pennsylvania
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Annual Report

2021

2020-2021 PHRC at a Glance

- Celebrated 66 years fighting for a fair and just state.
- Developed 6 PHRC Social Justice committees which are jointly led by a senior staff and a commission member. The committees are Educational Equity, Fair Housing & Commercial Property, Policy & Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA), Police & Community Relations, Diversity & Inclusion, Program, Community Outreach & Training.
- Policy position taken by the PHRC that the word "sex" as it appears in the PHRA is not limited to biological sex, but also includes sexual orientation and gender identity. This stance is aligned with the United States Supreme Court's position.
- Launched the PHRC Diversity Speaks Lecture Series.
- Created a guidance regulation that will provide protection to people of African descent when it comes to how they wear their hair. The policy position is in keeping with the CROWN Act - which prohibits discrimination based on a hair texture or hairstyle if that style or texture is commonly associated with a particular race or national origin.
- Conducted Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Training to Combat Racial and Pandemic Fatigue for PHRC Staff.
- The Office of the Chief Counsel created a Commission Counsel position tasked with rendering legal advice to Commission members.
- Continued PHRC Lunch & Learns to share staff expertise on current civil rights issues.
- The Enforcement Division Collaborated with the Legal Division to establish a robust investigation and litigation program.
- Continued Governor's Lean Management Trainings
- The Communications Division completed a redesign of the PHRC website to provide a more user-centric experience.

2020-2021 PHRC at a Glance

- The Communications and Fair Housing and Commercial Property divisions implemented a state-wide outdoor advertising campaign focused on housing discrimination.
- Conducted DEI Training for all PHRC Staff.
- Testified to the PA Legislature on 'Microaggressions on College Campus.'
- The Mediation Division finished 2021 with an overall resolution rate of 73 percent and recouped $1,904,088 in 2021.
- Conducted CRT (Critical Race Theory) Training for PHRC Staff
- Developed the CRT (Critical Race Theory) Social Justice Tool Kit for law firms, schools, school boards, Advisory Councils to the PHRC.
- The Fair Housing and Commercial Property Division saw a 32 percent increase in completed HUD complaints over last fiscal year.
- Continued the PHRC Social Justice Lecture Series
- The Sr. Leadership team visited the regional offices to provide various procedural and social justice training throughout the year.
- Launched the PHRC LGBTQ Social Justice Mini-Grants

Human Rights

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PHRC Vision, Mission & Values

VISION

As Pennsylvania's civil rights leader, it is our vision that all people in Pennsylvania will live, work and learn free from unlawful discrimination.

MISSION

The PA Human Relations Commission promotes equal opportunity for all and enforces Pennsylvania's civil rights laws that protect people from unlawful discrimination.

(l-r) – Adrian Garcia, Samuel Rivera, Laura Argenbright, Chad Dion Lassiter, Kurt Jung

VALUES

Equality - We believe strongly in the equality and dignity of all individuals. We uphold the principles of justice and fairness through our work, conduct and communication.

Service - We subscribe to the highest standards of responsiveness, quality, timeliness and professionalism.

Integrity - We uphold the highest standards of honesty and transparency. We are candid, trustworthy, credible and unbiased.

Excellence - We strive to excel in our work. We endeavor to ensure a highly prepared, diverse, competent and committed workforce.

Teamwork - We build and sustain strong, constructive and collaborative relationships.

Respect – We value employees' talents and differences and treat them with consideration and importance.

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
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History of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) was created in 1955 after the passage of the Pennsylvania Fair Employment Practice Act. It is the premier civil rights agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that is tasked with enforcing the state anti-discrimination laws and undertaking community outreach efforts that prohibit and prevent discrimination in Pennsylvania.

The PHRC enforces state laws that prohibit discrimination under the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA), which covers discrimination in employment, housing, commercial property, education, and public accommodations, and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act (PFEOA), which is specific to postsecondary education and secondary vocational and trade schools. Both laws ban discrimination in the Commonwealth based on race, color, creed, ancestry, age, or national origin. The laws were eventually amended to include discrimination based on sex and disability.

The PHRC is headed by a diverse group of 11 commissioners who are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate. The commissioners act as public liaisons, establish policies and resolve some cases that are not settled voluntarily. The commission is independent and nonpartisan, with no more than six commissioners from one political party. The chairperson is appointed by the governor, and a vice-chairperson, secretary and assistant secretary are elected by commissioners each year. The executive director reports directly to the commissioners.

PHRC's Executive Directors:	
Chad Dion Lassiter	2018 - Present
JoAnn L. Edwards	2011 - 2018
Homer C. Floyd	1970 -2011
Milo A. Manly	1968 - 1970
Elliott M. Shirk	1956 - 1968
PHRC Commission Chairs:	
M. Joel Bolstein	2017 - Present
Gerald S. Robinson	2011 -2016
Stephen A. Glassman	2003 - 2011
Carl E. Denson	2000 - 2003
Robert Johnson Smith	1990 - 2000
Thomas L. McGill, Jr.	1986 - 1990
Joseph X. Yaffe	1974 - 1986
Everett E. Smith	1970 - 1974
Max Rosenn	1969 -1970
Harry Boyer	1956 -1969

Pennsylvania Human Relations Act

Prohibiting certain practices of discrimination because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age or national origin by employers, employment agencies, labor organizations and others as herein defined; creating the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission in the Governor's Office; defining its functions, powers and duties; providing for procedure and enforcement; providing for formulation of an educational program to prevent prejudice; providing for judicial review and enforcement and imposing penalties defining "advertisement" and "advertiser"; and providing for certain forms of advertisement, for limitations and for civil penalties.

A Message from Governor Tom Wolf

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) has held a vital place in the life of the Commonwealth for over six decades. It is the only state-wide agency that enforces anti-discrimination laws in housing, public places, and government services. Since its inception in 1955, the PHRC has been tasked with ensuring that our differences not become the basis for discriminatory practices across the state.

The PHRC has long understood the value of unity amid cultural diversity and has invested in the infrastructure necessary to promote peace throughout the state.

It is my pleasure to congratulate Executive Director Chad Dion Lassiter, the Commissioners, and the entire staff for their service and dedication to the citizens of our state and their dedication to justice within our Commonwealth's communities.

Sincerely,

Tom Wolf
Governor

Chairman's Statement

Commissioner - M. Joel Bolstein, Esq.

At PHRC, we understand that our most powerful moments occur when we unite around our common vision and purpose. Throughout the years, our vision has remained steadfast – that all people in Pennsylvania should be able to live, work, and learn free from unlawful discrimination. As we mark our 66th year, every success that we achieve ultimately comes from the trust that millions of citizens place in PHRC to turn that vision into reality.

I commend Chad D. Lassiter, executive director, and his staff for all their hard work and creative efforts to meet our objectives in these challenging times. I also want to recognize the dedication of my fellow Commissioners who bring unique and diverse perspectives to every issue before the Commission.

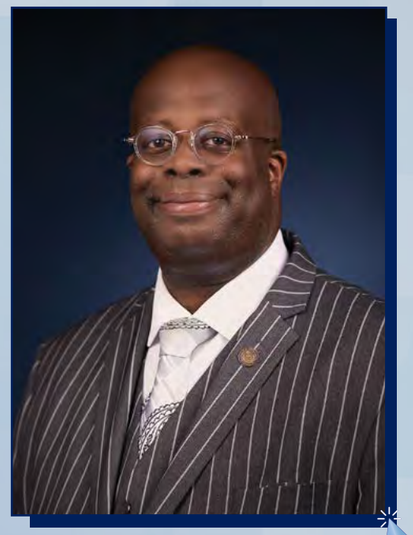
Lastly, I also want to express my sincere gratitude to Governor Wolf for his leadership and to our friends in the General Assembly for their continued support of the PHRC.

Sincerely,

M. Joel Bolstein, Esq.
Commissioner

Executive Director

Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW



This annual review of our work is an opportunity for me to pause, to remember, and to reflect on our social justice activities from the past year. It is true that 2021 continued to test us all here at the PHRC as it has tested everyone throughout the Commonwealth. The pandemic has presented a crisis on a scale we have never experienced before. The toll it has taken on the citizens is heartbreaking.

However, if there is a silver lining, it is this. The pandemic has given us a common bond. All of us throughout the commonwealth – regardless of race, sex, gender, religious affiliation, generation, or ethnicity - have been touched by the pandemic and its accompanying problems.

We, at the PHRC, know well that trouble can bring with it deep feelings - be they of empathy or of violence. In 2021, we have seen evidence of both - acts of heroism and of hate. Hate crimes targeting people because of race, gender or religion have risen. My prayer is that we emerge from the pandemic not with despair but with a greater appreciation for the power of compassion, a stronger bent toward generosity and a larger capacity for compassion and kindness. And that this is experienced not only by individuals but also by entire communities. As the writer Wendell Berry once explained, "A proper community, we should remember also, is a commonwealth: a place, a resource, an economy. It answers the needs, practical as well as social and spiritual, of its members - among them the need to need one another.

Since 1955, the PHRC has been an advocate for individuals and we will continue our work of investigating wrongdoing, but in 2022 we will add to our portfolio a focus on community wellbeing. A strong community is an antidote against racism, discrimination, hate and other social harms. It is why I selected the theme of unity for this year's annual report. A protective community begins with its members being of one accord.

I realize this will be an immense undertaking. I applaud the efforts of my staff who work so diligently. I thank the Commissioners for their dedication. I appreciate Governor Tom Wolf and the General Assembly for their support of the PHRC.

Sincerely,

Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW

Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW
Executive Director

Commissioner Profiles

Radheshyam M. Agrawal, M.D.

Dr. Radheshyam M. Agrawal is a Pittsburgh-based gastroenterologist on the faculty of Drexel University College of Medicine. He is also Professor Emeritus at Temple University School of Medicine, Allegheny Health Network. He has over 40 years' experience as a practicing physician, researcher and medical educator. He has won numerous research grants and honors in medicine, and is widely recognized for service to his profession and community.

Dr. Agrawal's government appointments include serving on the PA State Board of Medicine, the Federation of State Medical Boards, the Asian American and Pacific Advisory Council for the PA Attorney General's Office, the Governor's Advisory Commission for Asian-American Affairs, the Health Care Advisory Board for the 110th Congress, and the PA Medical Legal Advisory Board on Elderly Abuse and Neglect.

Radheshyam M. Agrawal, MD, was appointed to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission on June 3, 2014 and reappointed for a full five-year term in 2014 and in 2019.

Chairman, M. Joel Bolstein, Esq.

M. Joel Bolstein was appointed to serve as Interim Chair of The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission on April 18, 2016 and named Chair in October 2018.

He is currently a partner in the law firm of Fox Rothschild, LLP, where his practice consists of environmental law and governmental affairs. He is listed as one of the top environmental lawyers in Pennsylvania in the Chambers Guide USA, Best Lawyers and PA Super Lawyers. Mr. Bolstein served three terms on the U.S. EPA's National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy & Technology From January 1995 to July 1997, he was Deputy Secretary for Special Projects at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. In 1995, he received the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Award for Excellence. In 1999, he was presented the Excellence in Environmental Achievement Award from Bethlehem Steel Company for his work on the Bethlehem Works Project, the largest brownfield site in the country.

He was involved in a wide variety of areas, including permit and enforcement decisions and development of policies and regulatory initiatives In January 1999, Governor Ridge appointed Mr. Bolstein to a five-year term on Pennsylvania's Human Relations Commission. He was reappointed by Governor Rendell in 2005 and 2010.

George B. Dawson, Esq.

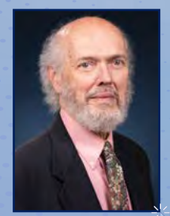
George B. Dawson, Esq. has served as Delaware County's deputy district attorney since 2013, overseeing the office's Anti-violence and Insurance Fraud Units. He participates in the office's community outreach and is a member of the county's Heroin Taskforce.

An attorney specializing in domestic relations, personal injury and contract dispute litigation, he has run a private law practice in Holmes, Delaware County since 2002. He represents Chester Upland School District as special counsel in student disciplinary and truancy matters.

Prior to serving in the DA's office, he represented indigent parents in matters involving Children and Youth Services in Master, Juvenile and Orphan's Courts.

He is a member of Delaware County Bar Association, Pennsylvania School Board Association and the National School Board Association.

Mr. Dawson is a cum laude graduate of Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan, and earned his bachelor's degree in business administration at King's College in Wilkes-Barre. He has served on the PA Human Relations Commission since 2014.



Michael Hardiman, Esq.

Michael Hardiman currently serves as a Commissioner for the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. He was initially appointed to serve in 2016. Hardiman previously worked for the PHRC for over thirty-three years. For the last seven years of his career at the Commission he served as Chief Counsel for the Commission. He retired in July 2012.

His primary work as Chief Counsel centered on employment discrimination litigation. In addition, he was involved with several urban area school district desegregation and educational equity cases. He also litigated sex equity/athletic program cases; physical disability/accessibility cases; age discrimination/pension cases; and private club/access cases.
Hardiman, additionally, has served as the Interim Executive Director of the Commission on two occasions, first in 2011 and again in 2018. Mr. Hardiman, after retiring from the Commission, also served for several years, in a volunteer capacity, as Of Counsel to the Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity (PLSE). PLSE is a non-profit corporation that works in the community to reduce negative collateral consequences for those who have interacted with the Pennsylvania Criminal Justice System. Hardiman received his undergraduate degree from Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1969 and he graduated cum laude from William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1977.

Hardiman also served in the U.S. Army from September 1969 through March 1972 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in July 1970.

Curtis Jones, Jr.

The Honorable Curtis Jones Jr. represents the 4th District of Philadelphia. Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr. is a champion for education, an ally for criminal justice, and the environment. He is also a noted expert on community-based economic development, Councilman Jones has served in various public and private sector positions for more than two decades. Under his leadership, minority-, women-, and disabled- owned business entities have received more than $583,000,000 in municipal contract opportunities.

Councilman Jones serves on numerous boards and executive committees including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and the Pennsylvania Crime & Delinquency Commission both appointed by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. He also serves on the Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB), as Co-Chair of Special Investigative Committee examining City demolition procedures and operations both appointed by Council President Darrell Clarke, the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority's Minority Advisory Committee, the Please Touch Museum, the Mann Music Center, the Philadelphia Gas Commission, and the City Avenue Special Services District.

A recipient of numerous community and industry awards, Councilman Jones, is one of Overbrook High School's accomplished graduates. He has furthered his scholastic achievements by attending the University of Pennsylvania's Fels School of Government, completing studies at Boston University's A. C. C. A. program, and receiving a Master's certificate in Contract Compliance in conjunction with the University of Alabama.

Secretary, Mayur Patel, Esq.

Mayur Patel is co-founder and principal of Laughner Patel Developers. LPD provides real estate development services including the search, design, development and construction of projects ranging from medical and commercial office building to hotels.

Prior to founding LPD, Mr. Patel served as general counsel to Hersha Hospitality Trust, a publicly traded hospitality REIT. During his time there, Mr. Patel helped Hersha move from the AMEX to the New York Stock Exchange, and grow from 19 hotels located primarily in the Northeastern United States to 85 hotels located throughout the country. As general counsel, Mr. Patel completed over one hundred real estate and financial transactions as well as assisted in the development of real estate projects throughout the East Coast, including New York City, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg.

Mr. Patel graduated from Randolph Macon College in Ashland, VA with a BA in International Relations and Political Science. He also earned a Juris Doctorate degree from the Villanova University School of Law.

Aleena Y. Sorathia, Esq.

Aleena Sorathia is a member of Ahmad Zaffarese LLC, a small, minority-owned law firm. Her practice focuses on representing small to large businesses as well as government entities in civil litigation and employment matters. During her time at Ahmad Zaffarese, Sorathia has represented clients in matters involving the Political Subdivision Tort Claims Act, the Sovereign Immunity Act, Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. Sorathia has also aided clients in matters related to §1983, Bivens, and the Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Law. Additionally, she has represented clients in connection with Act 111 and Act 195 arbitration matters, contract disputes and business formation. Sorathia also assists Ahmad Zaffarese's Collection group.

Outside of work, Sorathia is dedicated to serving the Greater Philadelphia community. Sorathia sits on the Board of Directors of Break Away, a national non-profit organization. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania (APABA-PA), and the Minority Alumni Society of Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law (MAS). Additionally, Sorathia is passionate about mentoring and participates in MAS & APABA-PA's mentoring programs to guide young law students in their professional development. Sorathia also provides shadowing opportunities to college students interested in the practice of law through the University of Richmond's Alumni Society

Adrian Shanker

Adrian Shanker is executive director of Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center in Allentown, PA and also serves as Commissioner and Health Committee Co-chair of the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs. A specialist in LGBT health policy, he administered data collection for the 2015, 2018, and 2020 Pennsylvania LGBT Health Needs Assessments and serves as LGBTQ subcommittee chair of the Pennsylvania Department of Health COVID-19 Health Equity Response Team. He is editor of Bodies and Barriers: Queer Activists on Health. Mr. Shanker has been named a "Healthcare Hero" by Lehigh Valley Business and twice named 'Person of the Year' by Philadelphia Gay News. Mr. Shanker earned a Graduate Certificate in LGBT Health Policy & Practice from George Washington University and earned his B.A. from Muhlenberg College.

Vice-Chair, Dr. Raquel O. Yiengst

Dr. Raquel O. Yiengst was born and raised in Puerto Rico. Upon graduation from high school her parents sent her to continue her studies at the University of St. Mary's in Kansas where she received a bachelor's degree in Child Development and Family Life. She returned to Puerto Rico where she met and married a man from Reading, PA where she currently still resides.

She received a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling at Kutztown University and a Doctor's degree in Urban and Bilingual Education from Temple University. She worked for the Reading School District as Director of Bilingual Education until her retirement. While working there she was appointed as a Commissioner to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission; a position she has held for the last 44 years. She is the Vice-Chair of the Commission and the Chair of the Educational Equity Committee.

In 2019, Dr. Yiengst received the prestigious PHRC Homer C. Floyd Award for her lifetime of work towards social justice

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission Social Justice Committees

Educational Equity Committee

There are harmful inequities in many aspects of the Commonwealth's educational policies and practices. The Educational Equity Committee (EEC) of the PHRC takes all appropriate measures within its jurisdiction to address inequities whether they are found in academic programs, vocational programs, or programs for special needs students. The goals for the EEC for 2022 are:

1. Researching the reasons for the school to prison pipeline and developing a stronger working relationship between the PHRC and the Department of Education.
2. Exploring the varied harmful equal education disparities in many aspects of the learning environment – academic, vocational, and programs for children with special needs.
3. Exploring the societal costs associated with unemployed youth and opening lines of communication between business and industry and school districts to determine the needs of students so they can be better prepared to enter the workforce.

Chair: Dr. Raquel Yiengst | Lead: Carl Summerson, Esq.

Policy and PA Human Relations Act (PHRA) Committee

The purpose of the Policy & PHRA Committee (PPC) is to spearhead efforts to enact, support, lobby and provide guidance regarding issues relating to unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and education. The committee reviews issues of relevance to the Commission, drafts guidance, alerts and educates the Commission on novel approaches to strengthen protections offered by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act. The PPC's goals for 2022 are:

1. To support the PHRC's efforts to enact LGBTQ regulations. These regulations will ensure that all Pennsylvanians, regardless of their sexual preference or identity, will be protected from acts of discrimination and hate.
2. To research, investigate and determine a plan of action to advocate for issues regarding national origin including Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) anti-hate initiatives, Native American mascot and discrimination issues, and language access.
3. To address race initiatives such as voter rights, hair guidance, critical race theory (CRT) and public accommodations.

Chair: Aleena Sorathia, Esq. | Lead: Kurt Jung, Esq.

Fair Housing and Commercial Property Committee

The Fair Housing Committee (FHC) is dedicated to expanding the PHRC's activities beyond the traditional role of enforcement, by leading statewide discussions regarding Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing and housing disparities within protected classes.
The FHC goals for 2022 include:

1. Obtaining representation from state legislators and our stakeholders to advocate for greater self-accountability in ensuring the Fair Housing Act's promise of diversity, equity, and inclusion in housing across the commonwealth.
2. Strengthening the relationships between the Fair Housing Initiative Programs (FHIPs) and fair housing enforcement agencies in Pennsylvania by identifying key issues and developing a system to share data regarding the calls they receive. The objective of this information-sharing is to evaluate housing denial rates among members of protected categories and its correlation to source of income.
3. Educating independent housing providers about the regulations and laws that govern their chosen area of business, housing as well as reaching out to Township Supervisors, Fair Housing Officers and District Magistrates.

Chair: Mayur Patel, Esq. | Lead: Adrian Garcia

What is Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing?

The Fair Housing Act requires agencies and organizations that receive federal funds to both combat acts of housing discrimination as well as to work to change our current housing landscape, which has been shaped by public policies and private practices into a system in which some neighborhoods and groups of people have quality housing, investment, and wealth-building opportunities that others do not. PHRC takes very seriously the charge to foster communities that are inclusive to all, regardless of protected class, and to support programs and practices that overcome housing segregation.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

The purpose of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee is to study issues of inequality, to spearhead diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives throughout the Commonwealth as well as to provide guidance to PHRC management. To this end, the Diversity & Inclusion Committee has set the following goals for 2022:

1. Provide access to our services for Pennsylvania citizens with limited English proficiency including adding different languages to our phone recordings and translating brochures, forms, and other documents into several languages.
2. Draft an internal language access office policy for PHRC that includes a list of resources available to help staff provide access to the citizens of the Commonwealth.
3. Continue the Diversity Speaks series by inviting presenters to talk about civil rights issues and diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices.

Chair: Mayur Patel | Lead: Samuel Rivera

Police and Community Relations Committee

The Police and Community Relations Committee recognizes that there are harmful inequities in many aspects of the Commonwealth's criminal justice system, police policies, and practices that contribute to disparate treatment of racial, ethnic and religious minorities as well as LGBTQ or gender-nonconforming persons. Our primary goal is to ensure that the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) takes the appropriate measures within its jurisdiction to address inequities whether they are found in criminal justice programs, police policies, patterns, or practices and/or patterns or practices as it relates to marginalized communities. In 2022, the Police and Community Relations Committee aims

1. To continue to improve the relationship between police and the community by providing training to members of the community as well as law enforcement.
2. To facilitate Diversity, Harassment, and Respect Police Training in addition to providing other training for incarcerated individuals and the children of incarcerated parents. This training would cover issues related to re-entry and re-integration through the collaborative grant partnership between the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC), the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC), and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).
3. To sponsor community engagement conversations with several police departments, implement the second annual School-to-Prison Pipeline Conference in Spring 2022, and conduct No Hate in Our State Town Halls in several counties throughout the state.
4. To promote the duplication of the City of Philadelphia model for Civilian Oversight Boards of local police departments.

Chair: Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr. | Lead: Stacey Waters

What is the City of Philadelphia model for Civilian Oversight Boards?

On February 4, 2021, Philadelphia City Councilmember Curtis Jones, Jr., introduced Ordinance 210074 to replace the Police Advisory Board with a brand-new Citizens Police Oversight Commission. The Commission will be made up of nine Commissioners and will have the power to investigate individual complaints of police misconduct and bring true civilian oversight to the Philadelphia Police Department. The Commission will have the power to investigate all incidents of police use of force, including the discharge of a firearm or taser, all injuries occurring in police custody, and incidents where officers are involved in the death of another person. The Commission will also have the power to make disciplinary recommendations for members of the Police Department, and the Police Commissioner must respond in writing to the Commission's recommendations. Finally, the Commission has the power to conduct investigations independent of the Police Department and can issue subpoenas to compel witnesses or produce documents.

Program, Community Outreach and Training Committee

The purpose of the Program, Community Outreach and Training Committee is to spearhead, monitor and support activities of the PHRC leadership, staff, and advisory councils as it relates to public education, outreach, and training initiatives. This committee also helps to identify training and educational needs both internally and externally to fulfill the Commission's responsibility to promote and instill best practices of equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and the community. The Committee's 2022 goals are:

1. To support high quality professional development for the PHRC staff, leaders and Commissioners by investigating the practices, procedures and approaches being utilized by similar state and municipal agencies as well as remaining actively engaged with IAOHRA (International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies).
2. To launch an initiative analyzing the multiple types of systemic discrimination that occur both in the public and private sectors and determine the most effective and efficient ways of reducing the disproportionate impact such discrimination has on minority individuals and marginalized groups.
3. To explore ways in which we can more effectively educate the various populations that we serve about the services available at the PHRC including how to file a complaint.

Chair: Michael Hardiman, Esq. | Lead: Laura Argenbright

"Real leaders must be ready to sacrifice all for the freedom of their people." -Nelson Mandela

Executive Office

The purpose of the Department is to assist the PA Human Relations Commission and its Executive Director with all administrative duties. The Executive Office - Administration Department oversees a variety of programs and services relating to personnel and including purchasing, budgeting, technology, facility management, real estate, automotive management, and special projects.

Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW - Executive Director

Anja Mijocevic, Special Assistant to the Executive Director

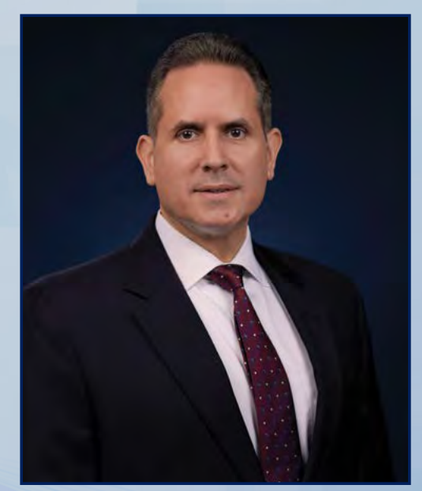
Carrie Peace Simmons - Executive Administrative Assistant

2020-2021 Highlights

- Kept a balanced budget throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Kept all staff employed during the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- Against the backdrop of a Commonwealth budget freeze that was in place, the Executive Offices were able to provide staff with requested supplies, accommodations, membership dues, or other requests.
- Hired a Chief Counsel during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Budget Freeze.
- Hired a Director of Communications during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Budget Freeze.
- Hired a Director of Enforcement during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Budget Freeze.
- Increased complement during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Sent 14 PHRC Employees to the prestigious MLK Leadership Development Institute.
- Maintained a level of fiscal overview of the EEOC and HUD contractual obligations.
- Provided DEI Trainings for all staff.
- Provided CRT Trainings for all staff.
- Provided Meditation and Mindfulness Trainings for all staff.
- Created 'Brave Therapeutic Spaces' for all staff to deal with pandemic fatigue, racial trauma and virtual fatigue.
- Provided organizational and logistical leadership with regards to assisting the Executive Director in scheduling over 100 speaking engagement, trainings and media appearances per the requesters.

"Many Abolitionists have yet to learn the ABC of woman's rights." -Susan B. Anthony

Office of Chief Counsel



Samuel Rivera, Esq.
Chief Counsel

The Office of Chief Counsel provides legal advice to Commissioners, Executive Director, and PHRC Staff and investigates claims of unlawful discrimination under the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act. The Office of Chief Counsel is divided into two sets of attorneys – six Prosecuting Attorneys and one Commission Counsel across the Commonwealth. The attorneys are in three regional offices – Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Prosecuting Attorneys work closely with complainants and are responsible for all aspects of litigation including public hearings. Commission Counsel, in contrast, provides legal advice on matters presented before the Commissioners, including dispositive motions, proposed adjudications, regulations, contracts, and appeals to Commonwealth Court. The attorneys continue to provide trainings to staff and members of the public.

2020-2021 Highlights

- Created a Commission Counsel position tasked with rendering legal advice to the Commission Members on matters appearing before it.
- Created a centralized system to oversee and supervise legal office assignments.
- Continued collaboration with Office of Enforcement to upgrade current case management and create new docketing system.
- Shifted to conducting virtual public hearings.

"The Latina in me is an ember that blazes forever."

-Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

Education and Community Outreach

The Education and Community Outreach efforts of the PHRC support the mission of the PHRC by developing innovative anti-discrimination trainings in each of the jurisdictional areas covered by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA). These include Employment, Housing and Commercial Property, Education and Public Accommodations, as well as the provisional jurisdictional area of law enforcement.

The Education and Community Outreach efforts of the PHRC provide free training and outreach with the purpose of educating the public about discrimination, as mandated by settlements and by requests. The training includes programs such as Implicit Bias; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Anti-Harassment and Respect for Police Officers; Voting Rights, Anti-Bullying for Schools; Diversity Training for Employer Groups; and Fair Housing Training and Fair Housing Testing. The education and outreach coordinators plan and present the School-to-Prison Pipeline Conference, PHRC Diversity Speaks lecture series and PHRC Lunch and Learns.

The outreach staff collaborates with local Moving Circles, Community Response Network, Anit-Defamation League, Advisory Councils and an Inter-Agency Task Force to coordinate responses to discrimination and hate. Our local Advisory Councils are the eyes, ears, and voices of the PHRC in the communities, and carry out the Commission's mission to eliminate discrimination at the local level. The Inter-Agency Task Force is made up of representatives of government agencies, nonprofit partners, and community advocates who share information about civil tension in their areas. This information allows the PHRC to monitor and respond appropriately to situations.

2020-2021 Highlights

- **Created the PHRC CRT (Critical Race Theory) Social Justice Tool Kit for Schools and Communities.**
- **Created a new advisory council in Indiana County.**
- **Collaborated with Bloomsburg University to provide 'Unconscious Bias Training' to the President of Bloomsburg's Senior Leaders.**
- **Collaborated with Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services of the City of Philadelphia to host a Combating Transphobia virtual event.**
- **Collaborated with the Biglerville School District and provided Unconscious Bias Training for their educators.**
- **Organized and held a social justice discussion on the January 6th sedition for the PHRC Staff.**
- **Provided law enforcement training in several police departments.**

"Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time."

-Marian Wright Edelman

Enforcement Division

Kurt Jung, Esq. - Director of Enforcement

The Enforcement Division is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the PHRC's housing, quality assurance, mediation, compliance, litigation, hearings, outreach and training programs, which are designed to prevent or eliminate discrimination in employment, education, residential and commercial real estate, and public accommodations pursuant to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Pennsylvania Fair Employment Opportunities Act.

In collaboration with the other Divisions, the Enforcement Division assists in strategic planning, policy and program development, fiscal planning, and education and outreach to community stakeholders. The team manages PHRC relationships and communications with federal and state entities such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The Division develops and implements policies and procedures for PHRC programs designed to improve the enforcement provisions of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act (PFEOA). It also evaluates the administration of PHRC's programs in regional offices and recommends modifications based on an examination of relevant laws, PHRC's legal authority and the production metrics. The Division monitors production and provides recommendations to ensure continuous quality improvement and efficiency in the enforcement process.

2020-2021 Highlights

- **Implemented changes within the investigative process to improve efficiency and quality.**
- **Developed productivity metrics, monitored improvements and provided recommendations throughout the PHRC to significantly increase productivity.**
- **Developed and implemented new procedures for the complaint intake process.**
- **Collaborated with the Legal Division to establish a robust investigation and litigation program.**
- **Established new procedures to efficiently disclose information pursuant to the Right-to-Know Law.**

"The worth of a book is to be measured by what you can carry away from it."

-James Bryce

Communications Division

Laura Argenbright - Director of Communications

The Communications Division serves as primary coordinator for media relations and liaison between Sr. Management, PHRC Staff, and the public. The director of communications plans, writes, and coordinates agency press releases and coordinates press conferences. The division promotes all public-facing activities, manages production and distribution of newsletters, maintains digital assets, and defines and protects PHRC's agency branding. The Communications Division is responsible for relaying information to the public regarding monthly PHRC Commission meetings.

Additional responsibilities include managing the production and distribution of the Commission's Annual and No Hate in our State reports.

The Communications Division plays a very important role in supporting the mission of the PHRC through public outreach and messaging. A core responsibility of this department is disseminating accurate, compelling, and essential information to the public via the news media, social media, traditional advertising, and public forums. From grass-roots efforts to state-wide awareness campaigns, the Communications Division must have its eyes on emerging social justice trends as well as erupting discrimination crises throughout the State. The division also works closely with many like-minded agencies, commissions, legislators, and civic groups across the state and monitors agency activity to ensure that PHRC is working in a pro-active as well as reactive fashion.

2020-2021 Highlights

- **Completed a redesign of the PHRC website – PHRC.pa.gov – which created a more user-centric experience, improved aesthetic appeal, and presented information in a more organized structure.**
- **Designed flyers in-house and promoted 10 PHRC Speaks programs, and more than 30 virtual social justice programs through social media, press releases and email campaigns.**
- **Created a digitally accessible version of the *PHRC Annual Report* in addition to the printed report, which was opened/read more than 1200 times; *No Hate in Our State* Report digital version was opened/read more than 500 times.**
- **Initiated with the Executive Director, Compassion Fatigue Resiliency training for PHRC Management, Staff and Advisory Councils.**
- **Worked with Adrian Garcia, Director of Fair Housing and Commercial Property to create a statewide Fair Housing outdoor advertising campaign.**
- **Implemented ASL and CC interpreting for programs**

"There must always be a remedy for wrong and injustice if we only know how to find it."

-Ida B. Wells

Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs Division

Guerline L. Laurore, Esq. Director

The purpose of the Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs department is to develop, coordinate, and implement, with the different departments within the PHRC, the political and community engagement development strategies designed to facilitate the successful completion of PHRC's initiatives.

2020-2021 Highlights

- **Coordinated meetings between elected officials and the senior staff.**
- **Maintained ongoing communication with the Executive Directors of the Governor's Advisory Commissions (Affinity Groups).**
- **Joined the Board of Directors of the World Affairs Council of Harrisburg (WACH) and strengthened the connection between the PHRC and that organization. Participated in a March Against Hate sponsored by the WACH.**
- **Assisted legislative aides and constituent affairs professionals in providing support to Pennsylvanians who are parties to a complaint or who would like to file a complaint before the PHRC.**
- **Provided commentaries on issues pertaining to the treatment of Haitian immigrants.**
- **Represented the PHRC in meetings including: State Health Equity; Leadership Development Institute Alumni Association; PA Bar Association Committee; Equity: Dismantling Systemic Racism; and the PA Department of Education Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Task Force.**

"Truth is powerful and it prevails."
-Sojourner Truth

Mediation Division

Desiree Chang, MS - Mediator

Guerline L. Laurore, Esq. - Director

Christopher J. Young, BS - Mediator

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) mandates the exploration of informed settlement discussions between the parties. The Mediation DIvision's purpose is to facilitate the resolution of discrimination complaints that are filed with the PHRC by allowing parties to engage in a mediation session to reach an amicable and satisfactory resolution.

Cases resolved through mediation contribute to more efficient closures. Daily, weekly, and monthly production statistics are monitored very closely. In addition, a monthly report reviewing cases outreached to, scheduled for mediation, mediations conducted, resolved, and closed are all tracked. Monies recouped via settlement terms are monitored, as well as cases dual-filed with the EEOC.

2020-2021 Highlights

- **Four hundred and twelve (412) Invitations to Mediate were sent to parties.**
- **One hundred and sixty-one (161) mediation sessions were scheduled in 2021.**
- **The Mediation Division conducted one hundred and sixty-seven (167) mediation sessions, encompassing one hundred and sixty-nine (169) cases.**
- **Of the mediation sessions conducted in 2021, one hundred and twenty-two (122) sessions resulted in a resolution. The Mediation Program finished 2021 with an overall resolution rate of 73%.**
- **Of the successful mediation cases in 2021, ninety-six (96) were dual filed with the EEOC.**
- **Total amount recouped in 2021 is $1,904,088.00 and $2,962,141.99 since the Mediation Program's inception in 2020.**
- **Mediation participant survey results have been overwhelmingly positive even when cases do not result in resolution.**
- **Provided a Continuing Legal Education program to the Dauphin County Bar Association entitled: Everything You Need to Know About the Mediation Program.**
- **The entire team completed an Advanced Mediation Training.**
- **Expanded our reach by working on mediating Education cases by using Public Accommodation as the umbrella under which we will cover Education.**

"The problem to be faced is: how to combine loyalty to one's own tradition with reverence for different traditions."
-Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Pittsburgh Regional Office

Lyle M. Wood
Regional Director

The Pittsburgh Regional Office of the PA Human Relations Commission embraces and promotes equal opportunity for all. We enforce the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act (PFEOA), which protects citizens from unlawful discrimination.

The Regional Office accepts Intake inquiries alleging discrimination, conducts investigations and litigates complaints of unlawful discrimination in violation of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act/ Pennsylvania Educational Opportunities Act for 26 counties in the western third of the Commonwealth. The Compliance and Housing units also include discrimination complaint investigations in the areas of Education, Public Accommodations, and Commercial Property. The Regional Office staff investigate allegations and complaints of individuals who have been adversely impacted or harmed because of unlawful discrimination.

The Pittsburgh Regional Office staff additionally conducts community outreach, technical assistance, and provides training assistance with and for our community, state, and federal partners. Our outreach activities educate the community of their rights under the PHRA and PFEOA and how to adjudicate alleged violations of the Act. By providing the necessary education and technical assistance, we are able to empower Commonwealth citizens on how to recognize unlawful discrimination, how to address discrimination when they encounter it, and how to avail themselves of their legal remedies if they are the victims of unlawful discrimination.

2020-2021 Highlights

- **Maintained and improved the operations of the Regional Office and upgraded and improved training to all staff members despite the ongoing pandemic.**
- **Continued to provide outreach, technical assistance, and training to our community partners.**
- **Eliminated a debilitating backlog.**
- **Improved the quality of case investigations and procedures.**
- **Investigated and produced more probable cause cases that were placed on the Commission's legal docket for Public Hearing.**
- **Conciliated a greater number of cases where allegations of discrimination were found to demonstrate probable cause.**
- **Hired five (5) additional investigative staff and two (2) clerical staff members.**

"You must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right."
-Rosa Parks

Harrisburg Regional Office

Heather Roth
Regional Director

The Harrisburg Regional Office of the PA Human Relations Commission embraces and promotes equal opportunity for all. We enforce the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act (PFEOA), which protects citizens from unlawful discrimination.

The Harrisburg Regional Office primarily handles the intake, investigation, and litigation of discrimination complaints for the 34 counties for which we serve. Additionally, outreach is conducted through attending community events and facilitating training to outside organizations both in person and virtually. The intake, investigation and litigation functions are the heart of the first part of our mission, enforcing PA's anti-discrimination laws. Without these activities, people of the Commonwealth would have little recourse against unlawful discrimination. Our outreach efforts serve the second part of the mission which is to provide equal opportunity for all. By getting into the communities in which we serve and the organizations with which we have ties, we are able to educate about what discrimination is, how to prevent it and what to do if you are the victim of it. We are also able to advocate for equal rights and provide a resource for anyone that needs additional information or assistance.

2020-2021 Highlights

- Exceeded target goal for EEOC by 55 case completions.
- Exceeded HUD goal by 73 case completions.
- Maintained no backlog in Intake, despite a huge influx of COVID related cases.
- Found Probable Cause in 27 cases.
- Hired two new Investigators and decreased turnover rate.
- Selected several staff to participate in the Governor's Dismantling Systemic Racism group.
- Increased number of cases docketed by 606 cases
- Conducted 22 training events impacting 920 people

Harrisburg Highlights
Addressing Discrimination

1,537 New cases accepted for investigation

1,152 Cases closed

$633,233 Amount awarded through 166 settlements

"I seek solutions, not battles.."
-Kate Brown

Philadelphia Regional Office

Robert Lindsey
Regional Director

The Philadelphia Regional Office of the PA Human Relations Commission embraces and promotes equal opportunity for all. We enforce the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act (PFEOA), which protects citizens from unlawful discrimination.

The Philadelphia Regional Office addresses discrimination cases related to employment, housing, commercial property, public accommodation, and education in the five (5) county area of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia. The office responds to a wide variety of complaints including discharge from employment, failure to hire, failure to rent, failure to promote, eviction and failure to provide a reasonable accommodation. The Philadelphia Regional Office is committed to conducting complete and thorough investigations to ensure that the citizens of Pennsylvania can live, work, and go to school free of discrimination.

2020-2021 Highlights

- Promoted two internal employees to Supervisory status.
- Partnered with Engage PA and presented 'Voting Rights' to 50 Philadelphia Area high school students at the National Constitution Center.
- Partnered with the Asian American Pacific Islander community around 'Stop AAPI Hate' by convening three social justice meetings.
- Tri-State Human Relations Commission presentation.
- DBHIDS Diversity Initiative.
- DBHIDS Trans Listening Tour Event.
- Senior Management Social Justice Training.
- Fair Housing and Community Outreach Canvassing.
- Hired additional staff.

Philadelphia Highlights
Addressing Discrimination

1,404 New cases accepted for investigation

593 Cases closed

$517,311 Amount awarded through 161 settlements

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Fair Housing and Commercial Property

Adrian Garcia
Director

PHRC's Fair Housing & Commercial Property Division plays a key role in ensuring housing justice and opportunities for the Commonwealth. This division works to advance fair housing initiatives both internally and with external stakeholders. This is accomplished through both ensuring compliance with case processing and providing training and resources to staff, and guidance to the commissioners, through the executive director, on issues related to housing. We have a responsibility as a commission to promote self-accountability to our Commonwealth in ensuring that we can deliver on the promise of the Fair Housing Act by providing assistance in Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. Our targeted efforts include: housing providers, social service providers, municipal governments, lending institutions, the district magistrates, and the community at-large, who often become victims of discriminatory housing practices. This is our calling.

2020-2021 Highlights

- 108 HUD Complaint completed (32% increase over FY 2019-2020).
- 90 Deferred Cases Accepted from HUD for Investigation.
- 68 Cases Deferred to HUD for Dual Filing.
- 20 Housing-related trainings/webinars provided to staff.
- 17 Housing-related Trainings provided to community and partners.
- Developed 10 Pennsylvania Cable Network episodes of PHRC Speaks: Fair Housing in the 21 Century.
- Conducted 6 Fair Housing Back to Basics Sessions.
- Hosted 2020 Fair Housing Conference with Richard Rothstein, author of The Color of Law, 2020 Sexual Harassment Roundtable and 2021 Fair Housing Conference (June) with Dr. Tiffany Manuel.
- Launched the FHIP & FHAP Partnership, to improve working relationships between grassroots education and enforcement organizations and the PHRC. This group meets quarterly.
- Co-founded the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Taskforce and as a result has partnered with Self Determination Housing Program of PA in consulting on fair housing issues for their Housing Provider Education curriculum.

"If we want a beloved community, we must stand for justice, have a recognition for difference without attaching privilege to difference."

-bell hooks

Social Justice in the Beloved Community

Despite the success of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission in mediating conflict throughout the Commonwealth during the past year, the sustainability of the vision "...that all people in Pennsylvania will live, work and learn free from unlawful discrimination" demands that the PHRC's work involve more than litigation. This is why we have added the Beloved Community component to our practice.

The Beloved Community is a term that was popularized by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It describes a community where members are passionately committed to the work of nonviolence and peace-making; a place where combatants could reconcile. The result of non-violence, King explained, is the Beloved Community - a community that considers the personal issues of discrimination, hatred and racism but also the social issues of poverty, health, homelessness and hunger.

The creation of the PHRC Social Justice Committees and the ongoing Social Justice Lecture Series are two initiatives that Executive Director Chad Dion Lassiter has undertaken in order to bring the concepts of the Beloved Community into the daily work of the PHRC and into our engagement with our partners across the Keystone State.

Dr. Martin Luther King often spoke of the transformational power of the Beloved Community and Executive Director Chad Lassiter believes the PHRC needs to also use this tool of reconciliation alongside those of litigation and policy-making. As King explained in 1963, "I do not think of political power as an end. Neither do I think of economic power as an end. They are ingredients in the objective that we seek in life. And I think that end of that objective is a truly brotherly society, the creation of the beloved community."

Social Justice Programs 2020 - 2021

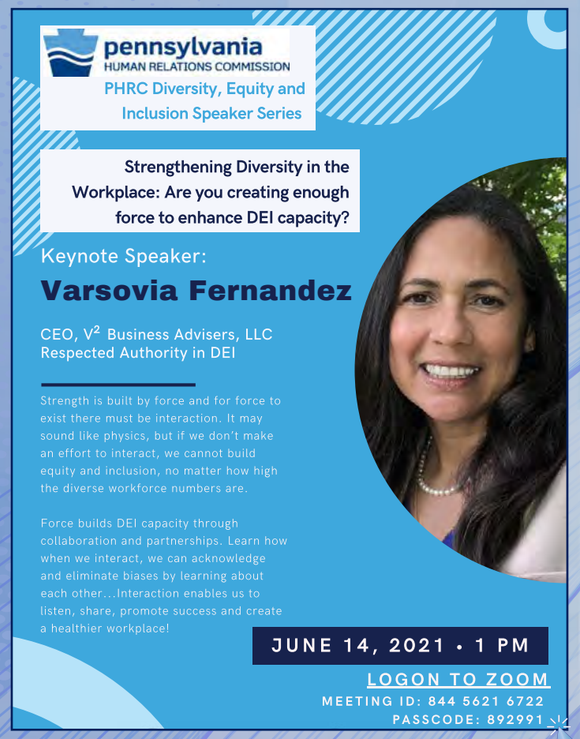
Diversity Speaks
Strengthening Diversity in the Workplace: Are you creating enough force to enhance DEI capacity?
Speaker: Varsovia Fernandez
June 14, 2021

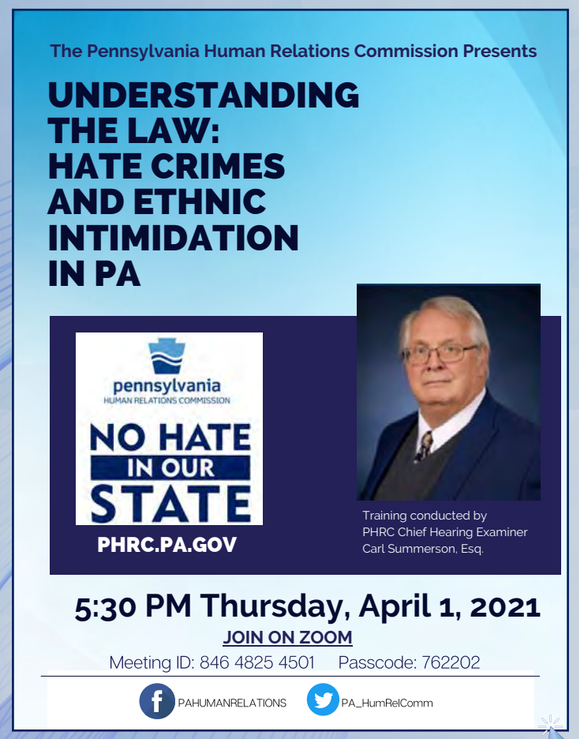
No Hate in our State Town Hall Forums
PHRC Panel Discussion – Assault on the Capitol *Jan. 12, 2021*

Addressing Hate Incidents Towards the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community *March 11, 2021*

Understanding the Law: Hate Crimes and Ethnic Intimidation in PA *April 1, 2021*

School to Prison Pipeline Conference: Enhancing Equity for Improved Educational Outcomes
April 27 & 28, 2021





Social Justice Programs 2020 - 2021

DEI Keynote
by Executive Director Lassiter for Leadership Development Institute
June 22, 2021

City and State Diversity Summit
July 27, 2021

Fair Housing
The Fair Housing Act and Hoarding
Nov. 19, 2020 (Lunch and Learn)

Fair Housing Conference Housing Equity: Moving Forward *June 24, 2021*

Sus Derechose en la Vivienda (Your Housing Rights Forum) *February 10, 2021*

Lunch and Learn Social Justice Series
The Fair Housing Act and Hoarding
Nov. 19, 2020

Chaos to Community – Revisiting the Triple *Evils Jan. 21, 2021*

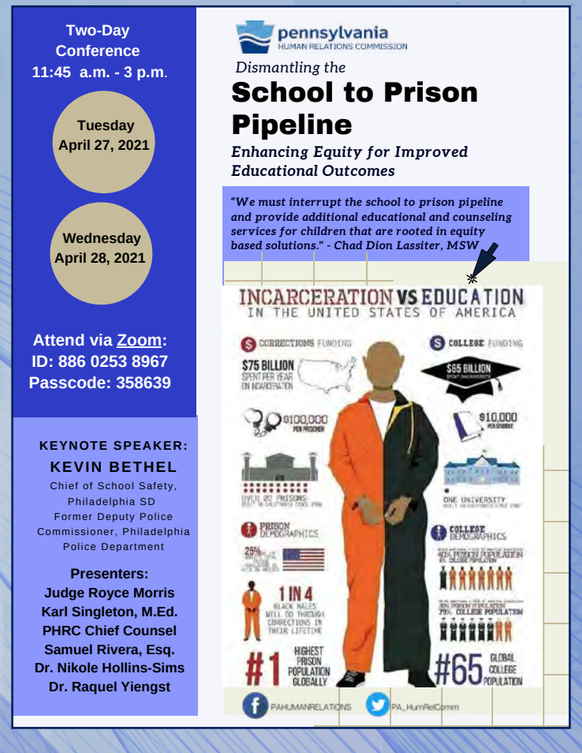
Organizing through Social Change
Feb. 25, 2021

Exploring our Educational System through a Racial Justice Lens
March 18, 2021

Reasonable Accommodations and Emotional Support Animals
April 22, 2021

Understanding Mediation *May 6, 2021*

Unlawful Harassment: Navigating Harassment Claims and Investigations
June 10, 2021



Social Justice Programs 2020 - 2021

Black History Month

Presentation: Educate to Elevate, Eliminating the Equity Gap to Enhance the African American Experience with Dr. Khalid Mumin

Feb. 24, 2021

Women's History Month

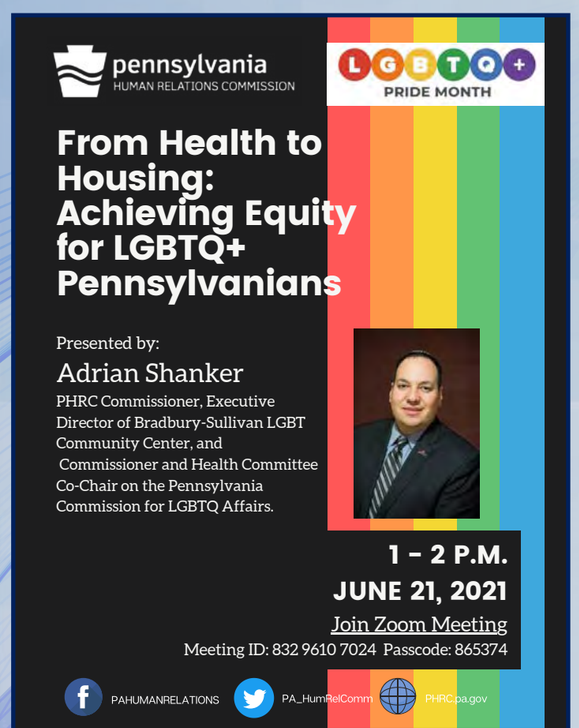
Presentation Keynote by Teresa Miller Secretary, PA Dept. of Human Services *March 30, 2021*

Pride Month

Intersectional Allyship with Amber Hikes *June 29, 2021*

From Health to Housing: Achieving Equity for LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians

June 21, 2021



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TRAINING PROGRAMS

Are you looking for an informed presenter to speak to your community or organization on subjects affecting their ability to live, work, and learn free from discrimination? PHRC trainers are available at no cost to present a variety of social justice programs.

Civil Rights and Filing a Complaint

Civil Rights Law and PHRC Jurisdiction
PHRC Overview & How to File a Complaint
Disability & Reasonable Accommodation

Preventing Discrimination in the Workplace and Schools

Cross-cultural Communication
Conflict Resolution
Sexual Discrimination in the Workplace
Sexual Harassment Prevention
Preventing Bullying and Harassment
SPIRIT Training

Bias, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Unconscious Bias
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)
Diversity & Cultural Professionalism
Bias and Hate Crimes
Implicit Bias for Law Enforcement

Fair Housing Rights

Fair Housing Fundamentals
Fair Housing for LGBTQ+ Individuals
Fair Housing & Disabilities
Fair Housing for Municipal Leaders
Fair Housing & Hoarding
Fair Lending
Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
Service & Support Animals (Housing or General)
History of Discrimination & Implicit Bias (Employment or Housing)

To learn more, contact stwaters@pa.gov or bmellinger@pa.gov, or fill out an online request at https://www.phrc.pa.gov/EducationandOutreach/

PHRC.pa.gov

PARTNERS

- The Office Of Governor Tom Wolf
- The Office Of Attorney General Josh Shapiro
- Local Human Relations Commissions and Diversity Organizations
- The PA Department Of Corrections
- The PA Department Of Education
- Us Department Of Housing and Urban Development
- Us Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission
- The State Police and Local Law Enforcement Agencies
- PA Council Of Churches and Interfaith Organizations
- PHRC Advisory Councils
- Fair Housing Initiatives Programs
- The Self Determination Housing Project Of PA
- NAACP - Various Chapters
- PA General Assembly
- Department Of Behavioral Health and Intellectual DisAbility Services - Philadelphia
- Urban League Of Philadelphia
- World Affairs Council Of Harrisburg
- Anti-Defamation League
- Pennlive/Patriot News
- University Of Pennsylvania Law School
- Temple University Law School
- Drexel University Law School
- Yogasong - Rachel Allen

Office of the Hearing Examiner

Office of the Hearing Examiner
Carl H. Summerson, Esq.
Chief Hearing Examiner

The primary purpose of the Office of Hearing Examiner is to perform the adjudicatory functions of the PHRC. The office adjudicates Motions, issues Rules to Show Cause when petitions are filed alleging a Respondent has failed to answer a Complaint, makes recommendation of a finding of liability when a Respondent does not respond to a Rule to Show Cause, conducts pre-hearing conferences in those cases that are approved for Public Hearing, and either conducts hearings as Hearing Examiner or advises a Panel of Commissioners when a Panel is assigned to hear a case.

2020-2021 Highlights

- **56 cases assigned and placed on the docket each either settled or moved towards Public Hearing.**
- **79 Motions received – six resulted in dismissal on the recommendation of the Hearing Examiner.**
- **32 Rules to Show Cause received – in cases where Answers were received those cases were returned to investigation.**
- **20 cases were adjudicated following the recommended for Liability and each of those cases are moving towards Public Hearing on the issue of appropriate damages.**
- **Assisted local governing bodies with the drafting of ordinances to create new local HRCs, their roles and responsibilities under their ordinances and advised in effective practice.**
- **Provided training on the subject of Ethnic Intimidation many times over the year.**

Complaints Docketed by Subject Area - FY 2020-2021

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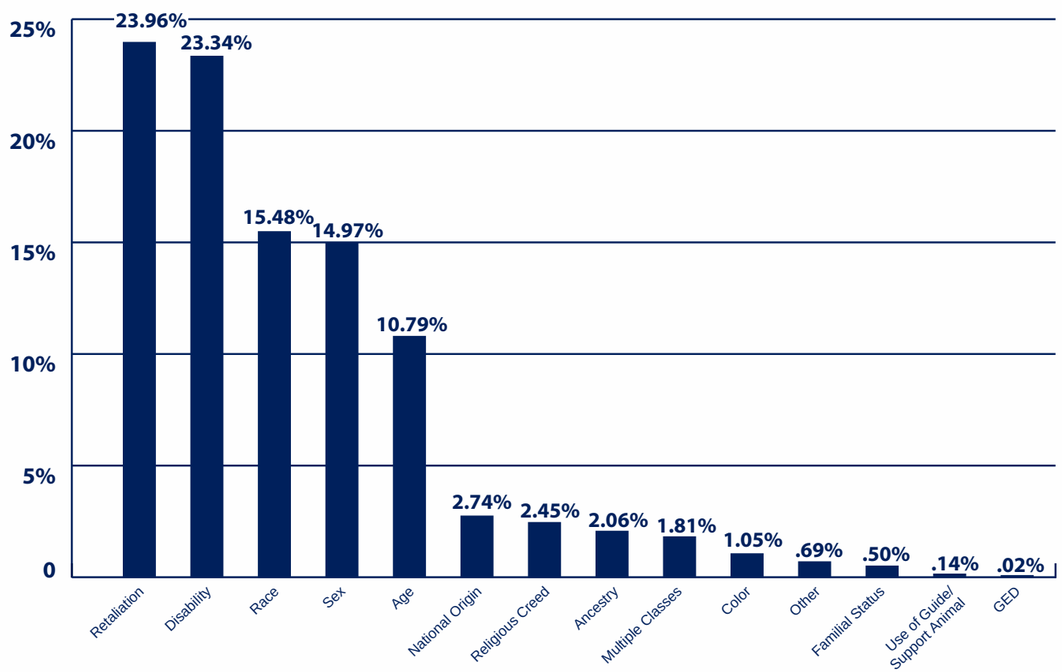
Subject Area	Number of Cases	Percentage of Total Cases
Employment	2908	75%
Commercial Property	6	0%
Education	68	2%
Housing	402	10%
Public Accommodations	476	12%
Total	3,860	

Basis of Complaints - FY 2020-2021



Top Three Complaint Bases of the Four Categories - FY 2020-2021

HOUSING
1. **Disability**
2. Race/Color
3. Retaliation

EMPLOYMENT
1. **Retaliation**
2. Disability
3. Sex

PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION
1. **Disability**
2. Race/Color
3. Retaliation

EDUCATION
1. **Disability**
2. Race/Color
3. Retaliation

Case Statistics - FY 2020-2021

Settled After Probable Cause Finding
19 (.82%)

Settled Before Probable Cause Finding
252 (10.87%)

Administrative
1130 (48.75%)

No Probable Cause
917 (39.56%)

Total = 2318

Administrative Closings 2020-21
Filed in Court
109

Court of Common Pleas
145

Federal Court
176

Average Case Age (June 30, 2021)
386 Days
(This does not include time in intake)

Probable Cause Findings Approved
30

PHRC has issued 30 probable cause findings.
Some cases remain open for conciliation or public hearing

Age

Age	E	H	PA	ED	Total
40's	83	2	0	1	**86**
50's	227	1	0	0	**228**
60's	227	4	0	0	**231**
70's	56	8	1	0	**65**
>80	4	1	0	0	**5**
Total	**597**	**16**	**1**	**1**	**615**

Ancestry

Ancestry	E	H	PA	ED	Total
African	2	0	1	0	3
Albanian	1	0	0	0	1
American or United States	1	0	1	0	2
Arab	1	0	0	0	1
Armenian	1	0	0	0	1
Asian	1	0	0	0	1
Chinese	0	1	0	0	1
Cuban	1	0	0	0	1
Dominican	2	0	0	0	2
Ecuadorian	1	0	0	0	1
German	2	0	0	0	2
Hispanic	47	7	5	2	61
Indian	0	0	1	0	1
Israeli	2	0	0	0	2
Italian	3	0	0	0	3
Korean	1	1	0	0	2
Latino	3	1	0	0	4
Mexican	5	0	0	0	5
Nicaraguan	1	0	0	0	1
Nigerian	1	0	0	0	1
Pakistani	1	0	1	0	2
Polish	0	0	1	0	1
Puerto Rican	12	1	2	0	15
Russian	1	0	0	0	1
Spanish	1	0	0	0	1
Sudanese	0	0	0	1	1
Total	**91**	**11**	**12**	**3**	**117**

STATISTICS - FY 2020-2021

E - Employment | H - Housing | PA - Public Accommodations | ED - Education

Familial Status

Familial Status	E	H	PA	ED	Total
Designee Of Such Parent Or Other Person Having Custody	0	1	0	0	**1**
Individual Not Yet 18 Living With Parents Or Guardian	0	18	0	0	**18**
Parent Or Other Person Having Legal Custody	0	9	0	0	**9**
Process Of Obtaining Legal Custody of Someone Under 18	0	1	0	0	**1**
Total	**0**	**29**	**0**	**0**	**29**

Multiple Classes	E	H	PA	ED	Total
African American Female	50	4	6	1	**61**
African American Male	32	0	6	1	**39**
Total	**82**	**4**	**120**	**2**	**100**

National Origin

National Origin	E	H	PA	ED	Total
Afghanistan	0	0	1	0	**1**
Africa	2	1	0	0	**3**
Albania	3	0	0	0	**3**
Barbados	1	0	0	0	**1**
Belize	1	0	0	0	**1**
Brazil	0	3	1	0	**4**
Burkina Faso	2	0	0	0	**2**
Chile	2	0	0	0	**2**
China	1	0	1	0	**2**
Colombia	1	1	0	0	**2**
Congo - Democratic Republic of	1	0	0	0	**1**
Cuba	2	1	0	0	**3**
Dominican Republic	7	0	0	0	**7**
Ecuador	1	0	0	0	**1**
Egypt	8	2	1	0	**11**
France	0	0	1	0	**1**
Germany	0	1	0	0	**1**
Ghana	2	0	0	0	**2**

continued...

continued...

National Origin	E	H	PA	ED	Total
Greece	0	0	0	1	**1**
Guatemala	1	0	0	0	**1**
Guyana	1	0	0	0	**1**
Haiti	3	0	1	0	**4**
India	10	1	1	0	**12**
Iraq	1	0	1	0	**2**
Italy	2	0	0	0	**2**
Jamaica	5	0	0	0	**5**
Japan	0	0	0	1	**1**
Jordan	1	1	0	0	**2**
Kenya	1	0	0	0	**1**
Korea - Republic of	1	1	0	0	**2**
Liberia	2	0	0	0	**2**
Mexico	3	1	0	0	**4**
Moldova - Republic of	0	1	0	0	**1**
Morocco	3	0	1	0	**4**
Nicaragua	1	0	0	0	**1**
Nigeria	4	0	0	0	**4**
Pakistan	0	1	0	0	**1**
Palestinian Territory	1	0	1	1	**3**
Peru	0	1	0	0	**1**
Philippines	2	0	0	0	**2**
Poland	0	0	1	0	**1**
Puerto Rico	12	2	1	0	**15**
Romania	1	0	0	0	**1**
Russian Federation	0	1	3	0	**4**
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1	0	0	0	**1**
Sierra Leone	1	0	0	0	**1**
Somalia	0	0	1	0	**1**
Spain	1	0	0	0	**1**
Turkey	1	0	1	0	**2**
Ukraine	0	0	1	0	**1**
United States	9	1	1	1	**12**
Venezuela	1	1	0	0	**2**
Vietnam	2	0	0	0	**2**
Virgin Islands - U.S.	1	0	0	0	**1**
Total	107	21	19	4	**151**

Race

Race	E	H	PA	ED	Total
African American	417	52	80	11	**506**
Alaska Native	1	0	0	0	**1**
American Indian	4	2	4	0	**10**
Asian	19	4	9	1	**33**
Bi-Racial	19	6	3	4	**32**
Black	101	8	15	2	**126**
Caucasian	68	8	12	1	**89**
Complainants Race and the Known Association with Another Person	7	8	1	0	**16**
Native American/Pacific Islander	0	0	1	0	**1**
Total	**636**	**88**	**125**	**19**	**868**

Religion

Religion	E	H	PA	ED	Total
Agnosticism	0	0	1	0	**1**
Atheism	1	1	1	0	**3**
Baptist	2	0	0	0	**2**
Buddhism	1	0	0	0	**1**
Christianity	18	2	12	1	**33**
Full Gospel	1	0	0	0	**1**
Hinduism	4	1	0	0	**5**
Islam	29	4	13	2	**48**
Israelite	4	1	0	0	**5**
Jehovah Witness	2	0	0	0	**2**
Judaism	14	3	1	0	**18**
Non-Catholic	2	0	0	0	**2**
Non-Christian	4	0	0	0	**4**
Pentecostal	1	0	0	0	**1**
Protestantism	1	0	0	0	**1**
Roman Catholicism	2	0	1	0	**3**
Strongly Held Belief	3	1	2	0	**6**
Wiccan	1	0	0	0	**1**
Total	**90**	**13**	**32**	**3**	**138**

Use of Guide/Support Animal

Use of Guide/Support Animal	E	H	PA	ED	Total
Total	**2**	**1**	**5**	**0**	**8**

STATISTICS - FY 2020-2021

Retaliation

Retaliation	E	H	PA	ED	Total
Assisted	7	0	0	0	7
Filed a PHRC Complaint	52	20	4	1	77
Otherwise Opposed Unlawful Activity	957	55	93	10	1115
Provided Information	21	2	1	0	24
Testified	2	0	0	0	2
Total	**1039**	**77**	**98**	**11**	**1225**

Sex

From Sex Retaliation	E	H	PA	ED	Total
Female	462	22	20	1	505
Female Pregnant	64	0	1	0	65
Gender Identity/Transgender	3	0	3	0	6
Male	204	8	22	3	237
Sex - Other	2	0	0	0	2
Sexual Orientation	**28**	**6**	**1**	**1**	**36**
Total	**763**	**36**	**47**	**5**	**851**

Disability

Housing	Total
Alcoholism	1
Allergies	1
Anxiety Disorder	13
Arthritis	1
Asthma	7
Attention Deficit Disorder	1
Autism	5
Back	5
Bipolar Disorder	1
Brain/Head Injury	2
Brain/ Head Injury (Traumatic)	2
Depression	1
Down Syndrome	1
Drug Addiction	1
Emphysema	1
Fibromyalgia	1
Hearing	2

Housing	Total
Heart/Cardiovascular	5
Hip Replacement	1
Learning Disability	1
Mental - Other	15
Missing Digits/Limbs	1
Other	110
Other Emotional/Psychiatric	17
Other Neurological	4
Other Respiratory/Pulmonary	7
Paralysis	1
Post Traumatic Stress	8
Schizophrenia	3
Seizure Disorder	1
Shoulder Impairment	1
Stroke	1
Vision	2
Total	**224**

STATISTICS - FY 2020-2021

Disability

Public Accommodation	Total
Anxiety Disorder	40
Arthritis	1
Asthma	28
Attention Deficit Disorder	1
Autism	12
Back	5
Cancer	2
Cerebral Palsy	4
Crohn's Disease	1
Diabetes	4
Drug Addiction	1
Emphysema	2
Epilepsy	1
Extremities Impairment	2
Fibromyalgia	2
Hearing	12
Heart/Cardiovascular	6
Learning Disability	2
Macular Degeneration	1
Mental - Other	5

Public Accommodation	Total
Multiple Sclerosis	2
Muscular Dystrophy	1
Narcolepsy	1
Obesity	1
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	1
Obstructive Lung Disease	3
Other	28
Other Emotional/Psychiatric	5
Other Neurological	1
Other Respiratory/Pulmonary	29
Paralysis	1
Post Traumatic Stress	22
Respiratory Pulmonary Disorder	4
Schizophrenia	1
Shoulder Impairment	1
Speech	1
Stroke	1
Vertigo	1
Vision	1
Total	**247**

Education	Total
Anxiety Disorder	8
Attention Deficit Disorder	2
Autism	3
Cerebral Palsy	1
Depression	2
Epilepsy	1
Hearing	1
Learning Disability	4
Mental - Other	1
Other	3
Other Emotional/Psychiatric	2
Other Neurological	1
Post Traumatic Stress	1
Total	**30**

Employment	Total
Alcoholism	5
Allergies	7
Alzheimers	2
Anemia	1
Anxiety Disorder	82
Arthritis	25
Asthma	30
Attention Deficit Disorder	17
Autism	12
Back	57
Bipolar Disorder	18
Brain/Head Injury	11
Brain/Head Injury (Traumatic)	5
Cancer	33

continued...

STATISTICS - FY 2020-2021

continued...

Employment	Total
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	2
Cerebral Palsy	1
Cervical Discogenic Injury	2
Chronic Fatigue	1
Crohn's Disease	3
Dementia	2
Depression	29
Diabetes	23
Drug Addiction	16
Dwarfism	1
Dyslexia	4
Eating Disorder	3
Emphysema	1
Epilepsy	7
Extremities Impairment	23
Fibromyalgia	8
Gastrointestinal	14
Graves Disease	1
Hand Injury	6
Hearing	28
Heart/Cardiovascular	39
Hernia	3
Hip Replacement	1
HIV	2
Immune System Impairment	5
Kidney	4
Learning Disability	14
Liver Impairment	1
Lupus	2
Menieres Disease	1
Mental o Other	16

Employment	Total
Mental Retardation	3
Migraine	12
Missing Digits/Limbs	3
Multiple Sclerosis	7
Narcolepsy	2
Nonparalytic Orthopdeic	3
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	1
Other	128
Other Blood Disorder	3
Other Emotional/Psychiatric	3
Other Neurological	4
Other Respiratory/Pulmonary	17
Panic Disorder	1
Paralysis	1
Parkinsons Disease	3
Post Traumatic Lumbar Strain	2
Post Traumatic Stress	35
Raynauds Disease	1
Renal Dysfunction	1
Respiratory Pulmonary Disorder	2
Schizophrenia	2
Seizure Disorder	3
Shoulder Impairment	15
Sleep Apnea	1
Sleep Disorder	2
Speech	1
Spinal Stenosis	2
Stroke	4
Vertigo	1
Vision	12
Total	**247**

Staff Recognition - Awards

Executive Director Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW:

- 2021 Social Worker of the Year - NASW PA Chapter
- Most Influential African Americans for 2010 - 2020 - The Philadelphia Tribune
- 2022 Power of Diversity: Black 100 - City & State
- Citations from Senator Bob Casey, US Representative Dwight Evans, PA State Senator Vincent Hughes, and the Congressional Black Caucus

Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh Regional Offices:

- Peace and Justice Award - PennLive.com/PA Media Group

Adrian Garcia, Director of Fair Housing and Commercial Property:

- PA 50 over 50 Power List - City and State Magazine

Guerline L. Laurore, Esq. Director of Mediation, Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs:

- Public Policy Trailblazer - National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Harrisburg Chapter

Martin Luther King Leadership Development Institute 2021 Graduates:

- Desiree Chang
- Carrie Gagliano
- Adrian Garcia
- Sabrina Harrell
- Kelly M Matos, Esq.
- Valerie Parris
- Carrie Peace-Simmons
- Stephen Renwick
- Gloria Richardson
- Derrick Testa
- Shaheeda Wilks
- Regina Young

We congratulate and thank these employees who have dedicated many years to PHRC and who have now retired or continue to serve the people of the Commonwealth:

Tenure Recognition

Carl Summerson	35 Years
Lyle Wood	31 Years
Martin Cunningham	25 Years
Stephanie Chapman	22 Years
Jodi Bradley	21 Years
Sabrina Harrell	20 Years
Demora Wallace	20 Years

Retirements

Joyce Jordan-Brown	13 Years
Renee Martin	26 Years
Francis Volpe	10 Years
Carla Johnson	11 Years
Terri Thomas	13 Years
Abraham Shaw	29 Years
Michele Boxley	40 Years
Diana Medley	25 Years
David Jones	30 Years
Rotana Jay	40 Years
Regina Young	35 Years

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission: A Great Place to Work!

As the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's premier civil rights agency, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission prides itself as being a great place to work. Under the watchful leadership of Executive Director Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW, the Commission employs a diverse high energy team of professionals who are dedicated to serving the people of the Commonwealth. For the past four years, Executive Director Lassiter has transformed the agency into a new and efficient workforce to meet his Social Justice vision of protecting Pennsylvania's civil rights in employment, housing, public accommodation, education and commercial property. The everyday positive energy, high work ethic and excitement can be felt in each of the Regional Offices.

That positivity continues to flow throughout every level of the agency. The following comments reflect the sentiment of most staff members: PHRC is a great place to work and to carry out our social justice mission!

"From my very first day at the PHRC, I was so excited to find talented staff who truly believe in the mission. The energy and high morale of the staff power this Social Justice Train. Under Chad Lassiter's leadership, the Agency maintains a high level of integrity, commitment, and accountability, and he has implemented many changes to ensure positive effective outcomes for the people of the Commonwealth. Those who work at the PHRC feel the excitement and positive energy from the chassis of this Social Justice Train!" – Kurt Jung, Director of Enforcement

"I love working for PHRC because it is an opportunity to do important work. As an immigrant myself, I understand the struggles of being a minority and have been the victim of various employment and housing harms. It gives me a sense of pride and accomplishment that I can use my expertise to aid the most vulnerable populations of our state. Finally, I love working here because I am surrounded by like-minded individuals who are all motivated by the same honorable goal of pursuing justice." – Carlos Alejandre, Investigator, Pittsburgh

"It is humbling to know that working hard can mean so much to the people reaching out to PHRC. I love knowing my work impacts so many of those people in their quest for justice." – Debbie Walters, Administrator Officer, Harrisburg

"I love working at the PHRC because what we do is important, especially with the current negativity surrounding all things related to civil rights today. The PHRC has kept me employed during the pandemic and the support and encouragement I receive from management and my colleagues is comparable to none." – Samantha Lopez, Intake Supervisor, Philadelphia

"It is important my work is in line with my faith in God. Isaiah 1:17 states, "Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, and please the widow's cause." The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission confronts injustice and enacts a brotherly love that takes action. Each day, the PHRC brings the Commonwealth one step closer to the beloved community." – Gregory J. Holts, Investigator, Pittsburgh

"Working at the PHRC is an opportunity to work with the State's stakeholders to protect civil rights in housing for the people of the Commonwealth. This is important because in order to achieve true equality in housing, it takes a collaborative effort. I have the distinction of working with the best senior management team I have ever experienced. They are passionate, dedicated, incredibly bright, and in have dedicated their life to the pursuit of justice." – Adrian Garcia, Director of Fair Housing and Commercial Property, Harrisburg/Central

"I love working for the PHRC because it is rewarding when justice is served by discrimination investigations. It is satisfying to know that every day I work towards eradicating illegal discrimination in the Commonwealth of PA." - Shaheeda Wilks, Investigator, Pittsburgh

"I like working for the PHRC because it gives me the intellectual stimulation knowing that every day is different, every scenario/case is different. I also enjoy that I am given the necessary training and tools to improve and potentially prosper within the agency. Also, if I may add, I think the hybrid schedule also affords me the opportunity to be a productive employee while utilizing different programmatic and technological advances that open up the possibilities for continuous learning, as well as contributing to the healthy work/life balance." – Todd Schwartz, Investigator, Philadelphia
"At the PHRC, our primary goal is serving the people of the commonwealth. We know how central housing is to thriving communities, and how important it is that everyone can find a quality place to call home. It's my privilege to connect with community members and housing professional throughout the commonwealth, sharing information about fair housing rights and protections. Every day, I learn something new from my colleagues and community partners at PHRC. This work can be an uphill battle, but it's inspiring to serve alongside people who have dedicated their careers to working towards equal opportunity for all Pennsylvanians." – Brittany Mellinger, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Harrisburg

"I started working for the PHRC because the job listing spoke to me: "A passion for social justice." During my interview I sat in a room with three typical, everyday people who were doing (and continue to do) extraordinary things for the citizens of the commonwealth. I've never wanted a job so badly in my life. I've now been with the Commission for a little over three years. My work is both challenging and rewarding.. I am supported by the agency as every level of management encourages investigators to attend training and events for everything from the history of movements to leadership, current struggles, and outreach. From the beginning, I have been inspired to find my niche and make it mine. When I feel overwhelmed, I remember something I read: that all injustice is connected. And so as long as I keep pulling at threads in my corner, I'm helping to unravel the whole thing. Knowing that everyone at the PHRC is pulling on their own little threads, too, gives me the optimism to not give up and frees me to just keep doing what I can."– Jenny Stalnaker, Intake Investigator, Pittsburgh

"Activist Jeanne Kirkpatrick once said,"-Democracy not only requires equality but also an unshakable conviction in the value of each person, who is then equal." Recognizing the value of all individuals, and advocating for the rights of all, is our organization's primary goal. As an Education and Outreach Coordinator, I am proud to be a part of that endeavor."- Stacey Waters, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Harrisburg

"I have been working for the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission for 22 years. I love working for the agency because it gives me the ability to help the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who do not have the means to obtain justice when they face discriminatory actions." – Jodi L. Bradley, Housing/Compliance Supervisor, Pittsburgh

"The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission PRO is a great place to work because it provides a means for the residents of Pennsylvania to seek justice. Enforcing Civil Rights allows us to be change agents within the scope of our agency and for me it is more than a "job", it's a dutiful responsibility to serve the people of the Commonwealth who exercise their right to file a complaint when faced with discrimination or harassment. We strive to impact the lives of those facing difficult circumstances with empathy paired with the law we enforce and that is honorable. The Philadelphia Regional Office has a diverse team of colleagues who create a welcoming environment that allow new hires to learn. They are equipped with the expertise that will guide my professional evolution." – Zulay Rojas, Clerk-Typist, Philadelphia

"Working for the PHRC allows me to exercise my personal morals everyday by fighting against discrimination for the underdog and those who feel powerless. PHRC is a good place to work due to the empowerment it provides me to stand up against the Megatron of systemic racism as well as the encouragement I receive to lead a well-balanced life between work, school, and family." – Ronessa Edwards, Supervisor, Philadelphia

"I enjoy working at PHRC because of the genuine passion and commitment displayed by my co-workers daily to ensure that all people in Pennsylvania live, work, and learn free from unlawful discrimination." - Amanda M Martin, Clerk Typist, Harrisburg

"My career working at the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission has afforded me the privilege of being the shield and the sword for social justice, ensuring equality, dignity, and fairness, for all those living in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, regardless of protected class or station in life." – Lyle M. Wood, Regional Director of the Pittsburgh Regional Office

"I am new, very new, but so far, I like working for PHRC because it aligns with my moral compass to pursue equality and fair treatment where I live. PHRC is a good place to work knowing that I can help change the way residents are treated in this state by those who tend to hold the power." – Asia Hightower, Investigator, Philadelphia

"I love working for the PHRC because it allows me to engage in the necessary moral struggle for equality and justice. Likeminded persons have achieved much over the last hundred years or so in this regard, but we are not there yet, and in a large sense, it's a never-ending battle. There are forces that profit and benefit from inequality and division, and they will always be tugging us in the wrong direction, eager and willing to reverse the progress we have made, and in their own process sowing hatred and discord. So, it's important to never get complacent, and know that the battle will never end. It will be ongoing but engaging in it is what gives our lives a greater meaning, and gives others the benefits of greater freedom and self-actualization." – John Brubaker, Prosecuting Attorney, Philadelphia

Voices of Equity

pennsylvania
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