

CCHR

Chicago Commission
on Human Relations









2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Nancy Andrade
Chair and Commissioner
Chicago Commission on Human Relations



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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS ENABLING ORDINANCE

The City Council finds that prejudice and the practice of discrimination against any individual or group because of race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, lawful source of income, and credit history (as to employment only), or criminal history (as to employment only) menace peace and public welfare. (2-120-480)

MISSION STATEMENT

The Chicago Commission on Human Relations (CCHR) is charged with enforcing the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance and the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance. The CCHR investigates complaints to determine whether discrimination may have occurred and uses its enforcement powers to punish acts of discrimination. Under the City's Hate Crimes Law, the agency aids hate crime victims. CCHR also employs proactive programs of education, intervention, and constituency building to discourage bigotry and bring people from different groups together.

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Message from the Mayor



**Mayor Brandon
Johnson**

“The CCHR is an invaluable resource to the City of Chicago and its residents.”

Greetings,

It is my honor to congratulate Nancy Andrade and the Commission on Human Relations (CCHR) on its 2023 Annual Report.

The CCHR is an invaluable resource to the City of Chicago and its residents. Through its strong enforcement of the city’s civil rights laws, our residents are protected from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and credit.

Similarly, CCHR’s work to combat hate crimes and advocate for victims is key to making our city welcoming and supportive of all people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other forms of difference. CCHR’s ability to defuse community tensions through mediation helps keep residents safe and prevents violence.

This is all vital work which often goes unrecognized. I applaud the CCHR for its efforts to fight discrimination and hate while promoting unity and equity.

Congratulations on another great year of service to the people of Chicago.

Sincerely,

Mayor Brandon Johnson

Message from the Commissioner



Nancy Andrade

**Chair and
Commissioner**

“As the civil rights agency for the city, it is an honor to be able to share this brief summary with you of our work fighting hate and discrimination.”

Greetings,

Welcome to the Chicago Commission on Human Relations 2023 Annual Report. As the civil rights agency for the city, it is an honor to be able to share this brief summary with you of our work fighting hate and discrimination.

Chicago, like other parts of the country, experienced an alarming increase in hate crimes in 2023. Much of this was fueled by the growing political division in our country which some have embraced as a license to hate. Additionally, conflicts overseas have created tensions here on our streets, further escalating the growth of hate activity. If that were not enough, the current immigration crisis at our borders has helped exacerbate tensions in our own communities over the distribution of resources.

These are just some of the challenges facing the CCHR. Yet we remain steadfast in our commitment to end discrimination and foster unity. We are strengthened by the support of Mayor Johnson and a new City Council with fifteen newly elected alders who have become our partners in this work.

Surely, we cannot do this work alone, thus we express our heartfelt gratitude to all the leaders in every ward and community of our great city. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Nancy Andrade

Chair and Commissioner

INVESTIGATION OF DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

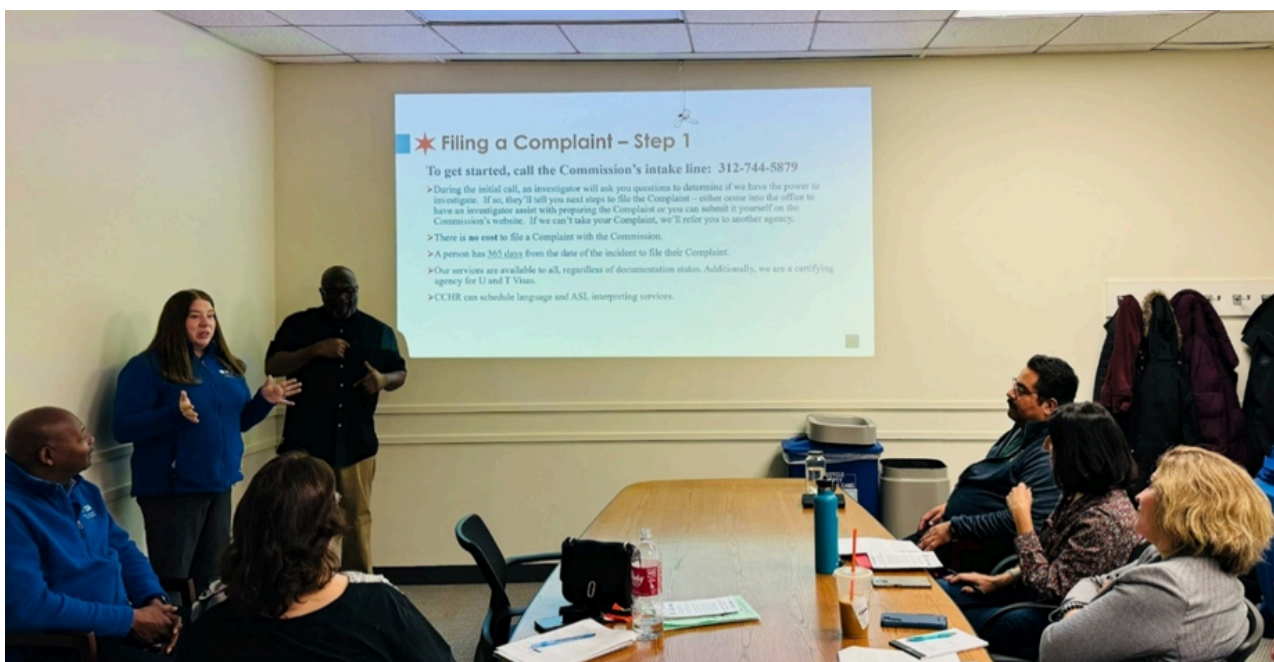
The CCHR protects residents and visitors in Chicago from discrimination through the enforcement of the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance and Fair Housing Ordinances which prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and credit.

These laws protect individuals and their families based on their:

- Race
- National Origin
- Age (40 and over)
- Gender Identity
- Source of Income
- Bodily Autonomy
- Color
- Religion
- Sex
- Marital Status
- Retaliation
- Ancestry
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Parental Status
- Credit History (employment only)
- Criminal History (employment only)

The CCHR's Adjudication Division conducts the intake and investigation of complaints filed with the agency and oversees the mediation and hearing processes. To file a complaint with the CCHR:

- The alleged discriminatory act must have taken place in Chicago
- The complaint must be filed within 365 days of the person being made aware of the discriminatory act
- Complaints may be filed in person, by mail, email, online via CCHR's website, or by fax.

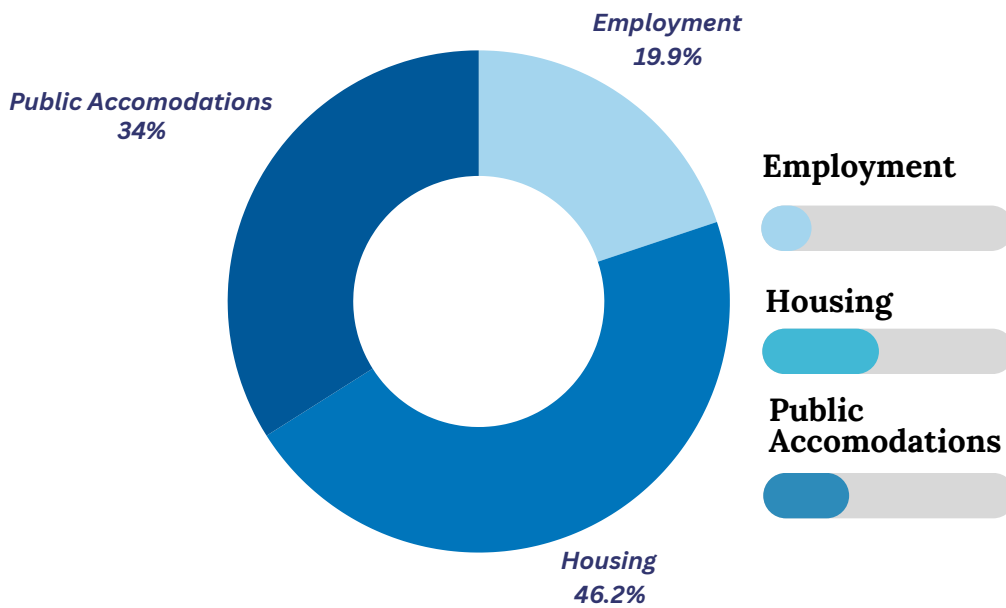


SUMMARY OF 2023 COMPLAINT FILINGS

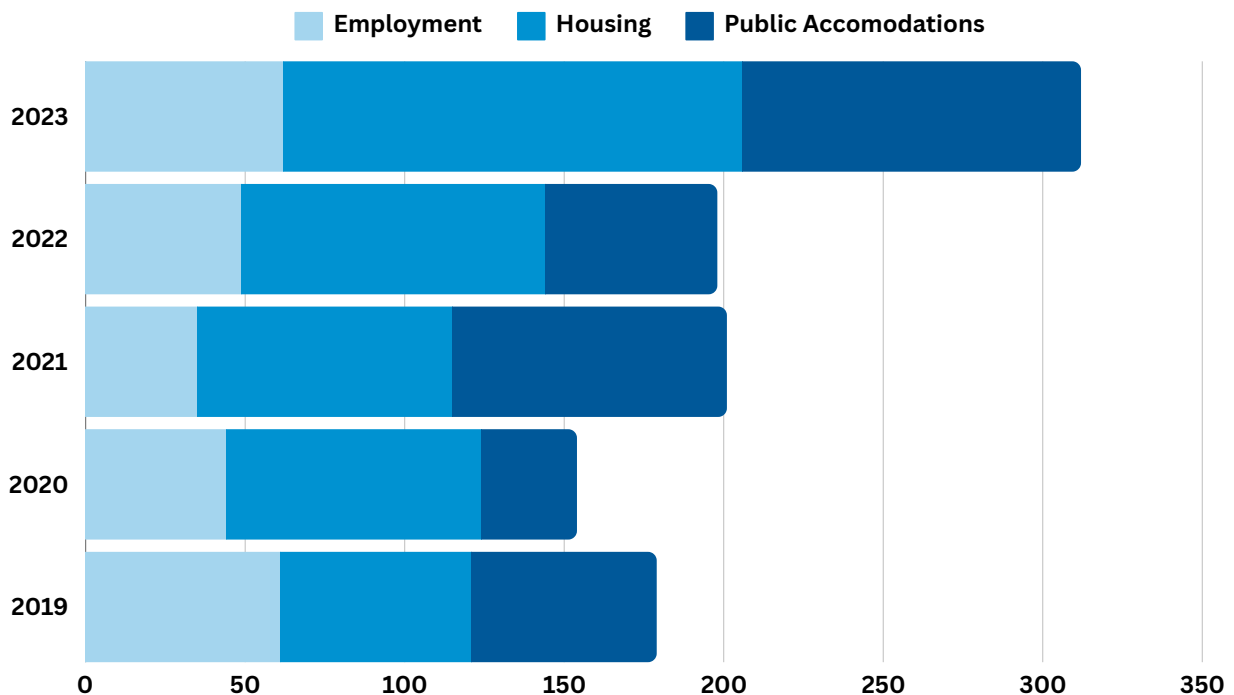
There were 312 new discrimination complaints filed in 2023, an increase of 58% over 2022 filings.

- Employment **62**
- Housing **144**
- Public Accommodations **106**

2023 DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS



NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY TYPE 2019-2023



HOUSING

Fair Housing is a priority for the CCHR because we understand that where one lives has a tremendous impact on the health and future of the individual and their family, as highlighted by the non-exclusive list of indicators below.



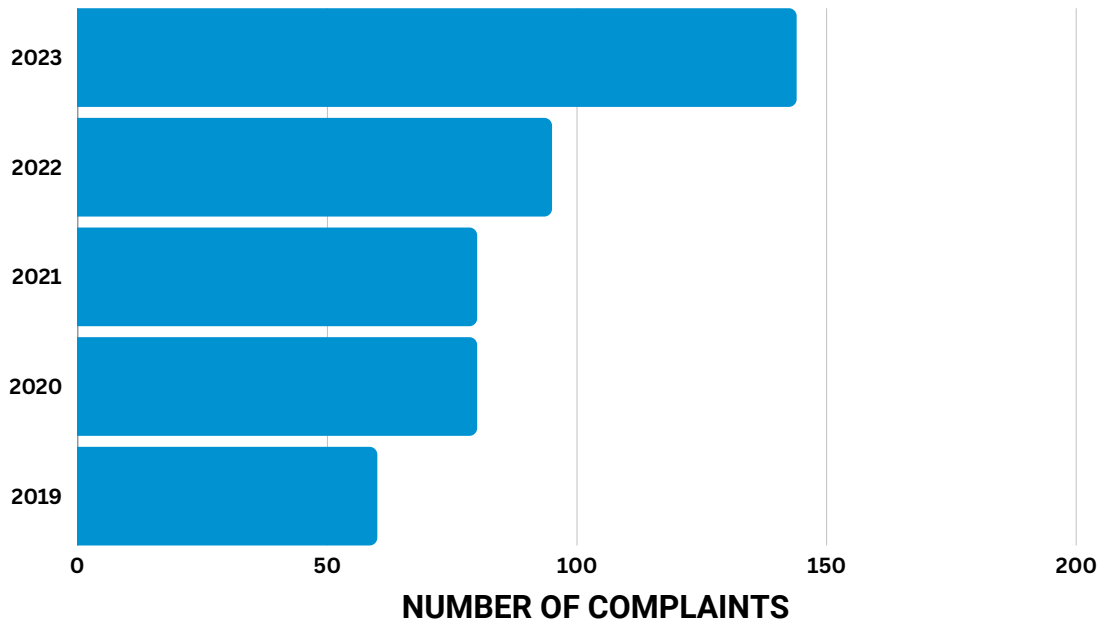
IMPACTS OF HOUSING CHOICE

PROS

CONS

Good Schools	Underperforming, poorly funded schools
Good Access to Public Transportation	Poor access to public transportation
Better Employment Opportunities	Limited employment opportunities
Grocery stores with fresh food	Food deserts
More greenspace, access to nature	Environmental pollution

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS RECEIVED 2019-2023

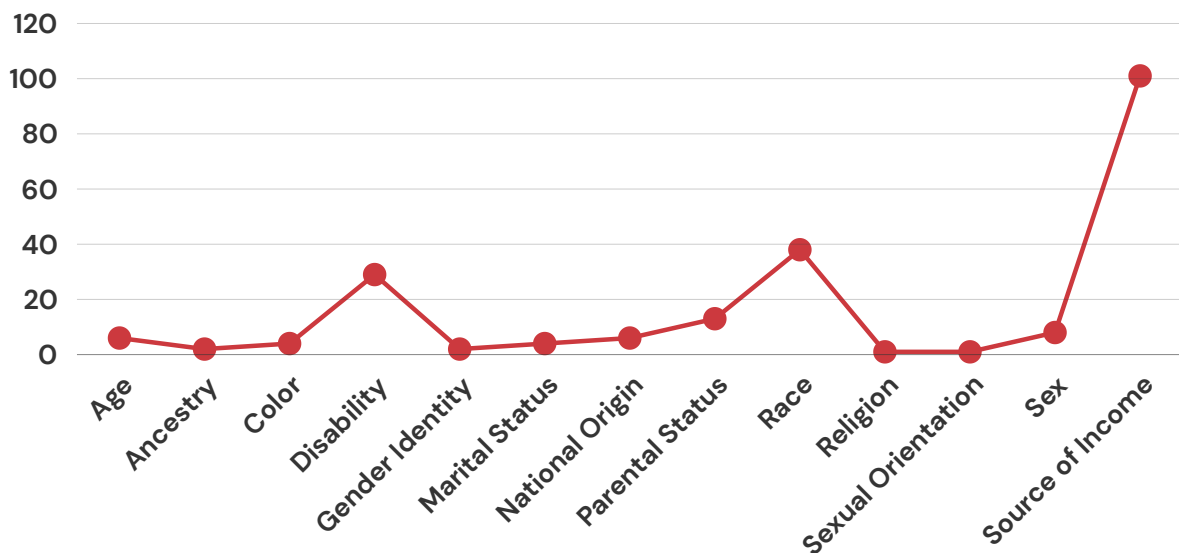


Housing Choice Voucher Discrimination

Source of income is a protected class under both the Chicago Human Rights and Fair Housing Ordinances. In the housing discrimination complaints received by the CCHR, source of income based on Housing Choice Vouchers (commonly referred to as Section 8) has been the most prevalent type of housing complaint received by the CCHR for many years. In 2023, complaints based on Housing Choice Vouchers accounted for nearly all of the source of income complaints filed with the CCHR.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION FILINGS BY CLAIM

2023

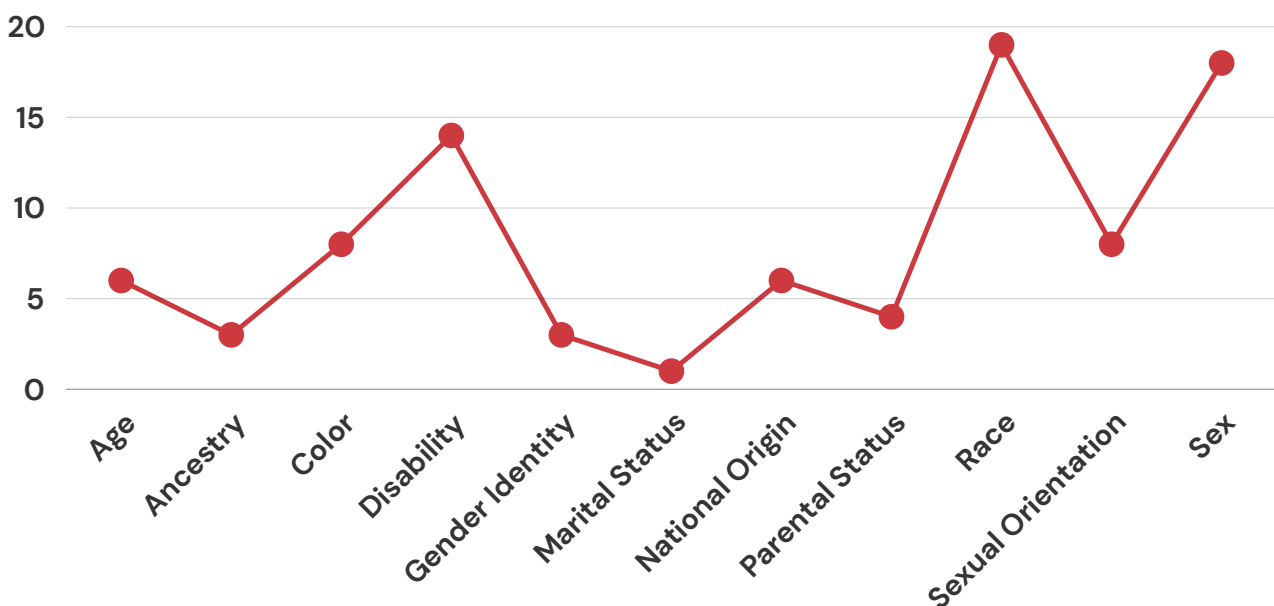


Employment

Employment discrimination has a substantial impact on everyone involved. Qualified applicants and their families suffer the economic impact of being unable to obtain good jobs and advance their careers. In the workplace, employees facing discrimination can suffer emotional and physical harm impacting their performance and ultimately their careers. Similarly, the workplace is also impacted by low morale, lower productivity, loss of qualified workers, and potential legal action.



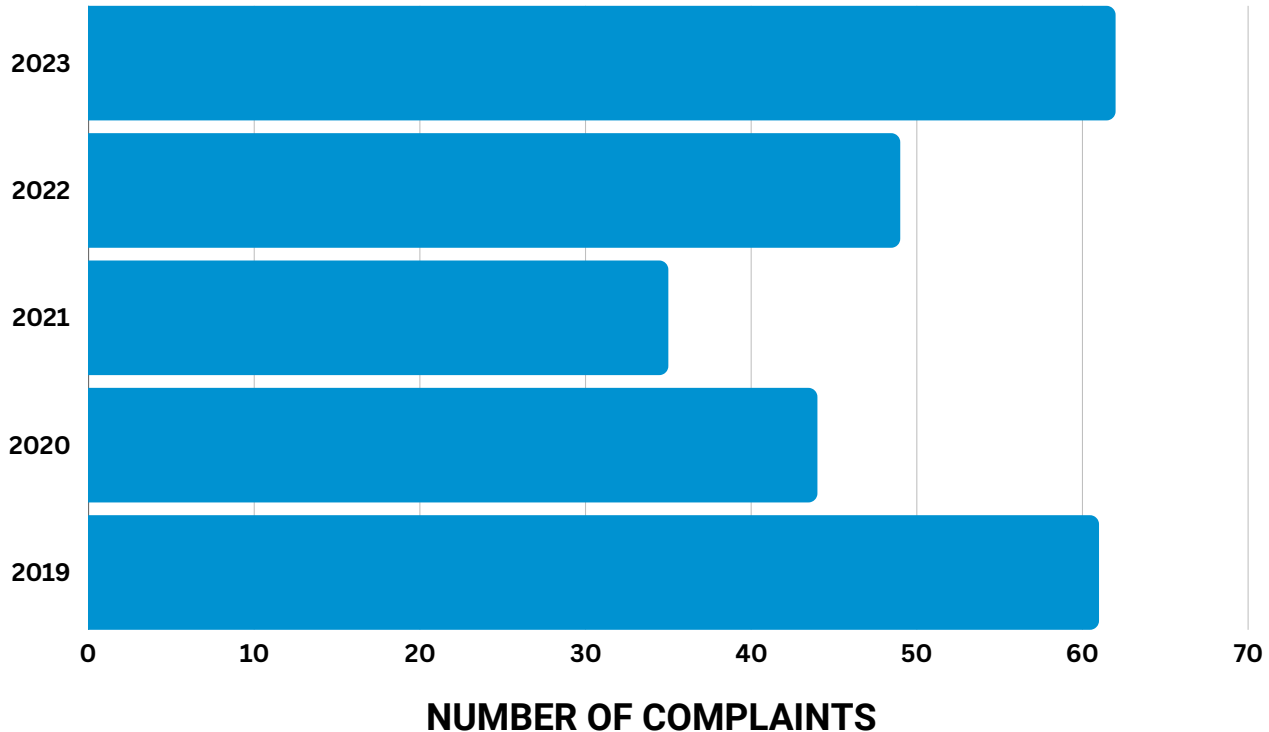
EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION FILINGS BY CLAIM 2023



Tips for Preventing Workplace Discrimination

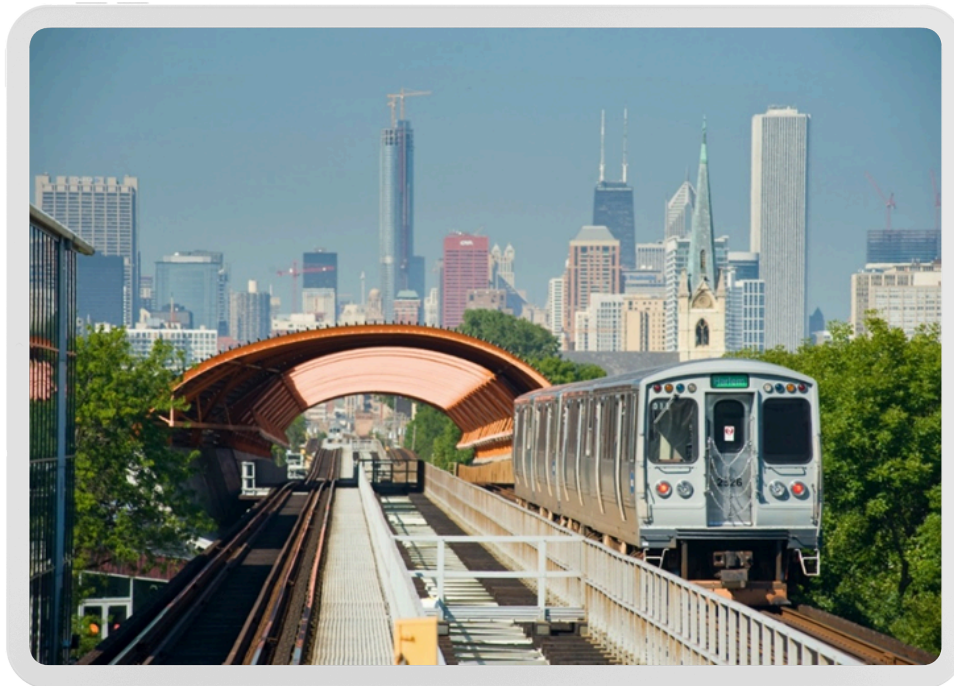
- Adopt clear and meaningful anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies.
- Periodically provide anti-harassment training to the workforce.
- Train appropriate HR personnel in how to investigate and handle discrimination complaints.
- Issue and update mission statements that emphasize the organization’s commitment to a workplace free from unlawful harassment and discrimination.
- Offer readily available avenues for employees to complain about alleged harassment or discriminatory treatment, including an open-door policy.
- Train supervisors to alert responsible human resources personnel of harassment, even if no formal complaint is received.
- Host employee forums periodically to explore whether any discrimination or harassment is occurring.
- Take prompt and remedial action if an investigation reveals any unlawful conduct or conduct that violates company policies or mission statements.[1]

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS RECEIVED 2019-2023



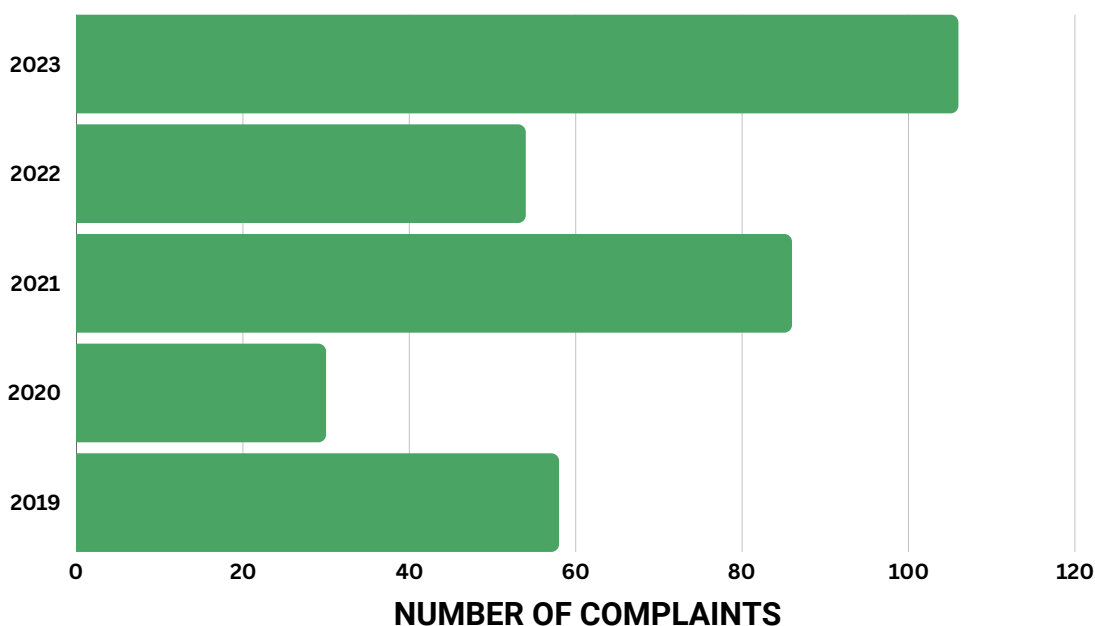
[1] Adapted from “The Damaging Effects of Workplace Racism. ” Matt Gonzales, Dec. 14, 2022, SHRM. <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/inclusion-equity-diversity/damaging-effects-workplacerasism#:~:text=It%20can%20lead%20to%20mental,result%20in%20decreased%20workplace%20productivity>

PUBLIC ACCOMODATIONS

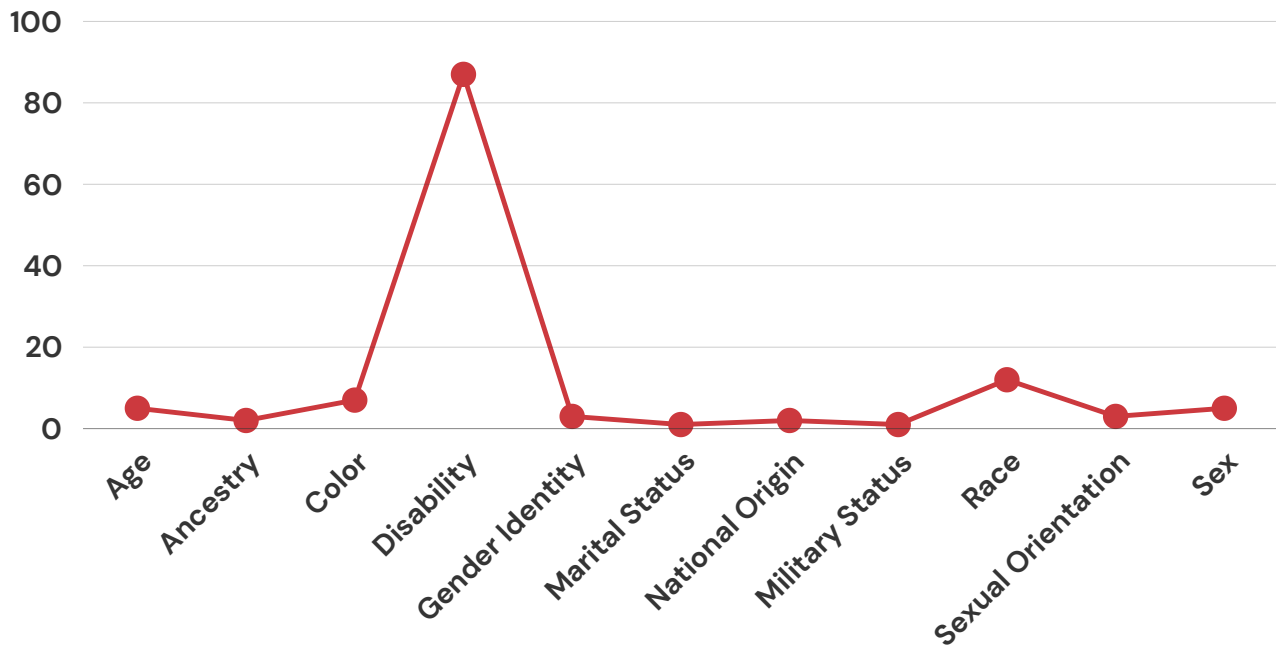


In 2023, the number of complaints received by the Commission increased by 58% over complaints filed in 2022. Public accommodation complaints accounted for 34% of these complaints. In fact, public accommodation complaints increased from 54 in 2022 to 106 in 2023, an increase of 96%. The vast majority of these complaints, 82% alleged discrimination based on disability.

PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION COMPLAINTS 2019-2023



PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION DISCRIMINATION FILINGS BY CLAIM 2023



Guidelines for Businesses to Improve Accessibility

- A business may not impose rules that exclude people with disabilities unless those rules are necessary to provide goods and services or are related to a legitimate safety requirement.
 - Example: A store requires customers using a credit card to produce a driver's license, thereby excluding people whose disabilities prohibit them from driving (e.g., people who are blind).
- A business must reasonably modify its procedures when necessary to afford goods or services to individuals with disabilities, unless such a modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the business.
 - Example: A café with a “no-animals” policy must modify that policy to allow people with disabilities accompanied by service animals to enter.

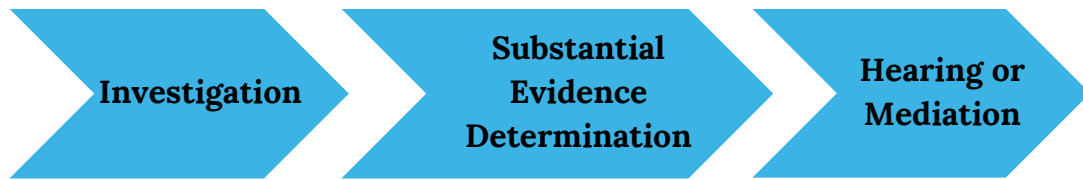
For more guidelines like these, see the CCHR fact sheet, Policies, Practices, & Procedures to Improve Accessibility for People with Disabilities.[2]

[2]

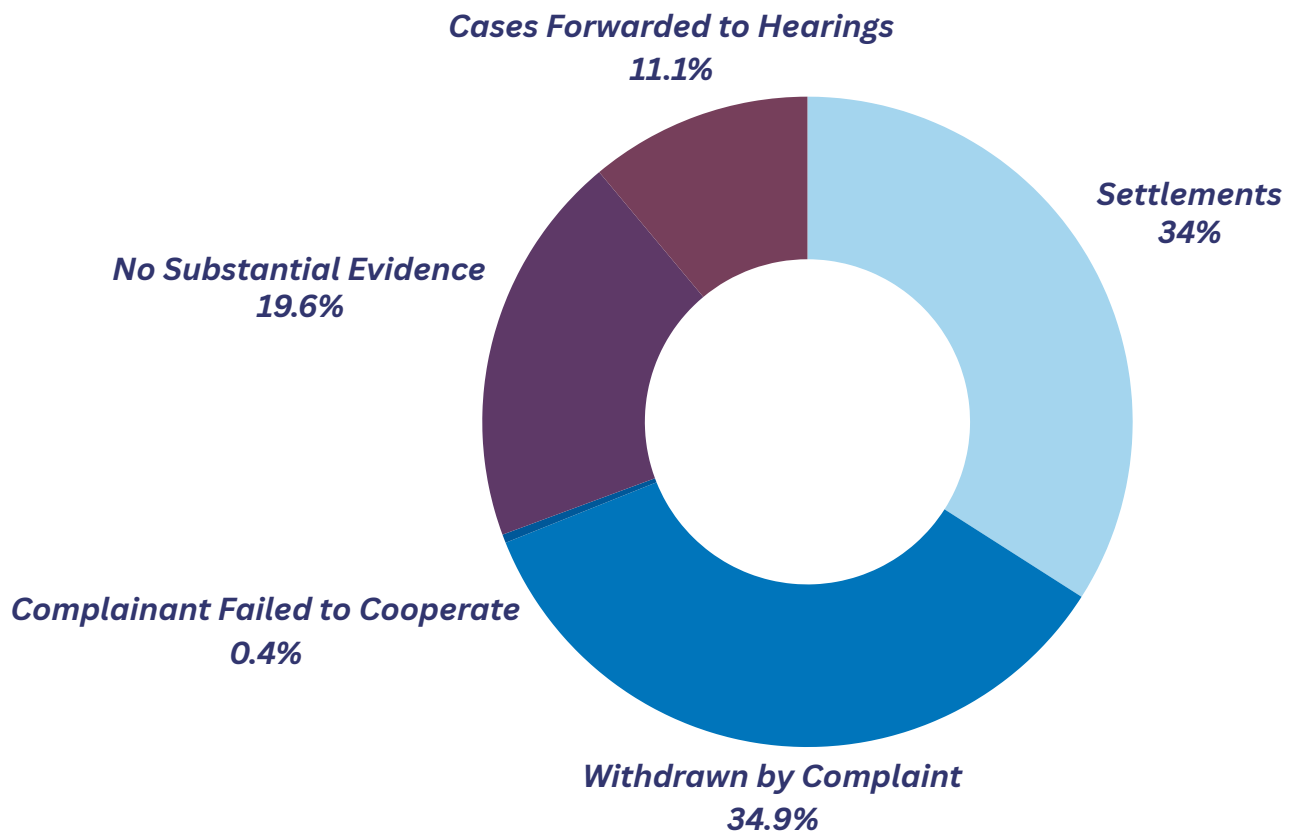
<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cchr/AdjSupportingInfo/AdjFORMS/2017AdjForms/SummaryOfNewDisabilityRightsRegs070117NEW.pdf>

RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

How Complaints Move Through the CCHR



Disposition of Closed Investigations



*This total includes cases that are withdrawn pursuant to private settlements. Terms of these settlements are not disclosed to the CCHR and are not included in our settlement totals.

Hearing Stage Activity

In 2023, the Commission advanced a total of 26 cases to the hearing stage, following a finding of substantial evidence. This was far fewer than the 40 cases advanced to the hearing stage in 2022.

In 2023, the Commission held 31 settlement conferences^[1] before one of the Commission's independent mediators. Of those cases, 21 either settled or were dismissed based on the complainant's failure to cooperate with the process. The remaining cases carried over to the following year.

[1] Many of these settlement conferences were in cases that closed in 2022.

2023 Board Rulings

Administrative hearings are held before independent hearing officers appointed by the Commission from a pre-selected roster of attorneys with expertise in civil rights law and litigation. The hearing officer manages the pre-hearing process, manages the hearing, assesses credibility, makes findings of fact, and issues a recommended decision which the Board of Commissioners considers as the basis for its final ruling on liability and relief. If a prevailing complainant was represented by an attorney, a second recommended and final ruling determines the amount of the attorney fees and related costs the respondent will be ordered to pay.

Board rulings are written legal opinions which explain the basis for the decision. They are available to the public and establish precedents for future Commission decisions. The Board Rulings Digest is a Commission publication listing all Board rulings entered after administrative hearings. The latest update of the Board Rulings Digest is available on the Commission's website (www.chicago.gov/cchr), or on request from the office.

Final Rulings

Ridenour v. Kimball et al., CCHR No. 19-H-32 (September 14, 2023).

The Board of Commissioners found that Respondents discriminated against Complainant based on her source of income – “gig work” – when they refused to rent an apartment to her because she earned her income performing independent contract work. The Board awarded Complainant \$5,575.38 in out-of-pocket damages, \$4,000 in emotional distress damages, and reasonable costs. The Board also assessed a fine against both Respondents in the amount of \$500 each, payable to the City of Chicago. The Board also referred Respondents' real estate agent to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

Note: Most of the Commission's source of income in housing complaints involve the use of a Housing Choice Voucher. With the prevalence of so many people now earning income through “gig work,” e.g., Uber and Lyft drivers, and Door Dash delivery drivers, the Commission expects to see more discrimination cases alleging this source of income.

Evans v. Pasiaka, CCHR No. 20-H-63 (September 14, 2023).

The Board of Commissioners found that Respondent discriminated against Complainant based on her source of income, a Housing Choice Voucher, when he refused to rent an apartment to her, stating that the property was “not set up for Section 8” and claiming that it would not pass a Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) inspection.

The Board awarded Complainant \$1,500 in emotional distress damages, \$1,500 in punitive damages, and reasonable attorney's fees and costs upon petition by Complainant. The Board also imposed a fine payable to the City of Chicago against Respondent in the amount of \$1,000, and a fine of \$250 against Respondent's attorney as a sanction for failure to comply with the Commission's procedural orders and rules.

Scales & Gayles v. MAC Property Management LLC et al., CCHR No. 18-H-12 (September 14, 2023).

Complainants were Housing Choice Voucher holders who expressed interest in two apartments managed by Respondents. Respondents did not rent either apartment to them. The Board found that one apartment was rented to another applicant prior to Complainants expressing interest and was thus, not available to them. The other apartment was rented to another Housing Choice Voucher holder. The Board found that Respondents did not violate the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance in this matter and issued a ruling of no liability.

Muhammad v. Delta Kappa Realty & Property Management, et al., CCHR No. 18-H-50 (September 14, 2023).

Based on the Hearing Officer's finding that Complainant's claim that Respondents failed to rent an apartment to her based on her race and source of income lacked credibility, the Board of Commissioners ruled that Respondents did not violate the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance and issued a ruling of no liability.

Vargas v. Tender Care Systems, Inc., CCHR No. 18-E-13 (December 14, 2023)

Based on the hearing officer's determination that Complainant lacked credibility in her claim that a male co-worker sexually harassed her, and that Respondent was aware of the sexual harassment, the Board of Commissioners issued a ruling of no liability.

Performance Achievements

The investigation and adjudication of discrimination complaints are handled by CCHR's Adjudication Division. In 2023, the outstanding performance of Adjudication Division resulted in these major achievements:

- Completed nearly 200 investigations
- Completed 50% of discrimination complaint investigations within 180 days compared to 30% in 2022
- Completed 77% of discrimination complaint investigations in one year, increasing efficiency 30% from 2022



Service Enhancements

To improve service to the public, here are some of the measures implemented by the CCHR:

- Implemented significant improvements to streamline the online complaint filing process.
- Partnered with Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) to provide enhanced ASL interpreting services for people filing complaints.
- Expanded our staff by adding two new Human Relations Investigators to help expedite investigations.
- Expanded our education and outreach program to include presentations on Deferred Action for non-documented residents filing complaints with the CCHR in connection with sexual harassment, and disability discrimination.
- Collaborated with MOPD to provide “Know Your Rights” presentations at MOPD’s field office with CCHR investigators present to take discrimination complaints on site.



FIGHTING HATE THROUGH ADVOCACY, MEDIATION, AND EDUCATION



The CCHR works to fight hate and promote unity and mutual understanding through its Intergroup Relations Unit (IGR).

IGR Programs

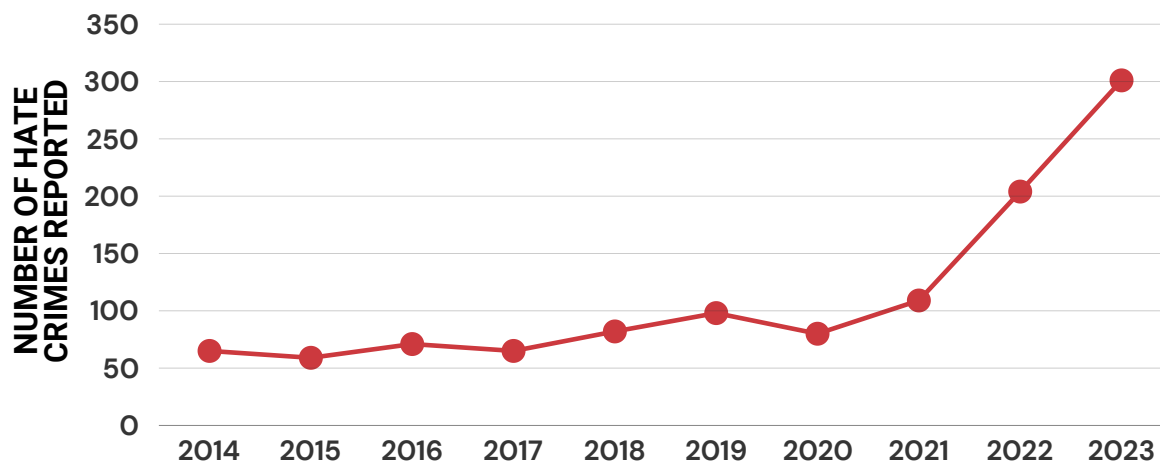
- Hate Crime Advocacy and Victim Assistance
- Community Tension Intervention
- Education and Outreach

Hate Crime Advocacy and Victim Assistance

Hate Crimes relate to a specific group of crimes such as assault, battery, criminal damage to property, etc., in which hate against the victim’s actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or national origin is a motivating factor for the crime.

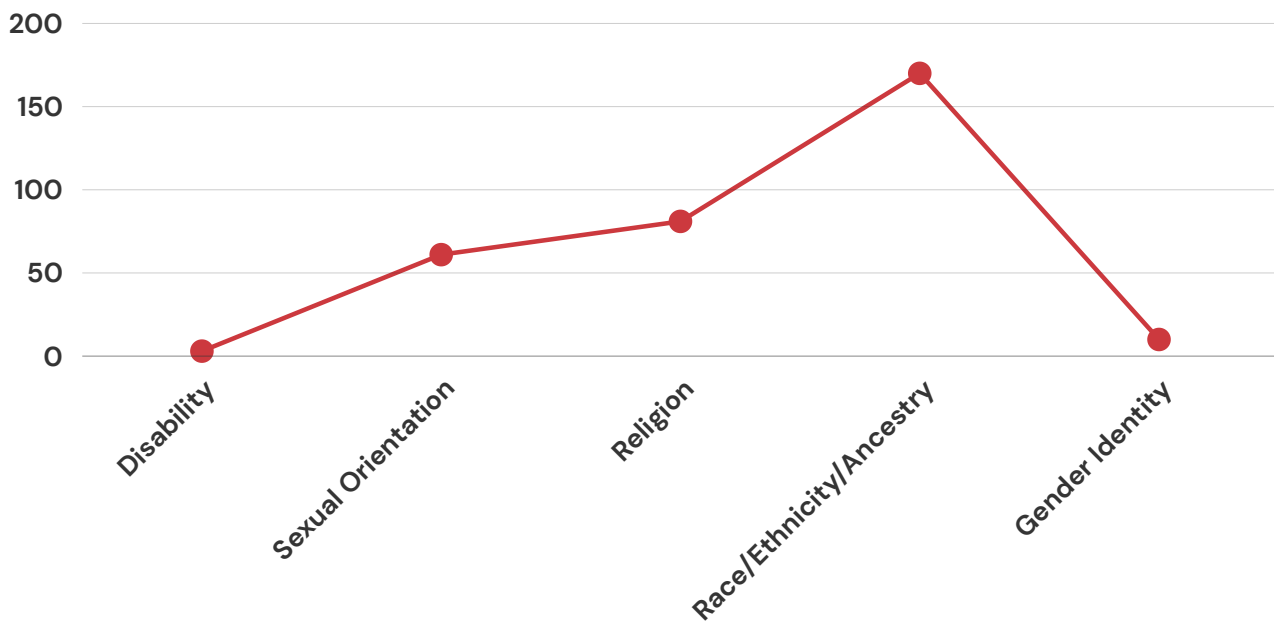
Hate crime advocacy and victim assistance are priorities for the CCHR, through our IGR Unit. Services provided include accompanying victims to criminal court when a hate crime is being prosecuted, identifying social service resources, and mobilizing community support for victims. The CCHR works closely with the Chicago Police Department, Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office, government agencies, and community-based organizations to provide these services. In December of 2023, amendments to the Hate Crime Ordinance enhanced reporting equity.

REPORTED HATE CRIMES 2014-2023



To further our hate crime work, the CCHR was awarded the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Program grant in the amount of \$400,000 by the Department of Justice to develop a Hate Crimes Pilot Program. Through this project, victims will be able to report hate crimes at designated community-based organizations. The grant is a collaboration with the Chicago Police Department. The program will kick off in the spring of 2024.

REPORTED HATE CRIMES BY BIAS CLASSIFICATION 2023



Community Tension Intervention



Mediation

The CCHR responds to a variety of community tensions including neighbor-to-neighbor disputes, conflicts between residents and businesses, and many more. Our staff of trained mediators work to facilitate conversations in a safe and confidential manner, while maintaining their neutrality, where both parties feel heard and can express their concerns openly.

The CCHR works closely with aldermanic offices, schools, community organizations, and other groups to reduce community tensions and promote healing.

For example, in 2023, the CCHR worked with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant, Migrant and Refugee Rights to address tensions at the city’s shelters for new arrivals. In all, the CCHR mediated more than 100 conflicts.

Peace Circles

In addition to using mediation as a tool to resolve community tensions, the CCHR facilitates Peace Circles based on the restorative justice model. Peace Circles have been used successfully by the CCHR to address conflicts and as an education tool for schools, community organizations, and governmental agencies.

Education and Outreach

Education and outreach are essential components of CCHR’s work. We provide presentations about CCHR services for organizations, community groups, businesses, and faith communities. In 2023 we hosted an Open House for newly elected alderpersons to orient them on how CCHR can be a resource for them and their constituents.

CCHR staff attend community meetings, host information tables at events, canvass neighborhoods, and more. In 2023, staff presented anti-bullying workshops to parent groups in Chicago Public Schools, Know Your Rights presentations to migrants in city shelters, and conflict resolution workshops at seniors centers.



Staff also joined several alderpersons for outreach at their Back to School fairs and community-based meetings and events. Staff joined the City Clerk’s Office at locations across the city for their Mobile City Hall initiative. Staff also participated in a Seder with leaders of the Jewish community, an Iftar with leaders of the Muslim community, the Bud Billiken parade with leaders of the African American community, and the PRIDE parade with leaders of the LGBTQ+ community, to name a few.

Unity Programs

In response to the increase in hate crimes in 2022, the CCHR hosted the CCHR Unity Brunch on January 23, 2023. The event brought together leaders from across the city to take a stand for unity and against hate.



As a follow up to the Unity Brunch, the CCHR hosted a full-day Unity Summit on July 20, 2023. The summit featured discussions on a variety of civil and human rights issues, bringing together a diverse group of speakers and participants from across the city. The summit was kicked off with an inspiring and energizing welcoming address by Mayor Johnson.



Think Before You Hate Campaign

In the wake of growing local tensions fueled by national and international conflicts, the CCHR launched the “Think Before you Hate” ad campaign. The purpose of the campaign was to prevent hate crimes and hate incidents. The colorful thought-provoking ads were placed on CTA buses, trains, and on transit station ad spaces citywide. The ads garnered more than ten million views.



Peace Day Rally

On September 23, 2023, the CCHR co-sponsored the 45th Annual Peace Day Rally at Daley Plaza. The CCHR has been a co-sponsor of this program with the Peace School for nearly 30 years. The event was opened with an impassioned call for peace by Mayor Johnson and featured a call for peace for each nation of the world.



Community Voices

Board of Commissioners

The CCHR Board of Commissioners serves as the public leadership and community voice of the department. The board receives reports on the work of the department from staff and provides valuable input on how to better serve the public. The board also reviews and recommends policies to address issues of discrimination and prejudice. Finally, the board makes the final rulings in all fully litigated discrimination cases after reviewing the recommended ruling of the hearing officer who conducted the administrative hearing. The Board may adopt the hearing officer’s recommendation in full, reject or modify it consistent with applicable law, or remand the case for further hearing.



Board of Commissioners

Nancy C. Andrade, Chair and Commissioner

Darlene Attiah
Karina Ayala-Bermejo
Jamie Brown
Marta Cerda
Jennifer Eleazar
Daniel Goldwin

Rey Gonzalez
Daniel Hernandez
Mirna Holton
Ahmad Jitan
Ray Koenig III
Margaret Kulujian

Esther Nieves
Dr. Terrell Odom
Michael Takada
Butch Trusty
Kimberly Waller

Advisory Councils

There are five advisory councils to the CCHR which work directly with the Office of the Mayor to serve as liaisons between city government and the community to promote cooperation and enhance services and to foster improved human relations and fight discrimination against all Chicago residents: Advisory Council on Women, Advisory Council on New Americans, LGBTQ+ Advisory Council, Advisory Council on Equity, and Advisory Council on Veterans.

Advisory Council Chairs

Advisory Council on Equity, Esther Nieves and Victor Dickson Co-Chairs

Advisory Council on LGBTQ+, Butch Trusty

Advisory Council on New Americans, Karina Ayala-Bermejo

Advisory Council on Veterans, Dr. Terrell Odom

Advisory Council on Women, Jackie Kaplan-Perkins

Mayor's Youth Initiative

The CCHR worked to further the Mayor's Youth Initiative by bringing on five young people in 2023 which included four undergraduate student interns and an international fellow CCHR hosted from Peru.

These talented and inspiring youth were instrumental in the success of many CCHR programs and initiatives including the Unity Summit, Think Before You Hate Campaign, and the development of a Discrimination Complaint Survey Tool.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CCHR would like to thank our fabulous group of superstar interns for 2023.

Julia Gould, University of Toronto
Ja'miah Reese, Loyola University, Chicago
Deena Al-Ali, Loyola University, Chicago
Sonia Varghese, Loyola University, Chicago

Thank you all for the enthusiasm, creativity, and energy you brought to CCHR everyday! It was great working with you. We wish you much success in your future endeavors.

Finally, the CCHR would like to thank the Department of Assets Information and Technology (AIS) Photography Unit for several of the wonderful photos interspersed throughout this report, and its Graphics and Reproduction Unit for the print and digital production of the report.



CHICAGO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS STAFF

Nancy C. Andrade, Chair and Commissioner

Aracelis Baez, Human Relations Specialist II

Maria Balderas, Executive Administrative Assistant

Marisol Gallegos, Director of Human Rights Compliance, Employment

Kenneth Gunn, First Deputy Commissioner

Wessie Johnson, Administrative Assistant III

Kristen Lee, Director of Compliance/Fair Housing

JoAnn Newsome, Deputy Commissioner

Peter Oakley, Human Relations Investigator II

Daniel Patlan, Human Relations Investigator II

Cheryl Reid, Human Relations Investigator II

Albert Robinson, Human Relations Investigator II

Jennifer Scott, Human Relations Specialist II

Daniel Serrano, Director of Intergroup Relations and Outreach

Connie Simonelli, Human Relations Investigator II

Ingrid Upchurch, Human Relations Investigator II

Gloria Vu, Human Resources Business Partner

Norman White, Hate Crimes Specialist