District reached a point of disorder when the mayor arrived to speak. There were rumblings of brutality on the part of the police but no specific charges.

A ballistic's examination of the gun used by Spaulding showed that a bullet fired from it had entered the back of Patrolman Heagy, causing his death.

Purpose Outlined

In writing to the council, the mayor outlined its purpose. He said:

"... The Civic Unity Council was formed to make sure that all power of government and all the power of public opinion could be mobilized to make sure that the various elements who make up our city's population could live together in harmony and understanding. . . . Fundamental to this is . . . that the police power always be an instrument to protect those rights, and not a weapon to abuse them."

In conclusion the mayor said: "If there is particular mistreatment of Negro prisoners, we want it stopped. If there is a campaign of misstatement and suspicion being waged against the police, we want that stopped too."

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,
April 13, 1954

Plumbers' Union Told: Test Negroes

The Mayor's Commission on Human Relations has ordered a plumbers' union to give qualifying examinations to two Negro plumbers who have been seeking membership.

The order in effect caps the year-long campaign of the two applicants, John Anderson and Dudley Brumfield, to crack the all-white Plumbers Local Union No. 27.

Commission Chairman T. Z. Korsak said the union also must permit observers from the commission and the U. S. Department of Labor to be present at the examinations.

Mr. Korsak said the union must complete processing of the men's applications within 25 days and then schedule the examinations within 14 days.

The controversy had gone into public hearings Nov. 27 last year and Jan. 2 and 3 this year, but a stalemate existed until the commission's order yesterday.

The Pittsburgh Press,
April 24, 1964

Plumbers Union Fined \$400, Costs

**Hearing Waived
In Two Charges
Of Discrimination**

Plumbers Local No. 27, charged with discriminating against two Negroes who applied for membership, waived a hearing yesterday and was fined \$400 and \$18 costs by Magistrate John J. Florucci.

The case, brought by the City of Pittsburgh, now will go to County Court.

Yesterday's development was the latest in the case of John Anderson, 7257 Somerset St., and Dudley Brumfield, 7013 Bennett St., both Homewood, who have been turned down in their applications for membership. In addition to the union, two of its officers, Joseph Steimers, president, and Joseph Allen, secretary-treasurer, were named defendants.

Cited City Ordinance

The city, represented yesterday by Mrs. Marion Finkelhor, assistant city solicitor, charged Local 27 with violation of the Fair Employment Ordinance. Previously, the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations, after several hearings, ordered the union to give admittance examinations to Anderson and Brumfield, both Negroes.

The information, filed by City Solicitor David W. Craig, charged that Local 27 failed to process applications of Anderson and Brumfield for reasons of race in violation of the City ordinance.

The information also accused the union of failure to comply with a ruling of the Human Relations Commission of last May 27, ordering the union to cease discriminating for reasons of race in the admission of members or apprentices, and to schedule within five days examinations for the applicants.

Yesterday's hearing in Downtown Magistrate's Court was delayed when B. P. Jubelirer, the union's attorney, phoned and asked for a postponement. He was turned down by Mrs. Finkelhor on the grounds that a number of persons had been called to the hearing.

As a result, Attorney Stuart Savage represented the union and pleaded not guilty to the accusations made against Local 27.

Two Charges for Each

Louis J. Mason, executive director of the Human Relations Commission, had just begun to testify when Attorney Savage said the union wanted to waive the hearing, taking it into County Court. The city ordinance provides a maximum \$100 fine on each count, and the \$400 fine was ordered because two charges were made against Local 27 in behalf of both Anderson and Brumfield.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,
Sun-Telegraph
June 17, 1964

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Kevin Carroll and Courtney Smith for their work on compiling and designing this report.

Cover art by Kristin T. Hearp

Letter from Commission Leadership

Dear reader:

We are proud to present the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations 2024 Annual Report. Thank you to Courtney Smith and Kevin Carroll, the staff members who continue to make this report possible year after year.


In 2024, the Commission took time to stabilize and prepare for the future. All vacant staff positions were filled with the addition of a new Deputy Director and Senior Investigator, and Mayor Gainey appointed two new commissioners. The Commission also hired a new general solicitor for the first time since 2016. Finally, the Commission secured its contract with a consulting firm to complete a strategic plan in 2025.

Our staff prioritized conducting outreach so the community would be informed of their rights and responsibilities under the law prior to the federal election. Collaborations with community service providers allowed information to trickle down to the populations they serve. The first continued legal education course on the administrative process for employment discrimination complaints was held in partnership with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Staff also collaborated with the local Fair Housing Initiatives Program, the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh, to conduct three Fair Housing for Landlords trainings. We believe that those who know better do better and strive to provide the necessary information before individual complaints arise.

As the world evolves, so do the protections offered to the people of Pittsburgh. In 2024, the Commission worked with City Council District 5 to pass medical marijuana patient protections in employment. Those who legally utilize medicinal marijuana under Pennsylvania law are protected from being rejected from an employment opportunity due to a positive THC drug test. For more information on exempt positions, liable employers, and more, please see the fact sheets on our website.

We thank our commissioners for their continued support in trying times. This work cannot be done without the community members who guide our efforts and affirm the case determinations. We welcome others who feel moved to affect change to apply to become commissioners in the coming years. The Commissioner Fact Sheet is included in this report as a guide to the expectations and responsibilities it entails.

Very truly yours,



Teaira Collins
Chairperson



Rachel Shepherd
Executive Director



PghCHR History

1952

Creation of the **Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC)**

1959

Pittsburgh City Council passes the **Fair Housing Ordinance**

1976

Pittsburgh passes its **Home Rule Charter** which allows Pittsburgh to protect classes not covered by federal or state law

1978

Solicitation, Blockbusting, and Redlining tactics are made illegal in Pittsburgh, bringing the city in line with the federal **Fair Housing Act of 1968**

1990

Passage of the federal **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. The City of Pittsburgh also adds **Sexual Orientation** to the list of classes protected against discrimination

1997

The Commission is granted **Substantial Equivalency Status** by the U.S. Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HUD), allowing for **Dual Filing** of complaints

2016

Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence is added to the list of classes protected against discrimination in housing

2020

Preferred Language, Citizenship Status, and Natural Hairstyle (CROWN Act) is passed, adding more discrimination protections

2023

Protections for **Survivors of Domestic Violence** are expanded in housing to better protect those fleeing violence

1946

Creation of the **Civil Unity Council (CUC)**

1955

Merger of the **FEPC** and **CUC** to form the **Commission on Human Relations**

1969

Sex added to the list of classes protected against discrimination

1977

The Commission is designated as a **706 Agency** by the EEOC which allows for the **Dual Filing** of complaints under federal and local law

1980

Age (over 40) and **Handicap Disability** added to the list of classes protected against discrimination; the **Human Relations Ordinance** is also added to City Code

1992

Familial Status is added to the list of classes protected against discrimination in housing

2014

Gender Identity and Expression are added to the list of classes protected against discrimination

2019

Pregnancy (and partners of pregnant people) is added to the list of classes protected against employment discrimination, making Pittsburgh the first city to protect partners of pregnant individuals

2021

Protections for **Survivors of Domestic Violence** are expanded to cover discrimination in employment

2024

Medical Marijuana Patients are added to the list of classes protected for employment discrimination

2024 at a Glance

During 2024,

The Commission received 282 inquiries and opened 94 new discrimination investigations.



The staff fully implemented a new case management system that is tied to the public portal. This keeps both the staff and the complainant's up to date on what is happening with investigations.

\$1,215, 324

total monetary relief obtained for Complainants through mediating settlements



Employment protections were added for Medical Marijuana Patients, making the hiring process more equitable when drug testing is involved.



Commission on Human Relations

Vision

PghCHR envisions a Pittsburgh where all of its residents, workers, and visitors thrive free from discrimination.



Mission

PghCHR is a civil rights organization focused on investigating instances of discrimination, providing outreach and education to communities about their rights, and recommending necessary protections in our City Code to provide all people in Pittsburgh with equal opportunities. Our goal is to decrease unfair treatment and discrimination by promoting justice and understanding among communities in the City of Pittsburgh.



Scope

Chapters 651 – 659 of the Pittsburgh City Code provide civil rights protections for individuals who live in, work in, or visit the City of Pittsburgh based on: Age (over 40, employment only), Ancestry, Color, Familial Status (housing only), Gender Identity/Expression, Handicap/Disability, National Origin, Place of Birth, Preferred Language (housing and public accommodations only), Race, Religion, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Citizenship or Immigration Status (housing and public accommodations only), Hair and Head Coverings, Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence (employment and housing only), Pregnancy (employment only), the Use of Support Animals because of the Handicap/Disability of the User, Medical Marijuana Patients (employment only), in addition to protecting individuals in these protected classes from retaliation for reporting and/or being involved in a case alleging discrimination.

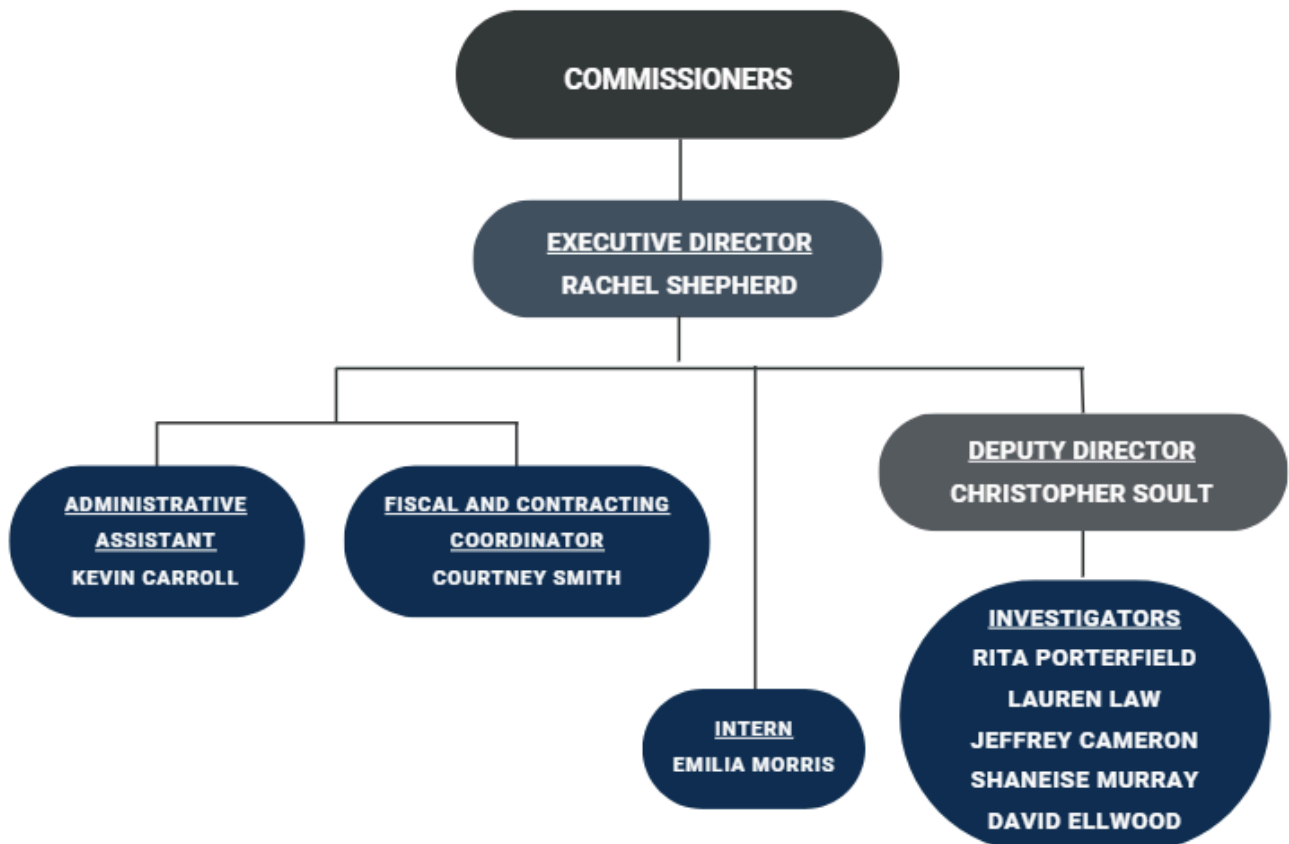
Commissioners

Teaira Collins, Chairperson
Genevieve Rosselot, 1st Vice Chairperson
Rabbi Jamie Gibson, 2nd Vice Chairperson
Alberto Benzaquén, Secretary
Carleen King, Treasurer
Rev. Liddy Barlow, Chair Emeritus
Namita Dwarakanath
Luz Esneda Blandon
Mary Jayne McCullough
Kyle Webster



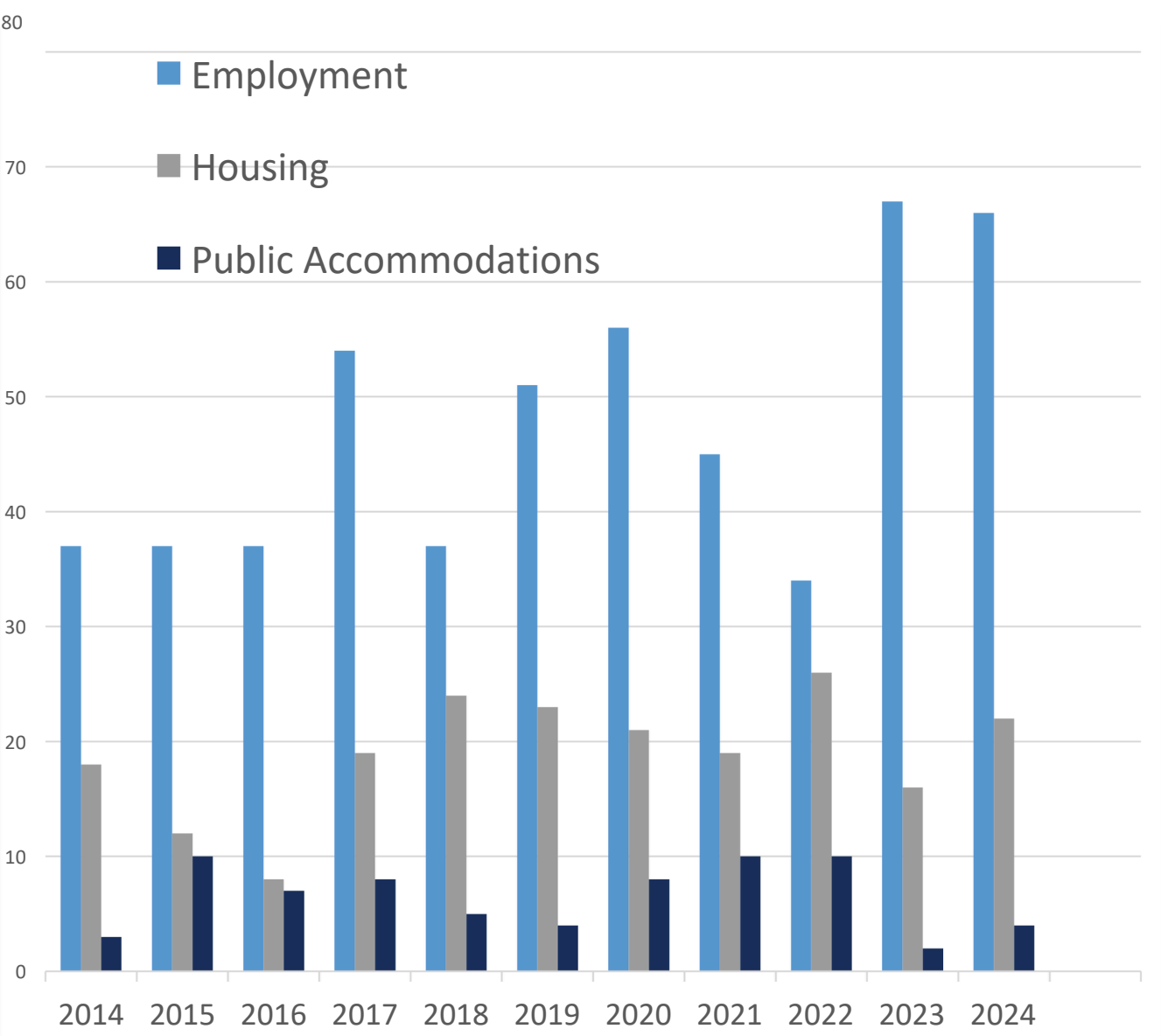
Thank you to the following Commissioners whose service ended in 2024:
Wasiullah Mohamed & Tracy Baton

PGHCHR ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Summary of Cases

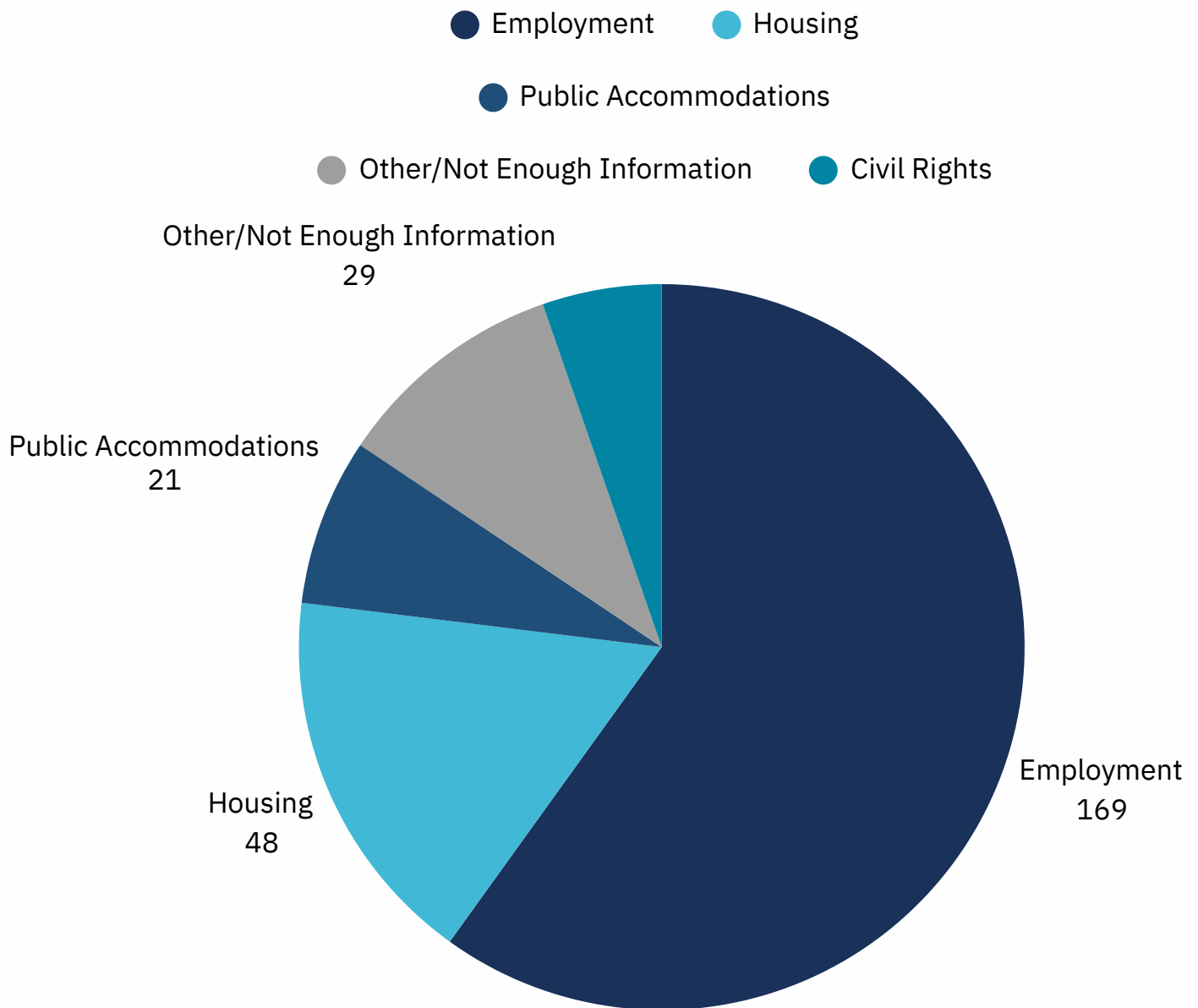
2014-2024



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Employment	37	37	37	54	37	51	56	45	34	67	66
Housing	18	12	8	19	24	23	21	19	26	16	22
Public Accommodations	3	10	7	8	5	4	8	10	10	2	4

Summary of Inquiries

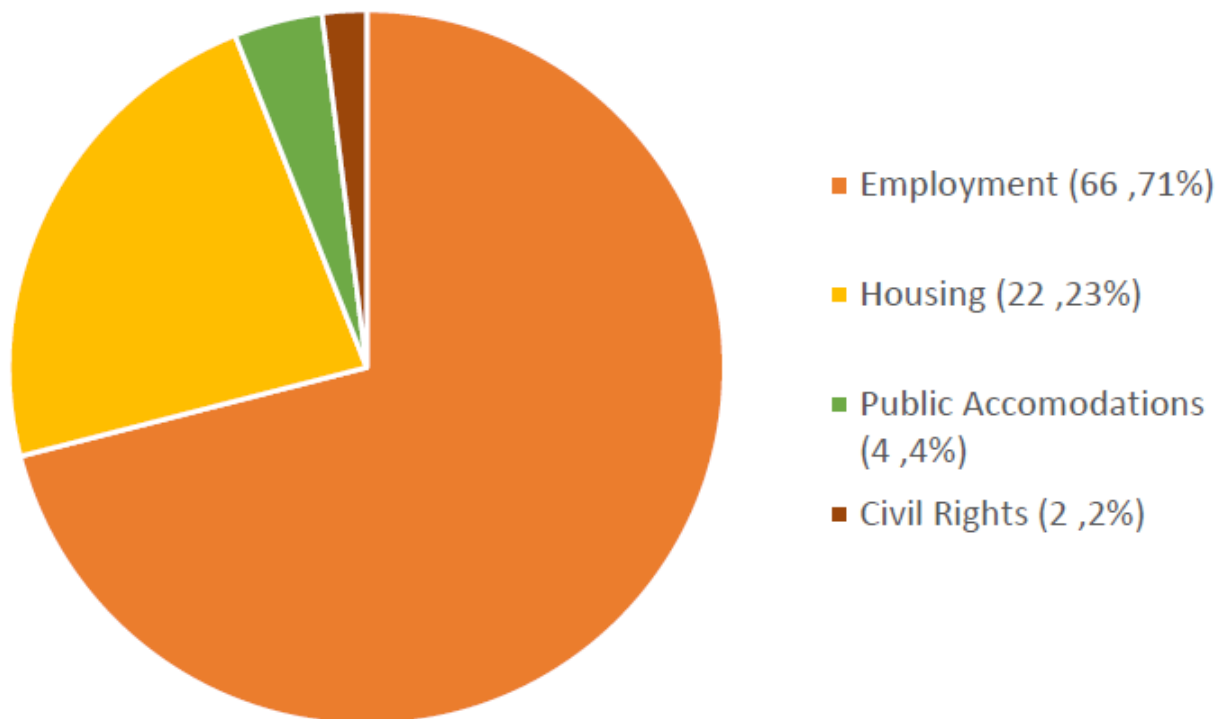
In 2024, the Commission received 282 inquiries, including phone calls, voicemails, emails, in-person inquiries, and portal inquiries.



New Cases in 2024

In 2024, the PghCHR opened a total of 94 new complaints alleging discrimination. The breakdown of the complaints is as follows:

66 employment discrimination complaints;
22 housing discrimination complaints;
4 public accommodations complaints; and
2 complaint alleging discrimination in civil rights.



The PghCHR has worksharing agreements with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In addition to inquiries received directly by the PghCHR that resulted in a complaint, EEOC and HUD also transferred cases to the PghCHR for investigation.

Employment Investigations

Investigative Authority

Per the City of Pittsburgh's Home Rule Charter and code of ordinances (aka the Pittsburgh City Code, City Code, or PCC for short), PghCHR has the authority to investigate claims of employment discrimination that, if true, would violate the City Code. Additionally, because the City Code's employment protections are so similar to federal employment protections, PghCHR can and does contract with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to also investigate claims of employment discrimination that, if true, would violate federal law. Regardless of where the person lives, the protections are available to a person who works within the city limits of the City of Pittsburgh. PghCHR contracts with the EEOC to enforce the following federal EEO laws:

Pittsburgh City Code

Section 659.02 of the City Code includes the same protections and protected classes as federal laws (see opposite page), including the prohibition against retaliation. In addition to those protected classes, the City Code includes the following protected classes: Ancestry, Place of Birth, Partners of Employees who are Pregnant, Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence, Natural Hair/Hair Styles and Head Coverings, and Medical Marijuana Patients.

- **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which prohibits discrimination in advertising, hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, and referral because of a person's Race, Color, Religion, Sex (including Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression), Pregnancy (including Childbirth and a Medical Condition Related to Pregnancy or Childbirth), and National Origin.
- The **Age Discrimination in Employment Act** of 1967 (ADEA), which prohibits discrimination against people who are age 40 or older.
- Title I of the **Americans with Disabilities Act** of 1990 (ADA), which prohibits employment discrimination based on a person's disability.
- The **Equal Pay Act** of 1963* (EPA), which prohibits discrimination in wage payments between men and women.
- The **Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act** of 2008 (GINA), which prohibits discrimination because of genetic information, such as genetic tests of an individual or their family members and family medical history.

**These cases are transferred to the EEOC for investigation per the work sharing agreement.*

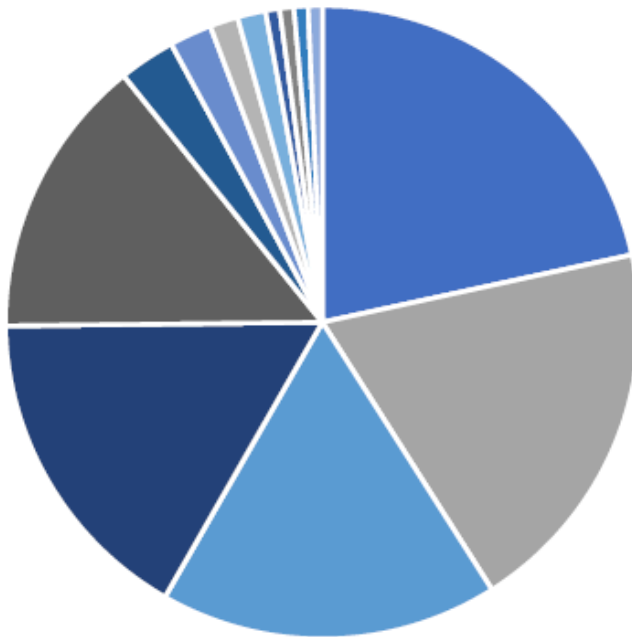
Employment Cases

Cases Filed on One
Basis:

25

Cases Filed on More
Than One Basis:

41

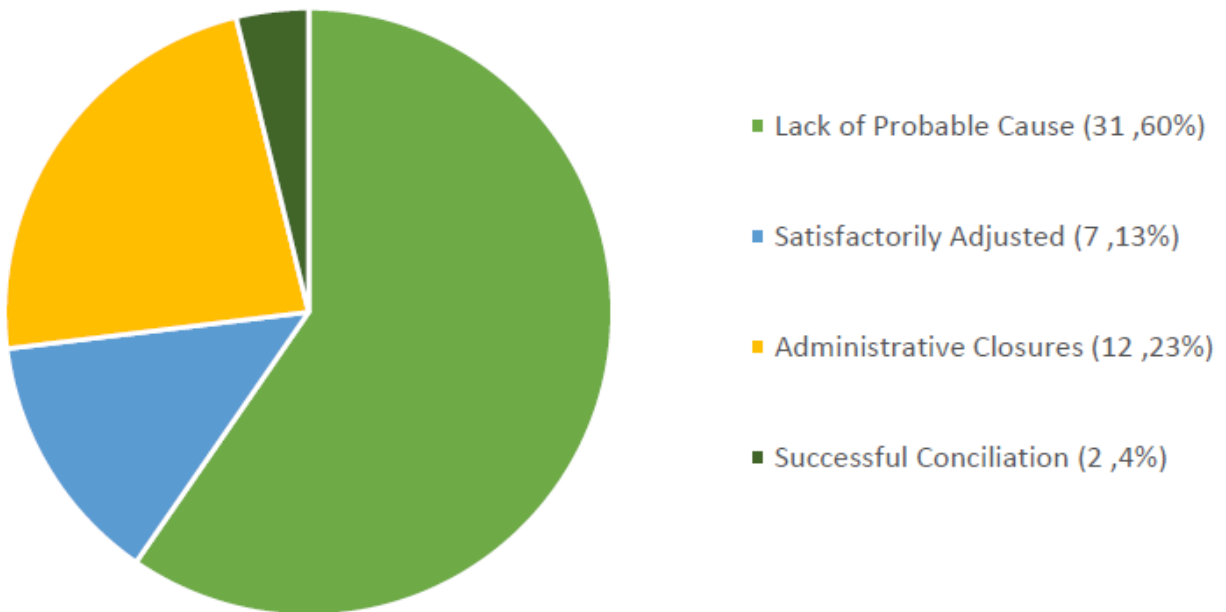


- Retaliation (30 ,22%)
- Sex (27 ,19%)
- Race (24 ,17%)
- Disability (23 ,17%)
- Age (20 ,14%)
- Color (4 ,3%)
- National Origin (3 ,2%)
- Sexual Orientation (2 ,1%)
- Religion (2 ,1%)
- Gender Identity/Expression (1 ,1%)
- Ancestry (1 ,1%)
- Place of Birth (1 ,1%)

Employment Closures

In the 2023-2024 case year, the PghCHR closed 52 cases and found Probable Cause in 8 cases, filed under City Code 659.02: Unlawful Employment Practices, enforced by the Commission. The PghCHR's case year follows the federal case year of October 1st – September 30th for employment cases.

Employment Case Breakdown of Closure Types



NOTE ON CLOSURES

Some monetary settlements also included non-monetary provisions in the agreements. The PghCHR has successfully resolved employment cases resulting in payments to Complainants ranging from \$6,700 to \$1,000,000. Out of the seven monetary settlements during the October 1st – September 30th case year, a total of \$1,193,724 was provided to Complainants in settlement agreements.

Housing Investigations

Investigative Authority

Per the City of Pittsburgh's Home Rule Charter and code of ordinances, PghCHR has the authority to investigate claims of housing discrimination that, if true, would violate the City Code. Additionally, because the City Code's housing protections are so similar to federal housing protections, PghCHR can and does contract with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to also investigate claims of housing discrimination that, if true, would violate federal law. The requirements and prohibitions apply to nearly all housing within the city limits of the City of Pittsburgh.



Federal Law

The Fair Housing Act of 1968, as amended (FHA), covers the entire United States. The FHA prohibits discrimination in nearly all housing related actions, such as advertising, rental, buying, selling, listing, insurance, financing/lending, and appraisal, because of Race, Color, National Origin, Religion, Sex (including Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression), Disability, and Familial Status. The FHA also prohibits blockbusting, redlining, and retaliating against someone for exercising their fair housing rights or participating in a fair housing investigation or lawsuit.



Pittsburgh City Code

Section 659.03 of the City Code includes the same protections and protected classes as those identified above under the FHA, including the prohibition against blockbusting, redlining, and retaliation. In addition to those protected classes, the City Code includes the following protected classes: Ancestry, Place of Birth, Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence, Citizenship or Immigration Status, Preferred Language, and Hair and Head Coverings.

Housing Cases

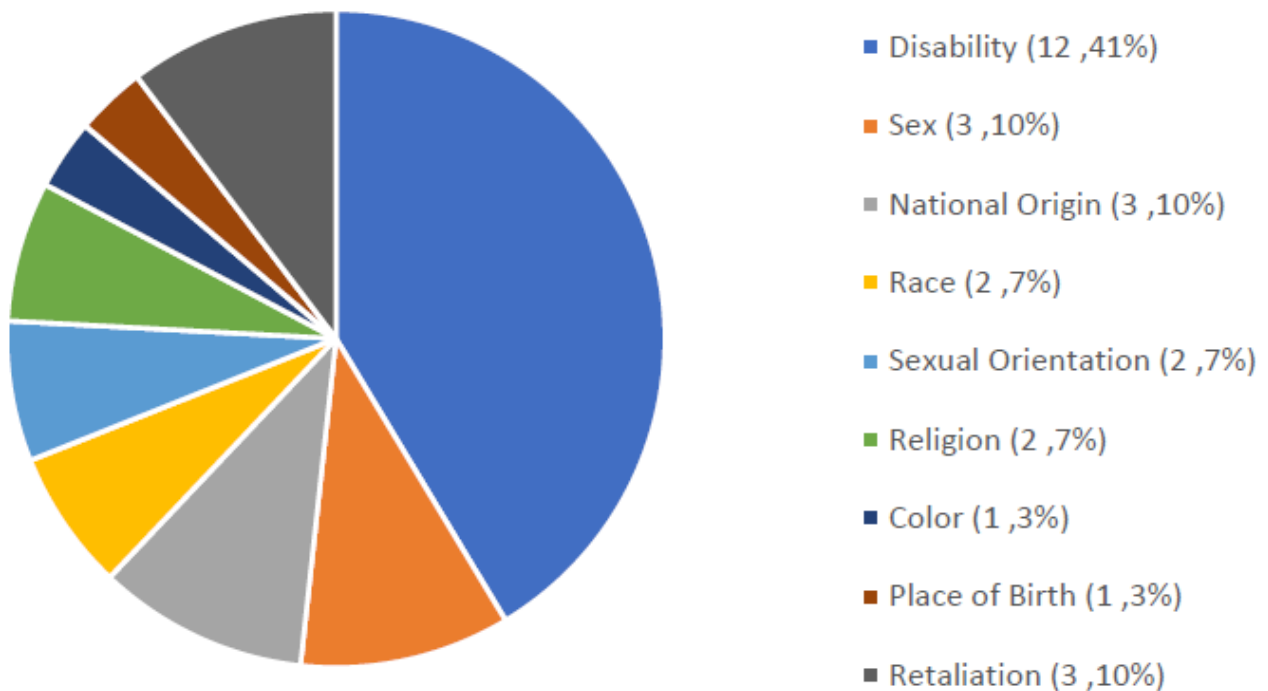
Cases Filed on
One Basis:

14

Cases filed on
Multiple Bases:

8

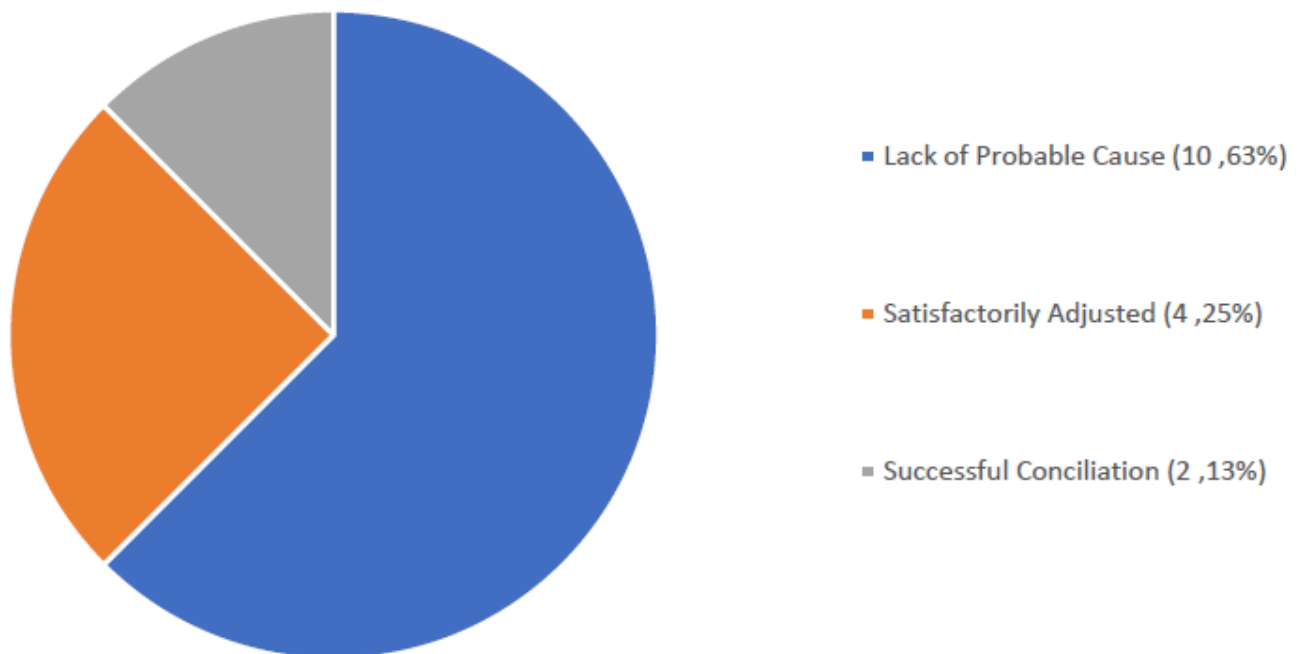
Housing Cases by Protected Basis*



*Some complaints were filed on more than one basis

Housing Closures

In the 2023-2024 case year, the PghCHR closed 16 cases and found Probable Cause in 7 cases. In many cases, both monetary and non-monetary settlements are awarded. In the 2023-2024 case year, one non-monetary settlements was reached as well as five monetary settlements. Non-monetary settlements included fair housing training, monitoring, and mandatory community meetings.



Notes on Closures

- The Commission's HUD guidance recommends that PghCHR reaches a determination in dual-filed cases within 100 days.
- For those housing cases that receive a determination of probable cause by the Compliance Review Section, either party may elect to have the complaint heard by the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, under Commission Rule 11. At that time, the Commission's housing solicitor maintains the civil action on behalf of the complainant or the Commission, at no cost to the complainant.

Civil Rights and Public Accommodations Investigations

In the 2023-2024 case year, the PghCHR investigated four Public Accommodations cases and two Civil Rights case.

In the 2024 calendar year, PghCHR closed five Public Accommodations cases and two Civil Rights cases.

Of these closures, three cases resolved with a settlement agreement.



Investigative Authority

Per the City of Pittsburgh's Home Rule Charter and code of ordinances, PghCHR has the authority to investigate claims of public accommodation discrimination that, if true, would violate the City Code. The requirements and prohibitions apply to nearly all public accommodations within the City of Pittsburgh. Public accommodations include retail, lodging, recreation, hospitals, transportation and other places that cater to the general public.

Pittsburgh City Code

Section 659.04 of the City Code prohibits discriminatory advertising and refusing, withholding, or denying accommodations, advantages, facilities, services or privileges, products or goods in a place of public accommodation, resort, recreation, or amusement because of the following protected classes: Race, Color, Religion, Ancestry, National Origin, Place of Birth, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression, Disability, Citizenship or Immigration Status, Preferred Language, and Hair and Head Coverings.

Continued Learning

Professional development is imperative for PghCHR staff. Our staff attend conferences and trainings to keep current on civil rights laws. As enforcement efforts evolve, we evolve also. New challenges arise every day, and we do our best to face them head on. Emerging issues are always in our sights.

Our staff have regular group discussions to share information, varied perspectives, and investigation techniques. We learn from and lean on one another. We also explore unconscious biases that may influence our work.

Below you will find a brief overview of the types of trainings our staff completed in 2024:

- FHAP Fundamentals of Fair Housing - Investigation
- Cultivating an Inclusive Environment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Employees
- Trauma 101: An Overview of Trauma-informed Care
- Confronting Bias and Hate in the Workplace: Antisemitism, Islamophobia and Backlash Discrimination
- Emerge Women's Leadership Retreat
- Advancing Racial & Health Justice Through a Right to Counsel for Tenants
- Empowering New Americans: Pursuing the American Dream and Fair Housing Together
- Combating the Many Forms of Mortgage Lending Discrimination
- Basics of the Right-to-Know Law
- The Trauma of Racism
- Expungement and Clean Slate
- Civil Rights in Public Accommodations
- Models of Proof: Theories of Discrimination
- EEOC Investigation Train-the-Trainer
- Unlocking Access: Masterclass on the ADA

FAIR HOUSING & SECOND CHANCE MONTH



From left to right: Deputy Director Chris Soult, Investigator Rita Porterfield, Director Rachel Shepherd, Fiscal & Contracting Coordinator Courtney Smith



PGHCHR AND PARTNERS HELD AN EVENT FOR FEDERALLY FUNDED HOUSING PROVIDERS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON LANGUAGE ACCESS, CULTURAL HUMILITY, AND CRIMINAL HISTORY.



From left to right: LaWanna Butler, Foundation of Hope, Megan Hammond, Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh (standing), Jay Dworin. Cloudburst Group Sara Pratt, Relman Colfax

This event was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

FAIR HOUSING & SECOND CHANCE MONTH

FEATURING:
SARA PRATT, CIVIL
RIGHTS ATTORNEY



Wed, April 3rd
9am - 3pm

Kelly Strayhorn Theater

5941 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

&
**PENNSYLVANIA
CONGRESSWOMAN
SUMMER LEE**

- lunch will be provided
- accommodations available upon request
- ASL interpreted



**Pittsburgh Commission
On Human Relations**



FAIR HOUSING & SECOND CHANCE MONTH



DeJonna Bates, Community Justice Project



Cristina Ballarta Silva,
Latino Community Center



Brenda Green, Jewish Family and Community Services,
Immigrant Services and Connections



Simone Vecchio, Hello Neighbor

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY
PARTNERS FOR SHARING THEIR
EXPERTISE ON HOW TO BEST WORK
WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS WHEN
HOUSING OUR IMMIGRANT
NEIGHBORS



Outreach

PRIDE

From left to right:
Fiscal & Contracting
Coordinator Courtney
Smith, Investigator
Rita Porterfield,
Deputy Director Chris
Soult, June McCartin
(Outwith Studio)



**JUNE IS ALWAYS A BUSY MONTH FOR OUTREACH AND TABLING.
OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY IS ESSENTIAL TO INFORMING THE PEOPLE
OF PITTSBURGH OF THEIR RIGHTS.**

JUNETEENTH

From left to right: Administrative
Assistant Kevin Carroll, Deputy Director
Chris Soult, Investigator Lauren Law,
Commissioner Genevieve Rosselot,
Commissioner Teaira Collins & Director
Rachel Shepherd



Urban League Thanksgiving Distribution

PghCHR participated in the community resources section of the annual Thanksgiving Distribution. We provided winter hats and information on their civil rights to the attendees.

Pictured: Director Shepherd,
Deputy Director Soult,
Investigator Porterfield
Present but not pictured:
Investigator Ellwood



COMMUNITY



City in the Streets

Staff and Commissioners attended these neighborhood outreach events to share what PghCHR is and does. The neighborhoods included Knoxville, the Hill District, Northside, Spring Hill, Hazelwood, and Homewood.

Partner Conferences



Deputy Director Chris Sault, Investigator Rita Porterfield, and Fiscal and Contracting Coordinator Courtney Smith at the **International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) Conference**



Fair Housing Partnership (Pittsburgh's Fair Housing Initiatives Program)'s Ray Moore and Megan Hammond & PghCHR (Pittsburgh's Fair Housing Assistance Program)'s Rita Porterfield, Rachel Shepherd and Chris Sault attended the **National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) conference**

Human Rights Activities



Housing & Human Rights: A Community Forum

Saturday, November 9, 2024

The human right to housing is well established in international law, yet many residents in our region suffer from housing insecurity, poor quality housing, and homelessness. How can we work together to promote and protect housing as a human right? How can international human rights law be a resource to advance work for housing rights in our city? This community forum will shape our local advocacy and inform a report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of human rights in the United States.



Left to right:
Leeretta Payne,
Man-E,
Rachel Shepherd,
Robert Damewood

Human Rights Activities



Creating a Human Rights Culture

PghCHR joined representatives from The Carter Center, ACLU, UN, OHCHR, Southern Poverty Law Center, and fellow commissions to discuss how to create a standardized human rights culture across the United States.

International Human Rights Day Press Conference

December 10th marks the anniversary of International Human Rights Day, which PghCHR commemorates with the Human Rights City Alliance, Global Switchboard, City Council, and others working in the human rights field in Pittsburgh.



Research

LGBTQIA+ &

A CURRENT OR FORMER RESIDENT
OF PITTSBURGH?
WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

PghCHR partnered with Outwith Studio, an LGBTQ-led urban planning and research firm specializing in housing issues, to conduct a survey of the LGBTQIA+ community on their experiences in housing.

The goals of the project were to better understand the nature of housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression experienced by city residents and to educate members of the LGBTQIA+ community on how to recognize and address housing discrimination.

View the full
report **HERE**



REPORT

Table 06: How discrimination was addressed

How was discrimination addressed?	Respondent %
Addressed discrimination and stayed in my home	47%
Discrimination sometimes but not always addressed	36%
Left living situation	19%
Discrimination didn't stop but couldn't leave	8%

Did you know the PghCHR can address discrimination issues while you are still in your housing situation?

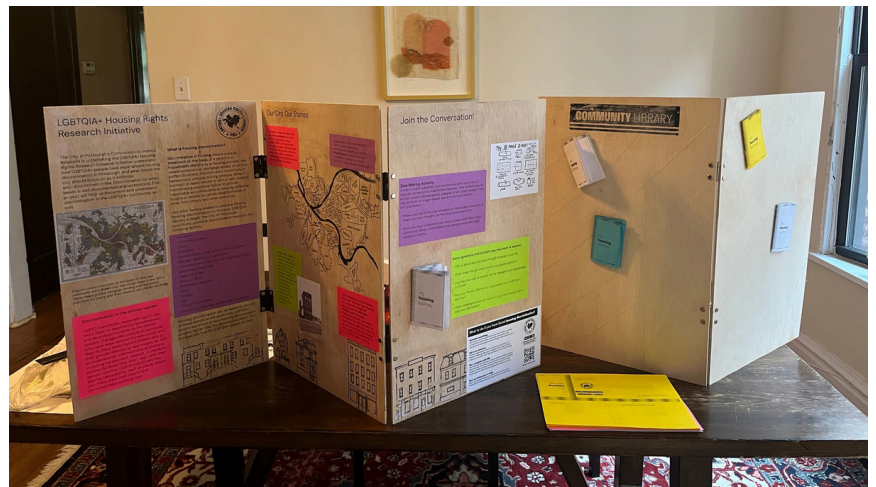


The fact-finding and education goals of this project help PghCHR increase rates of reporting, build trust, and proactively work to address housing discrimination before it occurs.

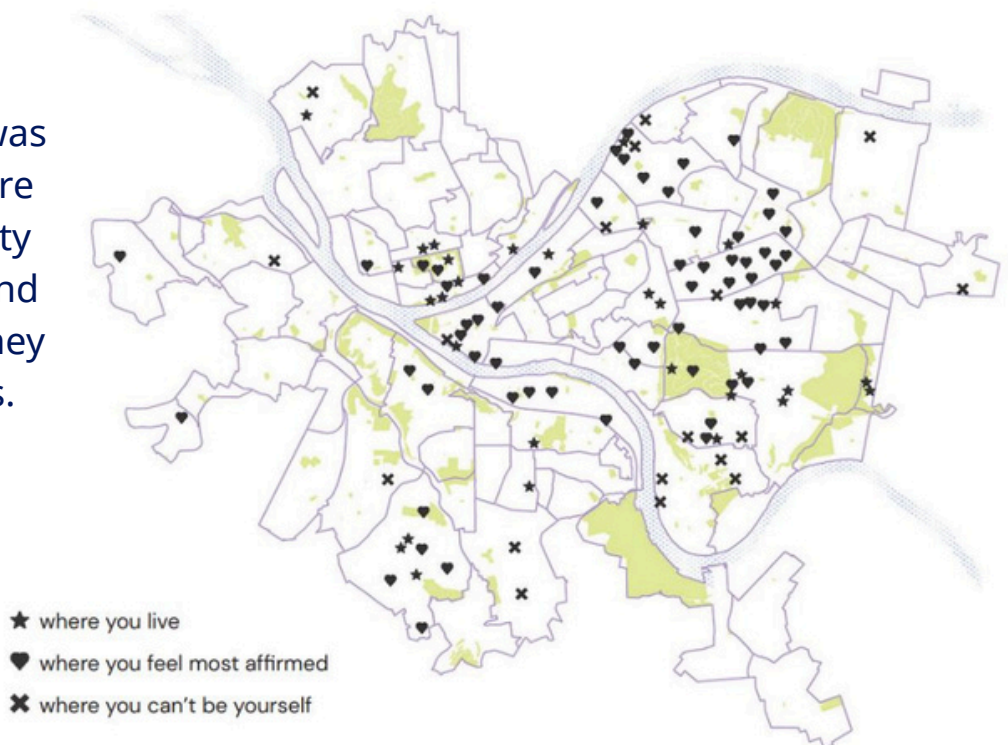
Data collection included interactive exhibits, as pictured below.

Participants were encouraged to use creativity to explain what queer home means to them through a zine.

Thank to the QMNTY Center and Carnegie Library for hosting our exhibit!



The exhibit at Pride was used to identify where LGBTQIA+ community members feel safe and affirmed, or where they can't be themselves.



Community Education



Director Rachel Shepherd of PghCHR and Director Deborah Kane of EEOC

PghCHR held its first continued legal education (CLE) course on the administrative process for employment cases. This training was geared toward attorneys who represent complainants to inform them of the best ways to work with us, and how our process differs from the EEOC.

This year the Fair Housing Partnership (FHP) and PghCHR began regular Fair Housing for Landlords trainings. These cover fair housing law for the Pittsburgh area and beyond.



Investigator Rita Porterfield of PghCHR and Director Megan Hammond of FHP



MEDICAL MARIJUANA PATIENT PROTECTIONS IN EMPLOYMENT



PRESS RELEASE

September 20, 2024

Rachel Shepherd, Executive Director
Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations

MEDICAL MARIJUANA PATIENT PROTECTED CLASS LEGISLATION

The Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (PghCHR) stands by the workers of Pittsburgh who legally utilize medical marijuana to treat disabilities. Gainful employment should be accessible to everyone regardless of the type of medical treatment they receive. It is a fact that refusing to hire someone because they have a disability that they are treating with legal substances is illegal discrimination. The idea that using medical marijuana will automatically make workers a risk to themselves or others is grounded in prejudice and stereotyping. Taking a prescribed medication for a qualifying disability should not diminish trust in a person's ability to be a reliable and productive employee, nor should it affect their ability to be considered in the hiring process.

PghCHR discrimination investigations involve finding facts to determine if it is probable that an employer showed preference, withheld opportunities, permitted harassment or terminated working relationships due to discrimination. Intent is irrelevant. If your policies, practices or actions disproportionately affect people in a protected class, that is discrimination.

We agree that safety is paramount in the trade industry. We do not agree that a person's legal use of marijuana to treat a disability is inherently unsafe. Use of marijuana (or alcohol, opiates, psychedelics, etc.) on the job is absolutely illegal. That is not what is being advocated for with this legislation. The legislation promotes a fair opportunity for our community members to join these wonderful trade unions and be a part of the development in Pittsburgh. We encourage employers to expand their views of what is reasonable and necessary for their employees to operate at peak performance.

If you are an employer in the City of Pittsburgh, please contact us for information on how you can be in compliance with this new legislation. PghCHR is here to help you know your responsibilities under the law and assist in achieving compliance before there is a complaint to respond to.

If you work within the City of Pittsburgh limits, please contact us for more information on your rights under the law. PghCHR is here to provide guidance on the best ways to communicate with your employer and what to do if you think you have experienced employment discrimination.

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MEDICAL MARIJUANA PATIENT EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE

Do I have to share my qualifying medical condition?

No. Your employer may ask for a copy of your current and active medical marijuana card but you are not required to provide medical records or a diagnosis of your medical condition.



Can I be fired for using medical marijuana while I'm working?

Yes. This protection does not give you permission to use medical marijuana while you are working, on breaks, during lunch, or on any job site you are assigned to. The employer is permitted to test you upon reasonable suspicion of substance use on the job or after a workplace accident.



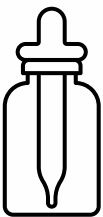
I applied for a job that requires a pre-employment drug test and I am a medical marijuana cardholder. What should I do?

Prior to taking the drug test, disclose that you are a medical marijuana cardholder and that you will test positive for that substance. The employer MAY still test for other substances. They MAY NOT deny you an employment opportunity because you legally use medical marijuana.



Can my employer tell people that I use medical marijuana?

No. Your employer must keep this confidential as they would any other type of medically-related information about an employee.



After I disclosed that I use medical marijuana my supervisor changed my work responsibilities. Is this allowed?

Depending on your job duties this may be necessary. Some duties that are restricted are working with certain chemicals, electricity, public utilities, positions that require carrying a firearm, etc.

Check out the full guidance here



Violating the public's trust

Pittsburgh media are significantly contributing to the decline of the quality of life here

The statement at the right comes from the report released by the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations in July 1993. The report was the result of the public hearings that the commission held in February 1993. It was one of 11 recommendations proposed by the commission to address the growing problem of violence and fear in Pittsburgh.

Many of the witnesses said that the media's tabloid-style reporting was a very significant contributor to our problems. Their concerns were exemplified by the way the media covered the release of the report. The television news reported that the commission recommended legalizing drugs vs. reporting the not-so-glamorous truth, that the commission recommended to "consider and debate new strategies to solve the drug problem, including the viability of decriminalization." This was a classic case of distorting the facts to hype the newscast.

The Post-Gazette was a much better source of accurate information than was TV news. The article, "City Panel Urges Debate of Legal Use of Drugs" (July 20, 1993), was well written. The editorial board of the PG was very responsive and responsible in its commentary on the commission report ("Debating Drugs," July 25, 1993). Although I don't always agree with it, I believe that the PG has one of the finer editorial boards in the country, in terms of presenting balance, as well as using logic more than arrogance as the basis of its stated position. However, the commentary of the PG's Tom Hritz is representative of how many journalists use the press to promote their own prejudices.

In his column on July 24, 1993, Hritz states, "When you're forced to call a summit meeting with the young punks that lead gangs — like the Pittsburgh Human Relations Commission has called for — you've already lost the war." The recommendation that Hritz is referring to on Page 11 of the report states, "The Pittsburgh HRC proposed to hold a commission-sponsored youth summit in which young people can voice their concerns and propose their own solutions." Nowhere in the recommendation are the words "gangs" or "leaders"

There is a need to establish an ongoing newswatch to monitor and critique both print and broadcast media that distort facts in an exploitive or discriminatory manner, and possibly to file complaints with the Federal Communications Commission.

— Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
July 1993

mentioned.

There is also a question as to which community is being done the worse disservice when similar situations are reported in completely different ways. Case in point: the reporting on the incidents that took place at the South Stadium following the Westinghouse-Peabody High School football game vs. the incident that took place at the North Hills-North Allegheny football game at North Hills Stadium, "Schools To Continue Evening Football" (Nov. 6, 1993).

The disparity of information and details of the two events was incredible. The entire North Hills incident in which a fight was broken up and three handguns taken from the fighting teens was all enclosed in a small, brief four-paragraph box directly under the headline that dealt with the South Stadium incident. The small headline in the box, "Youths Found with Guns at Game" (Nov. 6, 1993), would at first glance lead one to believe that the guns were confiscated at the South Stadium incident where there were no guns involved.

Most ironic in the PG article "Schools To Continue Evening Football" is the statement, in the first paragraph, that "there was no repeat of the gang fights that broke out the night before during a City League football playoff game." Near the end of the same very long article, Assistant Chief Charles Moffatt is quoted, "We don't even know if it was gang-related... if it was, we have nothing to substantiate that."

Additionally, the TV news never showed pictures of students from North Hills or North Allegheny high schools, as they did in the South Stadium incident (all African-American). We saw footage of a group of concerned parents and administrators in North Hills "trying to sort out" why these children were carrying guns. Couldn't the news cameras find any concerned parents and administrators in Homewood? Did they

even consider looking? I don't think that the North Hills incident received too little coverage. However, the coverage of the South Stadium incident was overkill tabloid journalism.

KDKA-TV news recently presented a special report called "Inside Gangs. As You've Never Seen Them." I've talked to many gang members, and I can attest that you have to interview many before you find one as crude as the one that was featured in Andy Sheehan's report. The graphic of the map showing the locations of Pittsburgh's gangs were all in predominantly African-American communities.

If KDKA's report had included interviews with members of the Irish Lynch Mob or the Lawrenceville Hoods, Greenfield Crips or the Greenstreet University gang in Regent Square, all white youth gangs, we truly would have seen inside gangs as we never have seen them before.

By no means does KDKA have a monopoly on this type of reporting. All of the Pittsburgh news media have gone to great lengths to lead the public into believing that all gangs comprise African-American young men, and that those young men are the root of all of our problems and fears. The practice of sensationalism as it pertains to violence is doing a great disservice to the entire Greater Pittsburgh community, especially our African-American young men who are the victims of blatant and vicious character assassination.

One could make a convincing argument that the media, particularly the television news media in Pittsburgh, are significantly contributing to the decline of the quality of life here. The TV news effectively uses sound bites, pictures, voice inflection and facial expressions to bring us drama and excitement, even if the facts must be manipulated to accomplish it. If the ratings of local television news are up, then it is at

the expense of our safety and well being; particularly our children's.

It is long past time that the news media stop using the right to free speech to obscure the truth, promote public unrest and fear, attack the character of entire communities of people, promote hatred and racism, all for the sake of "read all about it" and "tune in at 6." For agencies that represent themselves as delivering news to distort the facts of a situation to incite and provoke, is no less than a violation of the public's trust.

There is a lot more news than the violence and death that represents the lion's share of our newscasts. As long as the human being exists, there will be murder, rape, incest, etc. Although we must continue to work to improve the human condition, do we really need the gory details of these acts, from around the country and the world every day?

It is time to challenge the news media to do more than chase the police. The people of this country desperately need a cease-fire from the constant deluge of violence, suffering and despair that the news media assault our homes with every day.

The walls that separated one community from another are not as defined as they were 10 or 20 years ago. We must all work in a cooperative effort to address and correct the growing problem of violence, fear, racism and despair that is gripping our society. Just as the media have been very effective in promoting separation, fear and racism in their reporting, they can also help to do more to bring our communities together. The media must be fair and responsible. If they are not, then we all suffer, young and old, rich and poor, black and white.

It may help if everyone who works in the news media would read the Pledge of Allegiance every day and highlight the part that says, "One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Gene Baynes is chairperson of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
January 26, 1994

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
May 5, 2004

Parents charge landlord with bias against children

By Jim McKinnon
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Testimony will resume today in a civil trial in which three families of foreign origin are suing a Squirrel Hill landlord for refusing to renew their leases because they have too many children.

In complaints filed three years ago with the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, the plaintiffs said Zytznick Realty told them they had violated unwritten policies prohibiting more than one child in any family in the Beechwood Garden Apartments on Beechwood Boulevard.

Charles Morrison, director of the Human Relations Commission, said his office came

close but was unable to resolve the issue without a trial.

Testimony began in the nonjury trial Monday before Senior Common Pleas Judge Bernard J. McGowan.

Morrison said that after hearings before the commission, Zytznick was found in violation of a 1988 amendment to the federal Fair Housing Act and the Pittsburgh city code that prohibits discrimination against families with children.

The couples are Sanjay and Anupama Gupta, Chengxiang Zhai and Yan Lin, and Saban and Duriye Taniciyi.

Two of the three couples had a child before they moved into Beechwood Gardens. The third had their first child soon after.

Soon afterward, the wives in each of the couples were expect-

ing a second child, and Zytznick notified them that their leases would not be renewed.

Of the 144 units at Beechwood Gardens, 25 are occupied by families that include one child, Morrison said. Attorney Jeanine DeBor, who represents Zytznick, has said in briefs before the trial that the complaints initially included claims of discrimination on racial grounds. She said Beechwood has no policy against children.

"Clearly the defendants in this matter did not discriminate against families or have a malicious attitude toward children," DeBor wrote.

Jim McKinnon can be reached at jmckinnon@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1939.

Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations



Want to know more? Contact us for a conversation.

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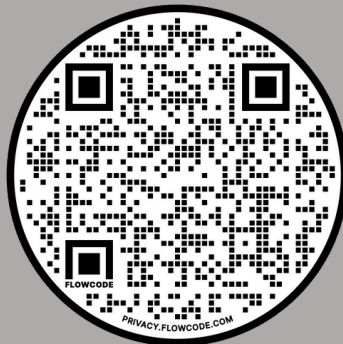
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