



# 2021

*Annual Report*



**Special thanks** to Tyler Viljaste and Kevin Carroll of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (PghCHR) for their tireless work designing this report and compiling numerous pieces of data.

**Tyler Viljaste** is currently a Senior at the University of Pittsburgh studying Politics, Philosophy and Finance. Tyler began working with the Commission in the Fall of 2018, and has continued to work with them since then, serving this year as an Elsie Hillman Honors Scholar with PghCHR. Tyler is graduating this year and will be attending Georgetown University Law Center this fall.

**Kevin Carroll** was born and raised in Pittsburgh and has a BA in Journalism from Loyola University Chicago. He has a background in nonprofit work that has focused on education and human rights. He joined PghCHR in August 2019.



## **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.**

## **Powers and Duties**

**PghCHR may also issue subpoenas and order discovery in aid of investigations, and hearings.**

## **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), ancestry, color, familial status, gender identity/ expression, handicap/disability, national origin, place of birth, preferred language (housing) race, religion, retaliation, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship/immigration status, hairstyles and protective and cultural hair textures, status as a survivor of domestic violence (employment and housing), pregnancy (employment), and the use of support animals because of the handicap or disability of the user.**

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# 2021 AT A GLANCE



**Pittsburgh Commission  
On Human Relations**  
*Serving Fairness Together*

DURING 2021,

## 45%

Race was the most frequent protected class basis for complaints. It accounted for 45% of total cases filed in 2021.

## RACE FILINGS



## CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINTS



## 7 FILINGS

This year, we saw the highest number of filings for Civil Rights cases in the past 10 years.

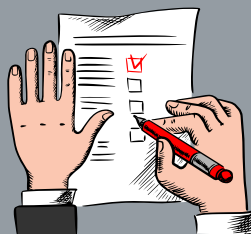
## \$46,700

Many claimants received monetary relief through the PghCHR's work in mediating settlements.

## TOTAL MONETARY RELIEF



## NEW PROTECTED CLASS



## ONE

Council Person Erika Strassburger successfully introduced legislation to add the protected class of "Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence" to cases of employment discrimination under City Code.



**Pittsburgh Commission  
On Human Relations**  
*Serving Fairness Together*

# 2021 EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**"ANYONE ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE THIS DANGEROUS SITUATION SHOULD BE SAFE FROM ANY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION THAT COULD ARISE, ESPECIALLY AT THEIR PLACE OF WORK...WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS LEGISLATION, SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WILL KNOW THAT THEIR STRENGTH IS VALUED, RESPECTED, AND PROTECTED IN THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH."**

*-Councilperson Erika Strassburger on the introduction of the protected classes of status as a survivor of domestic violence in employment, featured in an November 2021 City Paper Article*

**"IT'S INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT TO BEGIN TO GO BACK AND LOOK AT THAT HISTORY, AND TO BEGIN TO PUT A DOLLAR FIGURE ON WHAT WE CAN DO TO TRY TO UNDO A LOT OF THE DAMAGE THAT THE CITY GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY DID."**

*-Randall Taylor, community activist, commenting on the Commission on Racial Equity, featured in a December 2021 PublicSource article*

**"WE WILL WORK TO MAKE PITTSBURGH THE PITTSBURGH YOU VOTED FOR—A CITY WHERE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IS ABUNDANT FOR EVERYBODY, A CITY WHERE AFFORDABILITY ISN'T A LUXURY, A CITY THAT IS PREPARED TO LEAD INTO THE FUTURE"**

*-Ed Gainey in his acceptance speech upon election to Mayor of Pittsburgh in November 2021*

**"I WANT THEM TO, LIKE, KIND OF FEEL CHANGE. LIKE, FEEL HOW THE POEM ITSELF IS CHANGING AND HOW I ALSO WANT THEM TO...THINK THAT JUST CHANGE IS POSSIBLE."**

*-Amelie Sherer, a seventh-grade student at Colfax Pittsburgh in Squirrel Hill and one of the Youth Arts Contests winners from its first iteration, commenting on her winning poetry submission in an April 2021 PublicSource article.*

# Introduction

The year 2021 stands as a testament to the strength and resiliency of the City of Pittsburgh's Commission on Human Relations (PghCHR). The changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated that our office adapt to continuously changing environments to best serve all of those who live in, work in, or visit the City of Pittsburgh. After working entirely remotely for a year, our office transitioned into a hybrid in-person and remote format beginning in July of 2021. At the time of this writing, we have resumed most of our in-person services that were offered before the pandemic and have retained a majority of our virtual outreach and intake services that were offered during the pandemic to promote increased accessibility of our services. PghCHR has also continued to work tirelessly to ensure that residents of Pittsburgh are up to date on the most important information regarding the pandemic, relaying critical information on eviction moratoriums, housing subsidies, and employment guidance in the form of newsletters and virtual events. We have continued to maintain a virtual presence across our many platforms (Facebook, Instagram, MailChimp, and Twitter) to ensure ease of access and maximize our reach.

Outreach and education remain key parts of our strategy to help end discrimination in the City of Pittsburgh. PghCHR believes that all residents are better served if we take a proactive, rather than reactive, approach. By increasing education and outreach, we have the power to bring groups together, increase their knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, and foster a sense of community. Over the past year, we continued to maintain a robust virtual presence, including the development of a series of Fair Housing informational videos alongside putting together three informational webinars targeting service providers, landlords and housing providers, and tenants during the month of April 2021. This year, PghCHR also put on its first Immigrant and International Roundtable event, a discussion aimed at bringing together community stakeholders and service providers working directly with the Immigrant and Refugee communities of Pittsburgh to help provide policy and programmatic solutions to our office. In addition, PghCHR has continued to work with Tyler Viljaste, an undergraduate intern with PghCHR, on a series of custom "Know Your Rights: Recognizing and Reacting to Discrimination" virtual trainings in partnership with a variety of new community organizations, including the Latino Community Center, PA Career Link, and the Jewish Family and Community Services of Pittsburgh (JFCS) Career Center Counseling Staff, among many others.

PghCHR is also excited to have completed its second annual Human Rights Speaks Creative Arts Contest. The contest invited all youth grades 6th-12th who live in or go to school in the City of Pittsburgh to come up with their own, original answer to the following prompt: "What human rights story do you want to tell?". The competition was sorted into two age groups (6th-8th, and 9th-12th) with three categories for submissions:

writing, digital art, and physical art. PghCHR is looking forward to continuing to engage with Pittsburgh youth regarding their civil and human rights.

Core components of PghCHR's work also include providing recommendations to City Council and working to revise Pittsburgh City Code to make it more equitable. PghCHR understands that, at times, revising city code or adding new protected classes is important to ensure that all citizens feel actively empowered to combat illegal discrimination and feel a sense of belonging. In November 2021, PghCHR worked alongside Pittsburgh City Council Person Strassburger to introduce the protected class of Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence formally into City code under protections for employment. It was previously only been a protected class under City Code in housing. The new ordinance greatly expanded PghCHR's power to protect survivors of domestic violence, especially as people begin returning to in-person work as the COVID-19 pandemic conditions lift. PghCHR's vision and goal are that no one's status as a survivor of domestic violence is a barrier to them working in or having a home in Pittsburgh.

As a result of our efforts, this year PghCHR experienced the highest number of new civil rights complaint intakes in recent history. Through our increased and reimagined outreach and education strategies, we have reached far more communities than before. More Pittsburghers seem aware of our services than before. We look forward to continuously adapting services to best serve Pittsburgh's diverse communities and residents.



# Commissioners

**REVEREND LIDDY BARLOW - CHAIR**

**WASIULLAH MOHAMED – FIRST VICE CHAIR**

**TRACY BATON – SECOND VICE CHAIR**

**DAVID C. BUSH - TREASURER**

**BRITTANY BEASLEY - SECRETARY**

**J. MATTHEW LANDIS**

**MICHAEL GERARD BARTLEY**

**JENNIFER PRESUTTI**

**SONYA MEADOWS**

**WILL TOLLIVER, JR.**

**CHAZ KELLUM**

**ALBERTO BENZAQUEN**

**RABBI JAMES GIBSON**

Thank you to the following Commissioners whose terms on the Commission on Human Relations ended in 2021:

**RABBI SHARYN HENRY AND LEAH LIZARONDO**

# Committees

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

This Committee is comprised of the five (5) elected officers; *Chair, First Vice Chair, Second Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer*, as well as any past Chairs who are still active members of the Commission. Working with the Executive Director, the Executive Committee helps with general oversight of PghCHR operations.

## **COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

This Committee helps oversee community outreach and engagement and reviews complaints based on community tension that has an adverse affect on intergroup relation

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

This Committee reviews and makes recommendations on PghCHR's annual budget. PghCHR Commissioners then vote on the budget, and the Executive Director then presents the budget to the Mayor and City Council.

## **JUSTICE AND EQUITY COMMITTEE**

The Justice and Equity Committee will oversee new initiatives and legislative or advocacy efforts related to issues of human rights in the City. The Committee will also oversee internal efforts related to just and equitable policies and practices

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

This Committee reviews applications and interviews prospective candidates for Director and makes its recommendation to the Commission for such hiring. In addition, this Committee also evaluates the Director and reports such evaluation to the Commission. This Committee also approves all staff hiring made by the Director.

## **AD HOC COMMITTEES**

May be established by the Chairperson to further the mission, goals, and objectives of the PghCHR.

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF PghCHR



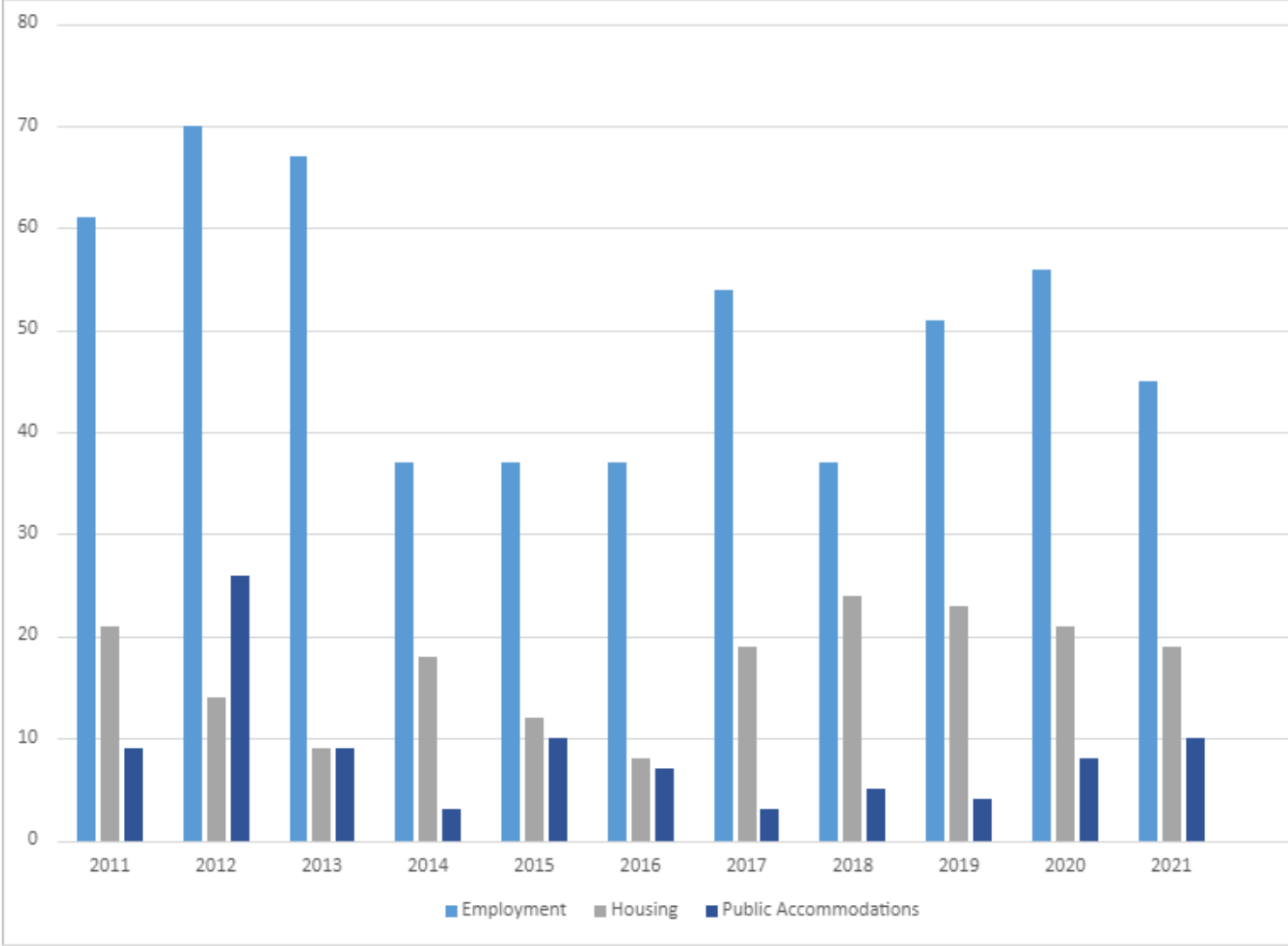
The **Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (PghCHR)** has gone through many developments in the past 75+ years. Here's a brief history of the Commission.



- 1946**  
Creation of the **Civil Unity Council (CUC)**
- 1952**  
Creation of the **Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC)**
- 1955**  
Merger of the **FEPC** and **CUC** to form the **Commission on Human Relations**
- 1959**  
Passage of the **Fair Housing Ordinance**
- 1969**  
The City of Pittsburgh adds **Sex** to the list of classes protected against discrimination
- 1976**  
Passage of the **Home Rule Charter**
- 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
- 1978**  
**Solicitation, Blockbusting and Redlining** tactics are made **illegal**
- 1980**  
The City of Pittsburgh adds **Age (over 40)** and **Handicap /Disability** to the list of classes protected against discrimination  
The **Human Relations Ordinance** is also added to city code
- 1990**  
Passage of the **Americans with Disabilities Act**. The City of Pittsburgh also adds **Sexual Orientation** to the list of classes protected against discrimination
- 1992**  
The City of Pittsburgh adds **Familial Status** to the list of classes protected against discrimination
- 1997**  
The Commission is granted **Substantial Equivalency Status** by HUD
- 2014**  
The City of Pittsburgh adds **Gender Identity and Expression** to the list of classes protected against discrimination
- 2016**  
The City of Pittsburgh adds **Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence** to the list of classes protected against discrimination in housing.
- 2019**  
The City of Pittsburgh adds **Pregnancy (and partners of pregnant people)** to the list of classes protected against discrimination, becoming the first city to protect partners of pregnant individuals
- 2020**  
The City of Pittsburgh adds **Preferred Language, Citizenship Status, and Natural Hairstyle (CROWN Act)** to the list of classes protected against discrimination
- 2021**  
Protections for **Survivors of Domestic Violence** are expanded to cover discrimination in employment

# Summary of Cases

2011-2021



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Employment</b>	61	70	67	37	37	37	54	37	51	56	45
<b>Housing</b>	21	14	9	18	12	8	19	24	23	21	19
<b>Public Accommodations</b>	9	26	9	3	10	7	3	5	4	8	10

# Summary of Inquiries

In 2021, the PghCHR received a total of 297 inquiries regarding our services. Despite the number of inquiries, not all contacts with the PghCHR office lead to an intake. In some cases the PghCHR lacked jurisdiction (outside the City limits) to take the complaint, or too much time had passed (more than 365 days) since the incident. Nonetheless, staff makes every effort to provide a proper referral so individuals can get the help and support they seek.

In order to better understand the PghCHR's reach, during inquiries from the public staff ask where or how the person found out about us and our services. This feedback helps the PghCHR think about where to prioritize its limited resources, and in which areas to increase its outreach efforts.

The Commission's best referral sources in 2021 was web search, with seventy (70) referrals. Another large source of referrals was Word of Mouth with thirty-six (36). *Figure 1* below has a breakdown of all referral sources.

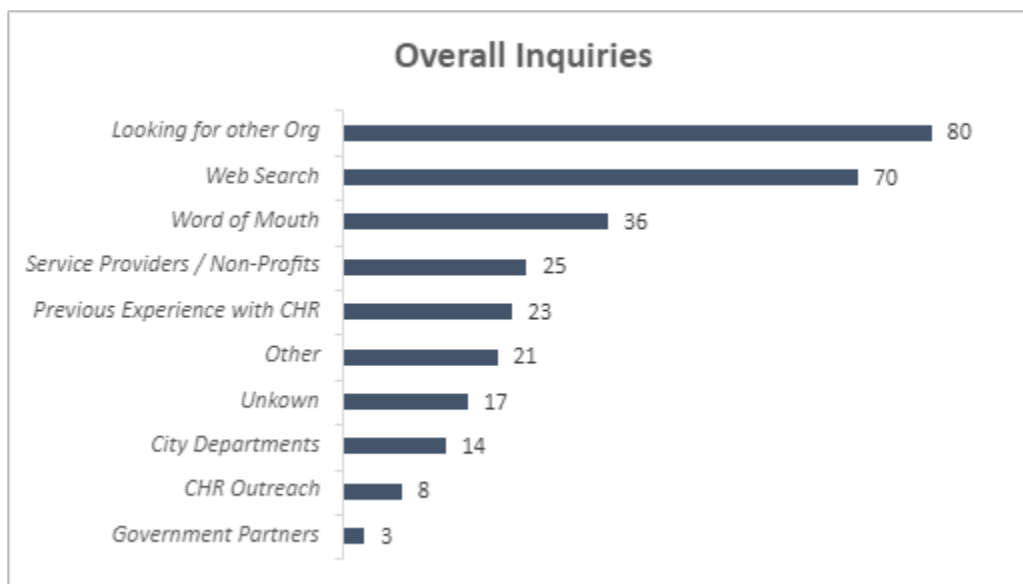
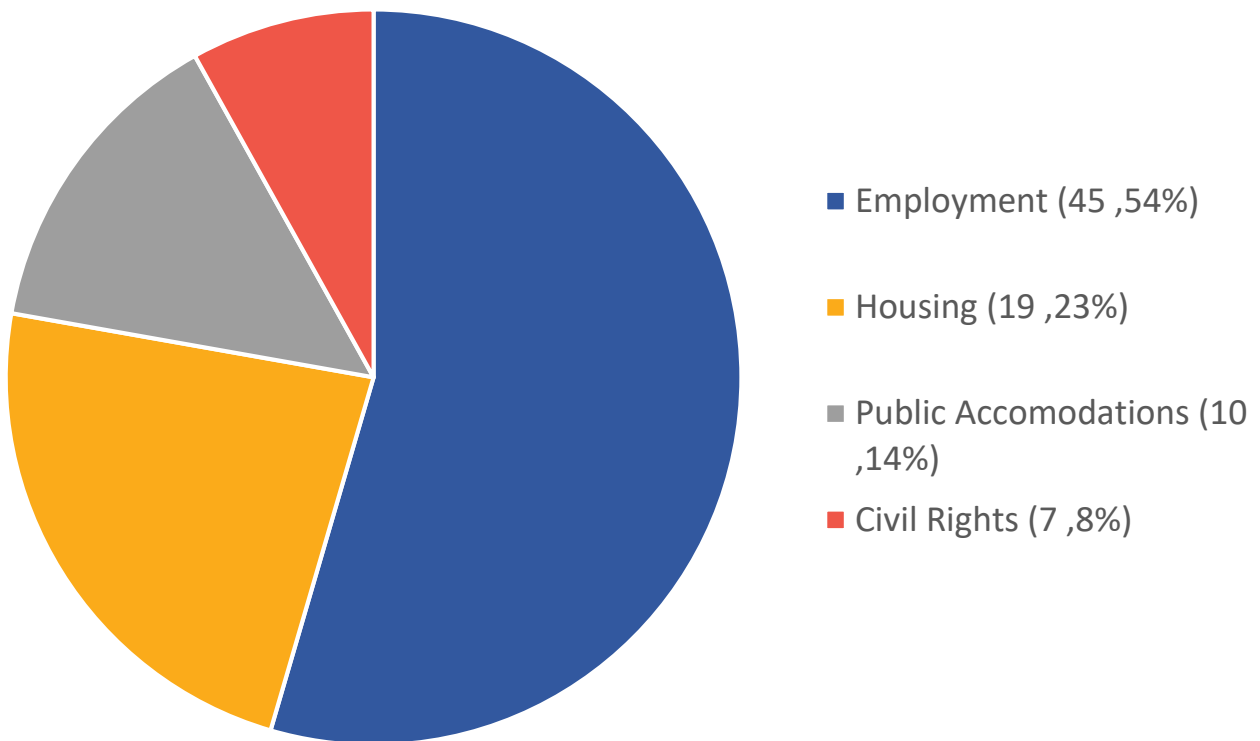


Figure 1 – 2021 Overall Referral Sources (N=297)

# New Cases in 2021

In 2021, the PghCHR opened a total of 84 new complaints alleging discrimination. The breakdown of the complaints is as follows; 45 employment complaints, 19 housing complaints, 10 public accommodations complaints, and 7 civil rights complaints.

## NEW CASE INTAKE BREAKDOWN



# Employment Investigations

**Investigative Authority:** Per the City of Pittsburgh’s Home Rule Charter and code of ordinances (a/k/a 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 the 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.

**Federal Law:** There are multiple federal equal employment opportunity (“EEO”) laws that cover the entire United States. Those laws prohibit employment discrimination and prohibit retaliating against someone for exercising their EEO rights or participating in an EEO investigation or lawsuit. PghCHR contracts with the EEOC to enforce the following federal EEO laws:

1. 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.
2. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (“ADEA”), which prohibits discrimination against people who are age 40 or older.
3. Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), which prohibits employment discrimination based on a person’s disability.
4. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 (“EPA”), which prohibits discrimination in wage payments between men and women.
5. 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.

**Pittsburgh City Code:** Section 659.02 of the Pittsburgh City Code includes the same protections and protected classes as those identified above in the federal laws, 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 Victim of Domestic Violence, and Hairstyles and Protective and Cultural Hair Textures and Hairstyles

# Of the 45 Employment Cases that were filed in 2021:

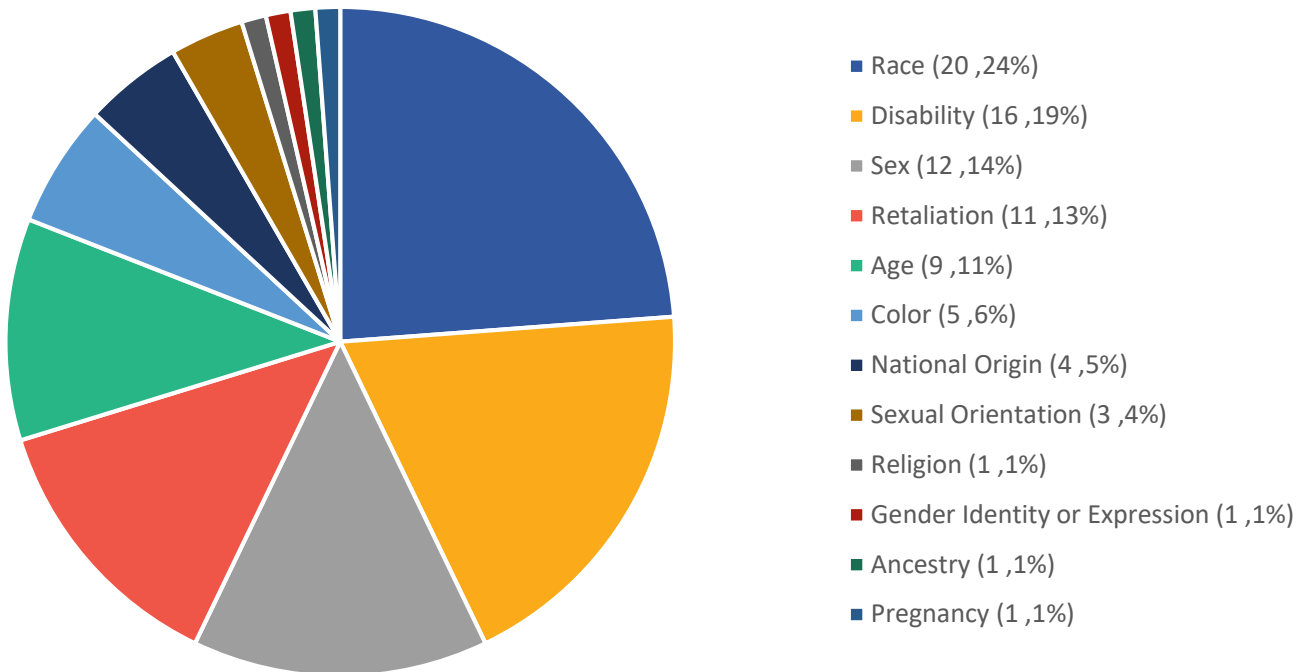
CASES FILED ON ONE BASIS:

22

CASES FILED ON MORE THAN ONE BASIS:

23

## EMPLOYMENT INTAKE BY BASE\*



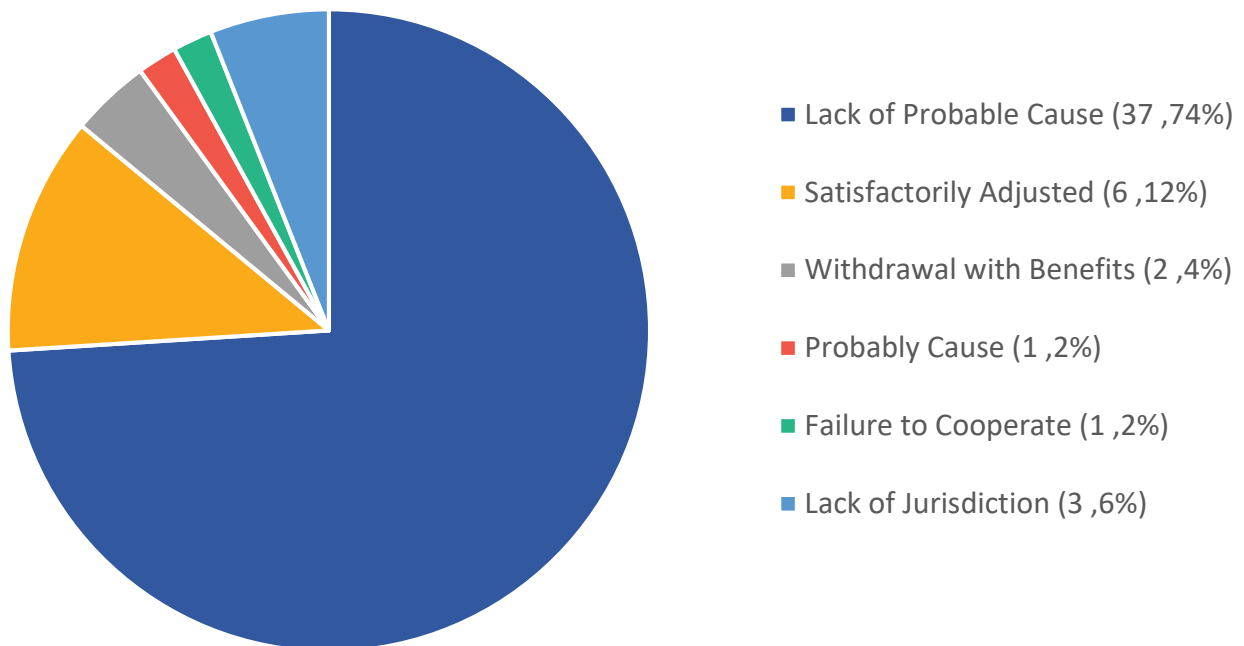
\*Some complaints are filed on multiple bases due to membership in multiple protected classes



# Employment Closures

In the 2020-2021 case year, the PghCHR closed 48 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 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup> for Employment cases.

## EMPLOYMENT CASE BREAKDOWN OF CLOSURE TYPES



### ***NOTES 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 \$1,000 to \$12,100. Out of the five monetary settlements during the October 1 – Sept 30 case year, a total of \$20,799 was provided to Complainants in settlement agreements.

# Fair 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 the 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 Pittsburgh 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 Victim of Domestic Violence, Citizenship or Immigration Status, Preferred Language, and Hairstyles and Protective and Cultural Hair Textures and Hairstyles

# Of the 19 Housing Cases that were filed in 2021:

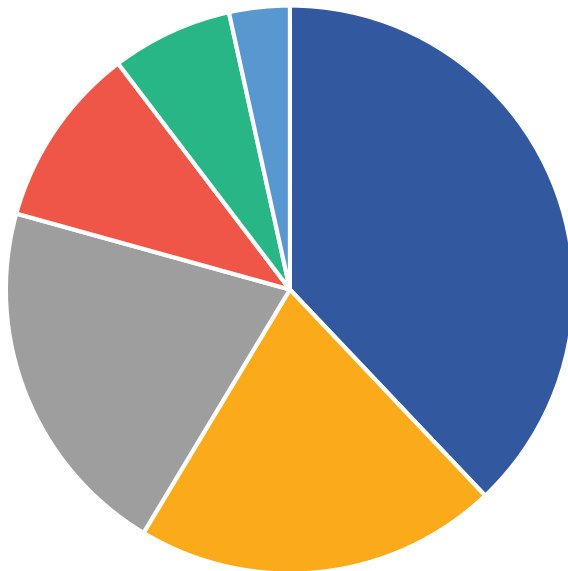
CASES FILED ON ONE BASIS:

12

CASES FILED ON MORE THAN ONE BASIS:

7

## HOUSING INTAKE BY BASE\*



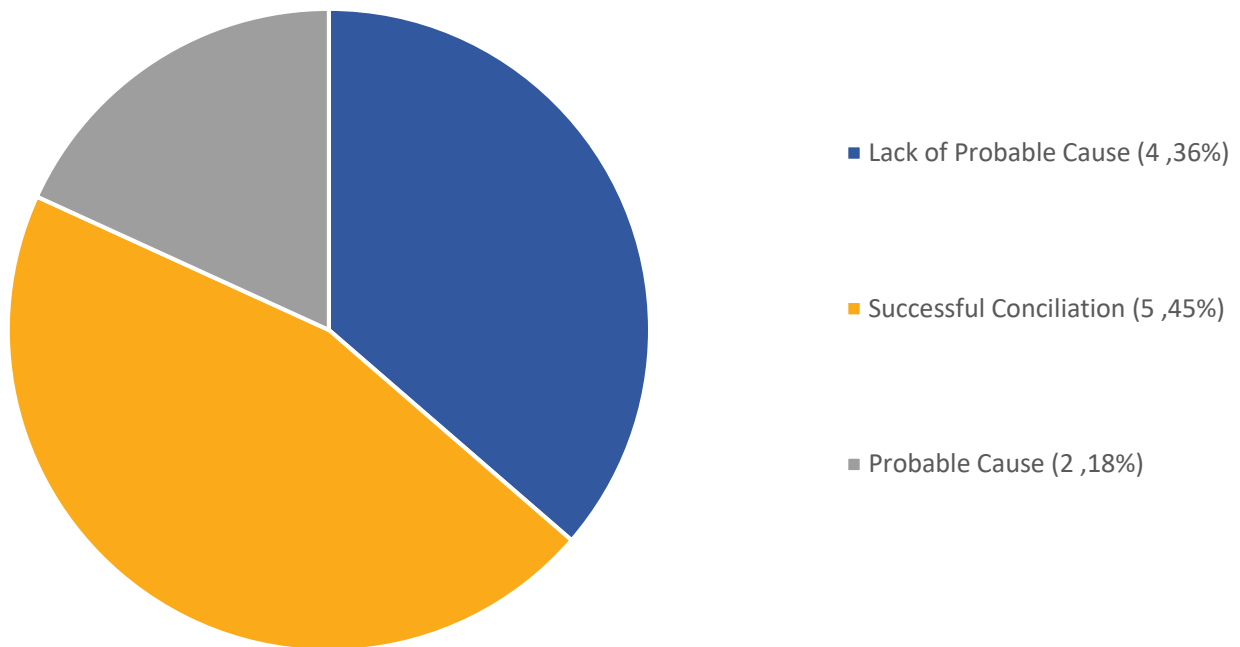
- Race (11 ,38%)
- Disability (6 ,21%)
- Retaliation (6 ,21%)
- Familial Status (3 ,10%)
- Sex (2 ,7%)
- Place of Birth (1 ,3%)

\*Some complaints are filed on multiple bases due to membership in multiple protected classes

# Housing Closures

In the 2020-2021 case year, the PghCHR closed 11 cases. In many cases, both monetary and non-monetary settlements are awarded. In the 2020-2021 case year, five monetary settlements were reached as well as non-monetary settlements. Non-monetary settlements included fair housing training, monitoring, and mandatory community meetings.

## HOUSING CASE BREAKDOWN OF CLOSURE TYPES



### NOTES ON CLOSURES

- The Commission is mandated to complete housing investigations within 100 days; this does not include the conciliation/mediation period or public hearing
- 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 County 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.

# Public Accommodations Investigations

**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.

**Pittsburgh City Code:** Section 659.03 of the Pittsburgh 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, Gender Expression, Disability, Citizenship or Immigration Status, Preferred Language, and Hairstyles and Protective and Cultural Hair Textures and Hairstyles

# Of the 10 Public Accommodations Cases that were filed in 2021:

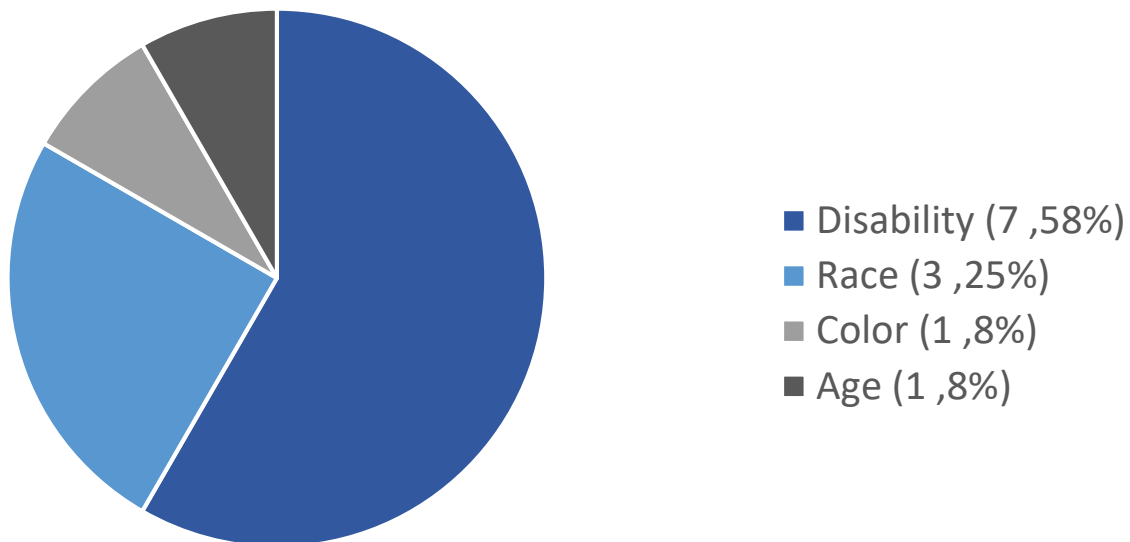
CASES FILED ON ONE BASIS:

8

CASES FILED ON MORE THAN ONE BASIS:

2

## PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS INTAKE BY BASE



Pittsburgh City Code Article V, § 659.04 “Unlawful Public Accommodation Practices” makes it illegal for the “owner, lessee, proprietor, manager, superintendent, agent or employee of any business or place of public accommodation, resort, recreation or amusement” to refuse service, facilities, entry, or goods to a person based on their protected class status. Currently there are 14 protected classes covered under public accommodations law.

# Civil Rights Investigations

**Investigative Authority:** Per the City of Pittsburgh’s Home Rule Charter and code of ordinances (a/k/a the Pittsburgh City Code, City Code, or “PCC” for short), PghCHR has the authority to investigate claims of civil rights discrimination that, if true, would violate the City Code. The requirements and prohibitions apply to all City of Pittsburgh employees

**Pittsburgh City Code:** Section 659.07 of the Pittsburgh City Code prohibits City of Pittsburgh employees, including the City of Pittsburgh Police, from discriminating against anyone while acting in their role as an employee because of: Race, Color, Religion, Ancestry, National Origin, Place of Birth, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Age, and Disability.

# Of the 7 Civil Rights Cases that were filed in 2021:

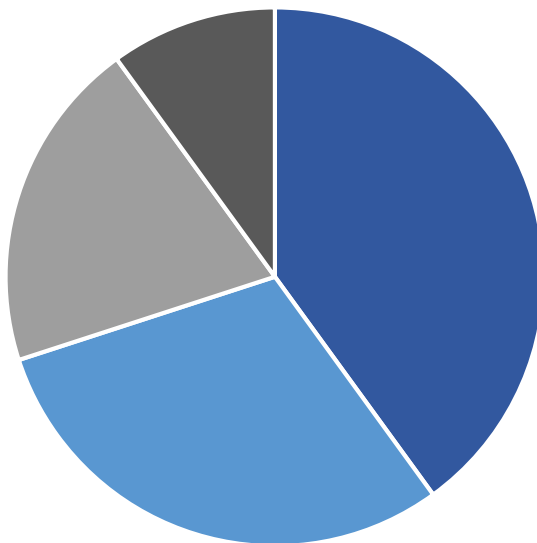
CASES FILED ON ONE BASIS:

4

CASES FILED ON MORE THAN ONE BASIS:

3

## CIVIL RIGHTS INTAKES BY BASE



- Race (4 ,40%)
- Disability (3 ,30%)
- Sex (2 ,20%)
- National Origin (1 ,10%)



## Outreach and Education 2021

With word of mouth as the Commission's top referral source, outreach is an essential part of our operation. The goal is to reach as many Pittsburghers as possible to be sure they know their rights and responsibilities under the laws PghCHR enforces. Below are some events and meetings the PghCHR participated in or hosted in 2021 to continue sharing information with those who need it most.

The Commission continues to partner with the [Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh](#) to provide information on home ownership and lending to those in the process of purchasing a home for the first time. If you would be interested in being a part of [Operation HOME](#), please call 412-227-4161 or email [HIntake@ulpgh.org](mailto:HIntake@ulpgh.org).

During Fair Housing Month the Commission partnered with the [Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh](#) and [Global Wordsmiths](#) to hold webinars on Understanding Fair Housing During COVID-19 for [landlords](#), [tenants](#) and [service providers](#). The Commission provides information on rights and responsibilities that can help avoid discriminatory issues before they occur.

With constant change in our communities it is important to stay up to date on local issues and to be a part of the ongoing conversation to create positive change in Pittsburgh. In 2021, the Commission regularly participated in several local meetings, including the:

- [Local Housing Options Team](#)
- National League of Cities [Eviction Prevention Cohort](#)
- City-County Task Force on Disabilities
- Housing Justice Table
- Just Housing Working Group
- Pittsburgh Disability Awareness and Financial Inclusion Working Group

If you know of a group that would appreciate information from the PghCHR, or who would like to provide information to us, please reach out to us!

While the PghCHR holds monthly meetings that are open to the public, every year there is a special public meeting held in the community to more deeply engage Pittsburghers. In 2021 the [PghCHR Annual Community Meeting](#) focused on Thank you to our guest speakers, Paul O'Hanlon of the City-County Task Force on Disabilities, Laura Perkins of Casa San José, and Devon Brown of Council District 8.

While civil rights and human rights aren't identical there is a lot of overlap between the two. The PghCHR continues to work with the [Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance](#) to host events that bring together stakeholders and spread awareness of human and civil rights. The Annual Human Rights Picnic is the perfect opportunity to network and get to know the leaders of civil and human rights in Pittsburgh. Watch for the announcement on our [Facebook](#) in summer of 2022 to join us next time!

# **A Welcoming Commission How We Serve Pittsburgh's International Communities: 2021 Update**

In October 2021, PghCHR hosted a roundtable discussion centered around the challenges immigrant and international (I&I) communities face in the provision of housing, employment, public accommodations, and city services in the City of Pittsburgh. This initial roundtable was the result of realizing, through increased outreach to organizations that serve the I&I community, that there was room for improvement in our engagement strategies that could enhance our ability to serve the I&I community directly, and in partnership with community organizations with whom they have existing relationships. The event and discussions that took place gave us invaluable perspective and advice for changes to our approaches moving forward, and it is our hope that the success of this roundtable event will help spur momentum for future roundtable events that are centered around other communities of interest for PghCHR. We are grateful to our community partners that were able to attend, and we look forward to continuing working with them into the future as we further refine our outreach and education strategies for the immigrant and refugee communities in Pittsburgh.

In addition, PghCHR had continued its "Know Your Rights" training series and has expanded its immigrant and refugee organizational network, having created and presented trainings for the Latino Community Center, the Hispanic Development Corporation, the Jewish Family and Career Services team, and more. We also have been working with a new Americorps vista, Cailynne Angelo, who has helped us expand our language accessibility to include increased translations of our materials and governing documents. Through our work, we hope to promote the City of Pittsburgh's Welcoming Pittsburgh message, ensuring that our City is one that others will look to and see diverse neighborhoods where all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, will feel safe, welcome, and supported by their community.

# Human Rights Speaks: Youth Creative Arts Contest

PghCHR held our second annual Human Rights Speaks: Youth Creative Arts Contest. We invited all youth ages/grades 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> who live in or go to school in the City of Pittsburgh to come up with their own, original answer to the following question:

The New Pittsburgh Courier, originally published as the Pittsburgh Courier, is an award-winning newspaper that was once the “most widely circulated black newspaper” in the U.S. Throughout its history, the Courier has covered and spoken out against the following human rights issues affecting black and African American people. Today, there are still many human rights stories to be told. **Question: What human rights story do you want to tell?**



There were two age groups (6th-8th and 9th-12<sup>th</sup>) and three categories (writing, digital art, and physical art). Winners in each age group and category received a monetary prize (\$250 for 1st place winners; \$50 for 2nd place winners), as well as non-monetary prizes. In addition, winners were interviewed by WQED about their submissions. Listen to the full interview here: [WQED Youth Arts Contest Winners](#)

For more details on the contest and to view the winners' artwork, please visit our webpage for the contest: [Human Rights Speaks](#)



# Temporary Eviction Moratorium Ordinance



## What was T.E.M.O.?

In March of 2021, Pittsburgh City Council enacted Chapter 782 of the Pittsburgh City Code, which, as amended, prohibited landlords from taking action to cause the eviction of an individual or household except for good cause. On April 30, 2021, Mayor Bill Peduto designated that PghCHR investigate and enforce violations of the ordinance. The Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (PghCHR) created procedures for landlords to apply for just cause exemptions to the ordinance and to investigate alleged moratorium violation. On August 3, 2021, the City's Emergency Disaster Declaration expired and, with its expiration, Chapter 782 was no longer in effect.

## Moratorium Violation Reports



# 27 filings

The Commission received 27 reports of potential moratorium ordinance violations. Of those, 11 (41%) were found not in violation, 10 (37%) had the investigation discontinued at the moratorium expiration, 4 (15%) were found likely to have violated the ordinance, and 2 (7%) were not jurisdictional.

# 18 Requests

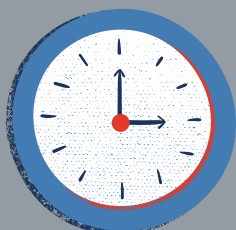
The Commission received 18 good cause exemption requests. Of those, 8 (44%) were found to have established a rebuttable presumption of good cause, 7 (39%) were determined to have not established the rebuttable presumption, and 2 (11%) were not jurisdictional.

## Good Cause Exemptions



# Work Hours 400+

PghCHR spent at least 400 work hours over 22 weeks to supporting T.E.M.O. (18hours/week). The TEMO work was done in addition to the existing Commission work and with the addition of 15 hours/week staff support. TEMO activities included the research and development for TEMO rules, processing of good cause



## Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence

In November 2021, Pittsburgh District 8 City Councilperson Erika Strassburger introduced new legislation that offers workplace protections for people working in our City and experiencing domestic violence. The legislation was created in partnership between the Councilwoman's office, the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations

(PghCHR), and Standing Firm, a national program of the Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh. The legislation was formally passed into law in December 2021.

Per year, an estimated 10 million people in the U.S. experience an instance of domestic violence. Access to a stable source of income and personal economic security can be essential to safely escaping domestic violence. People experiencing domestic violence may experience harassment in the workplace, may need frequent access to the court system, or may miss time at work due to the actions of another person. The legislation requires employers to allow reasonable accommodations and considerations for employees who disclose that they are experiencing domestic violence. With the passage of this legislation, survivors of domestic violence will now have legal protections and recourse if they face unfair or unequal employment outcomes. Claims or reports of discrimination based on a person's status as a survivor of domestic violence can be reported to PghCHR. For more information on this legislation, please visit our [Resources page](#) where you can find [guidance for employers and business owners](#) to understand the ordinance.

# Staff Training

Each year PghCHR staff participates in various conferences and trainings to stay abreast of current civil rights laws. We find that this is essential in an ever-changing social climate where new challenges arise every day and case law is constantly evolving. In order to provide thorough, unbiased investigations, our staff regularly have group discussions to share institutional information, varied perspectives, and investigation techniques. In addition, bi-weekly professional development meetings serve as a platform to discuss various topics and encourage team building. Below you will find a brief overview of the types of trainings our staff attended in 2021:

- Homes Within Reach Conference
- Citizenship for Immigrant Children
- Preventing Eviction with Mediation
- Collateral Damage: The Consequences of Racial Bias in the Appraisal Process
- Housing Rights for People with a Criminal History
- Fair Housing: Moving Forward
- Immigrant and Language Access Overview Training
- 2021 Pittsburgh Community Development Summit
- Ethical Considerations When Conducting Fair and Unbiased Workplace Investigations
- The ADA and our Jails: Delivering Service to All with Dignity and Respect
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Achieving Racial Equity in Recruiting and Hiring Persons with Criminal Records
- Race and Disability: the Financial Impact of Systemic Inequality
- So You Want to Use Social Media to Reach Communities at Risk of Eviction?
- Supreme Court Update: Cases of Interest to Labor and Employment Law Practitioners
- ACBA CLE Webinar: The Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") in Employment

# Commission Staff

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**WESLEY SPEARY – DEPUTY DIRECTOR**

**RACHEL SHEPHERD – FISCAL AND CONTRACTING COORDINATOR**

**JESSICA ROHE-COOK – OUTREACH AND INTAKE COORDINATOR**

**RITA TURPIN PORTERFIELD – SENIOR INVESTIGATOR**

**CHRISTOPHER SOULT – SENIOR INVESTIGATOR**

**SHANEISE MURRAY – SENIOR INVESTIGATOR**

**EMILY COSTELLO- SENIOR INVESTIGATOR**

**KEVIN CARROLL – ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

**TYLER VILJASTE – INTERN AND FELLOW**

**JAKOB HESS – CORO FELLOW**

**KHADAJAH MUHAMMAD – CORO FELLOW**

**KAYLA HUMPHRIES – PARTNER4WORK INTERN**

**CALLIE ANGELO – AMERICORPS VISTA**





# Pittsburgh Commission On Human Relations

*Serving Fairness Together*

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