

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2014-2015



TENNESSEE HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION



"Safeguarding Individuals From Discrimination Through Enforcement & Education"

== TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Letter to the Governor & General Assembly | 2 |
| Message from the Chair of the Board of Commissioners | 3 |
| History | 4 |
| Overview | 5 |
| Board of Commissioners | 6 |
| Customer Service & Intake Division | 8 |
| Mediation | 9 |
| Employment Division | 10 |
| Housing Division | 12 |
| Legal Division | 14 |
| Title VI Division, Compliance Program | 16 |
| Communications Division: Education & Outreach | 19 |
| Office Locations & Staff | 22 |





TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

WILLIAM R. SNODGRASS TENNESSEE TOWER
312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE, 23rd FLOOR
NASHVILLE, TN 37243-1102
(615) 741-5825 | FAX (615) 253-1886 | www.TN.gov/HumanRights

September 19, 2015

Governor Bill Haslam
State of Tennessee
1st Floor, State Capitol
Nashville, TN 37243

Members of the General Assembly
State of Tennessee
Legislative Plaza
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Haslam & Members of the General Assembly:

It is my honor to provide you with the 2015 Annual Report for the Tennessee Human Rights Commission. This report details the Commission's activities from the period beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015.

This includes the Commission's core functions of processing complaints of discrimination in an efficient and timely manner, providing education and outreach to more diverse audiences utilizing different formats, and working with state agencies to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

This report also covers our ongoing partnerships to educate the public, as well as the issuance of the Status of Human Rights in Tennessee and Status Presentations/Conversations in Knoxville and Johnson City.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Beverly L. Watts
Executive Director



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR**TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

WILLIAM R. SNODGRASS TENNESSEE TOWER
312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE, 23rd FLOOR
NASHVILLE, TN 37243-1102
(615) 741-5825 | FAX (615) 253-1886 | www.TN.gov/HumanRights



It is my great privilege to serve as the new Chair of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission Board of Commissioners. Through events like The Status of Human Rights, our Annual Employment Law Seminar, and more than 140 outreach initiatives, we successfully reached more people than ever before.

On behalf of my fellow Commissioners, I am pleased to submit more detailed information about the Commission's work and activities in this annual report for 2014-2015. Let me thank my fellow Commissioners for allowing me to serve as Chair. I am confident that the Commission will continue its important work and look forward to another year of success and progress.

I want to thank Governor Haslam, the Lt. Governor Ramsey, the Speaker of the House Harwell and Members of the General Assembly for their continued support.

We look forward to continuing our important work.

Sincerely,

Annazette Houston
Chair of the Board of Commissioners

== HISTORY OF THE TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

On September 30, 1963, Governor Frank G. Clement signed Executive Order 18 creating the Tennessee Human Relations Commission. At that time, the Commission's purpose was to advise the public on their human rights, researching and making reports on human relations and reporting these findings to the Governor. The Commission accomplished this by working closely with other governmental agencies with similar duties. In 1967, legislation was passed creating the Tennessee Commission on Human Development, which absorbed the duties of the previous Commission, adopted rules and regulations to govern its proceedings and added a prohibition against sex discrimination.

In 1978, the Tennessee Human Rights Act (THRA) became law transforming the Commission from an advisory agency to an enforcement agency. Former Commissioner Jocelyn Wurzburg of Memphis, Tennessee was the author of this legislation; her leadership was critical to its passage. In 1979 and 1980, the law was amended to include disability and age as protected classes. In 1983, the Commission officially became the Tennessee Human Rights Commission (THRC). In 1984, the law was amended to prohibit discrimination in housing. In 1990, the expansion was extended to include familial status and disability as protected classes. Today, the THRA prohibits discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age (employment only), familial status (housing only), and disability (employment and housing only). In 2009, the THRA was expanded and given the authority to verify that state governmental entities comply with requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI). Title VI prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin.

In the 2014 legislation was passed that amended the Tennessee Human Rights Act (T.C.A. §4-21-201) by reducing the Commission's board from 15 members to 9 members, with 2 members being appointed by each of the senate and house speakers, and 5 appointed by the governor. The Commission's new board structure became effective on January 1, 2015.

THRC has maintained collaborative partnerships with the federal government for more than 30 years. In 1979, the Commission partnered with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) through an employer monitoring grant, now expanded into a work-share agreement. In 1985, the THRC began its partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a substantially equivalent agency. These relationships allow the Commission to investigate complaints involving alleged violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act).

The mission of the THRC is to safeguard individuals from discrimination through enforcement and education. The Commission executes its mission through a nine-member Board of Commissioners and staff of 29 in four offices (Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga and Knoxville). Through nine 'Rule 31' trained mediators, the Commission has operated a successful Mediation Program since its reactivation in 2008. The THRA and Tennessee Disability Act are enforced through receiving, mediating, investigating, conciliating and, when necessary, litigating allegations of discrimination. Since 2009, the Commission has also coordinated the state of Tennessee's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Commission uses a variety of public meetings, outreach events and resources to educate the public about their rights.

MISSION

Safeguard individuals from discrimination through enforcement and education.

VISION

Ensure that all Tennesseans are treated with respect and equality.

VALUES

Integrity, Respect, Equality, Dependability, Dedication

2014-2015 Highlights

- The Annual Employment Law Seminar experienced record-breaking attendance, featuring reputable keynote speakers, such as EEOC Chair, Jenny Yang.
- The Commission engaged the community in two conversations regarding *The Status of Human Rights in Tennessee* and plans to hold more in the coming year.
- In collaboration with the EEOC Memphis District Office, the Commission held two webinars educating the public about pregnancy discrimination and retaliation.
- The Commission awarded Carol Berz with the *Jocelyn D. Werzburg Civil Rights Legacy Award*.
- The Customer Service Division is the initial point of contact for the THRC. The Division processed 9,042 calls from the public, a .97% increase from the previous year.
- A total of 43 mediations were attempted, 25 of which were successful, resulting in \$209,977 awarded as monetary benefits to complainants. The mediation program experienced a resolution in 58% of all mediation attempts.
- The Employment Division received 628 inquiries, of which 361 complaints were accepted. The division closed 276 complaints. More than \$61,000 was awarded as monetary benefits to complainants.
- The Housing Division accepted 152 complaints and closed 112. The Division successfully closed 56% of complaints, which exceeded its HUD cooperative efficiency goal for the fifth consecutive year. The Division held 45 conciliations, resulting in more than \$63,000 in settlements.
- The Legal Division reviewed and recommended for closure 243 complaints, reviewed 24 investigative plans, and conducted 9 reconsiderations. The Division found reasonable cause in 6 complaints, and conciliated 6 complaints.
- More than \$334,000 in monetary benefits was awarded to Complainants for all conciliations, mediations, and settlements.
- The Title VI Compliance Program reviewed 42 state agencies' implementation plans. This was the first year since the program's inception to reach 100% compliance.
- The Education and Outreach program successfully connected with more than 34,400 individuals through participation in more than 140 outreach events and activities – a more than 4% increase from the previous year. Through both traditional and social media, the Commission is expected to have reached more than 3 million individuals.



Executive Director Beverly L. Watts & Chair Annazette Houston of the Board of Commissioners



Former Chair Stacey Garrett of the Board of Commissioners



Deputy Director Sabrina Hooper & Chair Annazette Houston

== BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Commission’s board is made up of Tennesseans that represent employers, business owners, religious groups, trade unions, human rights groups and the general public. The Board met a total of six times throughout fiscal year 2015, both in person and telephonically. At these meetings, the Board exercised its authority as defined by the Tennessee Human Rights Act. A complete record of minutes from these meetings can be found on the Commission website. In the 2014 the Tennessee Human Rights Acts was amended, reducing the Board of Commissioners from fifteen members to a nine-member board. This change became effective January 1, 2015. These individuals are appointed by the Governor (5), Lieutenant Governor (2), and Speaker of the House (2), to serve staggered terms. Three commissioners from each of the state’s three Grand Divisions are appointed to serve on a non-partisan basis.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: JULY 1, 2014 – DECEMBER 31, 2015

East Tennessee



Patricia Pierce
Harriman



William Coleman, Jr.
Johnson City



Paul McDaniel
Chattanooga



Annazette Houston
Knoxville



Chrystal Home
Chattanooga

Middle Tennessee



Stacey Garrett, Chair
Nashville



Karla Miller
Nashville



A.J. Starling
Nashville



Joseph Walker
Nashville



Bill Martin
Nashville

West Tennessee



Rieta Selberg
Memphis



David Cocke
Memphis



Robert Jones
Memphis



Ralph White
Memphis



Jocelyn Wurzburg
Memphis

== BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, continued

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2015

| East Tennessee | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |
| Annazette Houston Knoxville | Chrystal Horne Chattanooga | Vacant |
| Middle Tennessee | | |
|  |  |  |
| Julius Sloss Mt. Juliet | Bill Martin Nashville | Eric W. Crafton Nashville |
| West Tennessee | | |
|  |  |  |
| Ralph White Memphis | Rieta Selberg Memphis | Vacant |

CUSTOMER SERVICE & INTAKE DIVISION

Through the Commission’s Customer Service & Intake Divisions, individuals can find answers to questions regarding discrimination. The **Customer Service Division** serves as the initial point of contact for the Tennessee Human Rights Commission. Staff works diligently to provide information on how to file a complaint, send out complaint forms to interested parties, and make referrals to other agencies if necessary. Interested parties may obtain the information and documents needed to file a complaint at any of the Commission’s four regional offices or on the Commission website. The Commission must receive a complaint form with an original signature in order to process the complaint.

During fiscal year 2015, the Customer Service Division:



Received
9042
phone calls



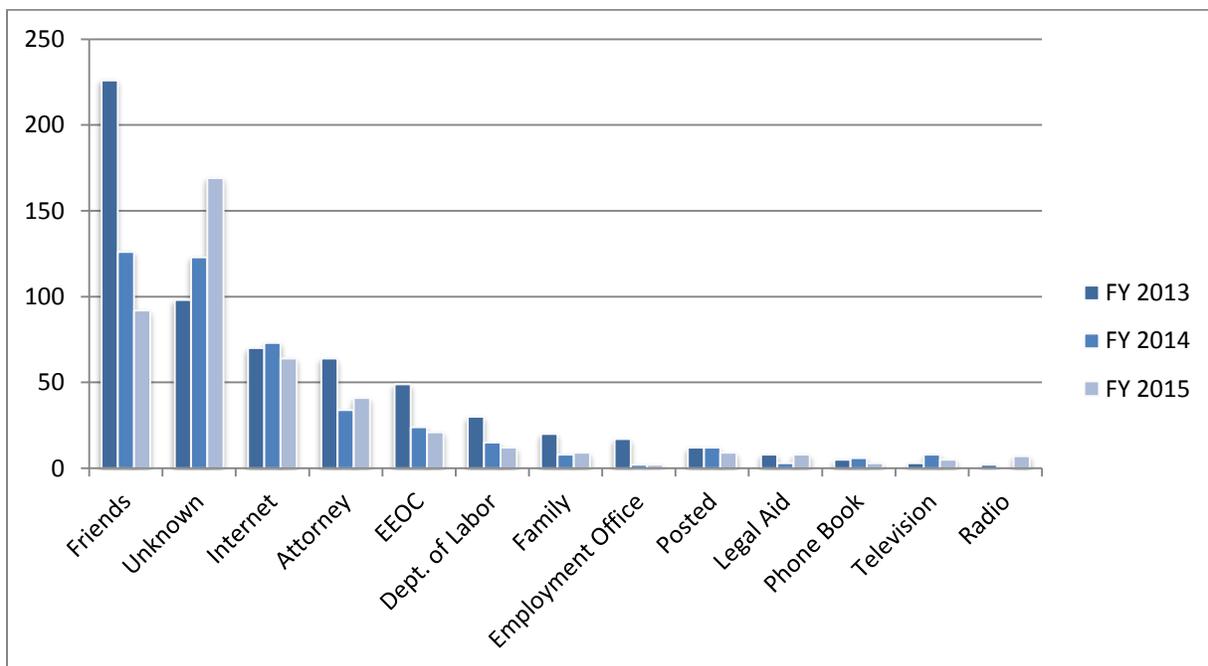
Complaint forms
were sent by
mail & by email
1,121



Copy requests
processed by
Customer Service
Division
30

The **Intake Division** receives complaint forms in employment and public accommodations. Staff determines jurisdiction, provides clarification on our statutes, notifies Respondents of the charges filed against them, requests the Respondent’s position statement, and offers mediation.

HOW COMPLAINANTS LEARN OF THE COMMISSION



MEDIATION

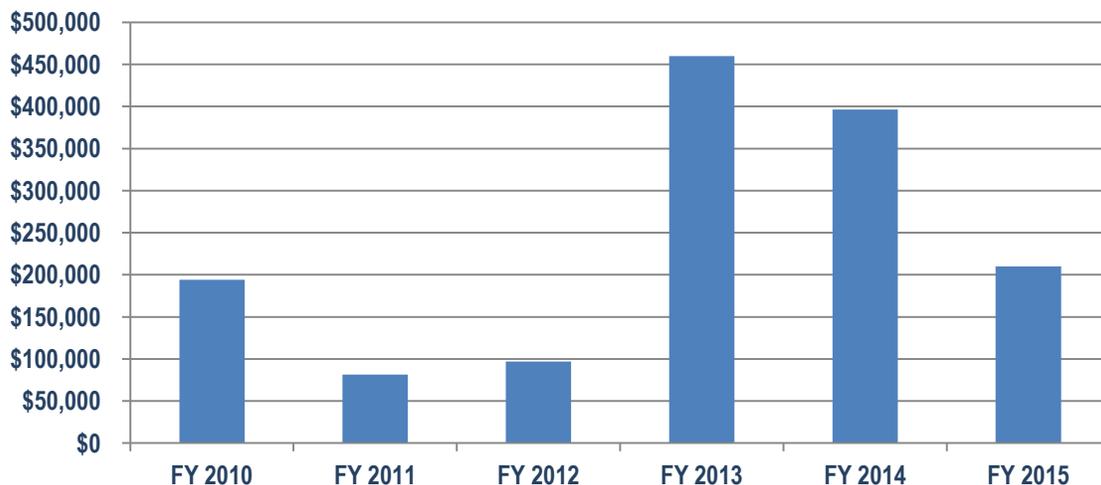
The purpose of mediation is to facilitate an atmosphere for both parties to discuss their perspectives on the conflict and work toward a possible resolution of the dispute. Mediation is provided at no cost to either party and is done in a secure and controlled environment. Mediation is an alternative to undergoing a full investigation or litigation. Complainants and Respondents must agree to attempt mediation. If the parties agree to a resolution, the case is closed. However, if an agreement is not reached, the case is then sent to investigation.

- From **25** successful mediations, **\$209,977** was awarded as monetary benefits to complainants.
- These individual benefits ranged from **\$500 - \$46,000**.
- Non-monetary benefits awarded included: not contesting unemployment benefits, policy changes, reinstatement, and training.
- Mediation program achieved a **58% resolution rate** in mediations held.

Through nine Rule 31 trained mediators on staff and a contract with the Nashville Conflict Resolution Center (for Spanish speaking parties), the Commission held 43 mediations during fiscal year 2015.



Monetary Benefits through Mediation



EMPLOYMENT DIVISION

The Employment Division is responsible for resolving complaints of discrimination in the areas of employment and public accommodation on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and age (40 and over). The staff is composed of eight full-time employment investigators. Four investigators are located in Nashville, while two are housed both in Chattanooga, and Memphis. These investigators resolve complaints through mediation and investigation.

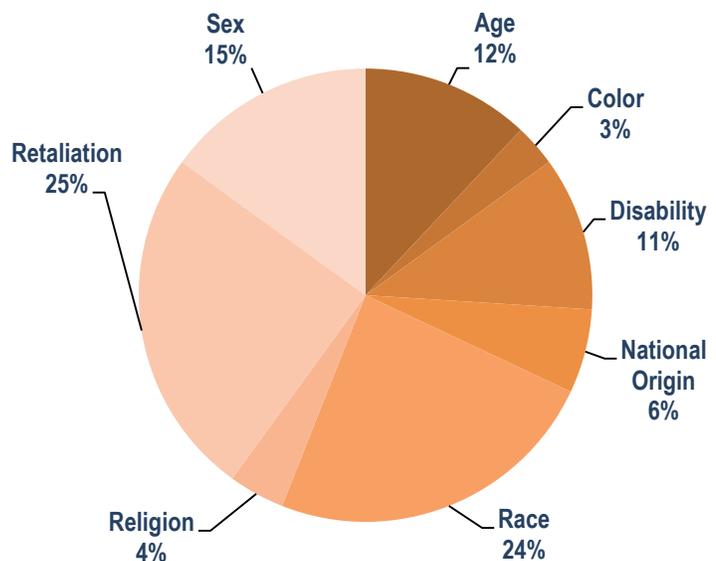
The Commission has a work-share agreement with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to investigate complaints of employment discrimination when businesses have 15 or more employees. This partnership allows the federal and state agencies to coordinate their investigations and avoid duplication of efforts in seeking to end discrimination.

In fiscal year 2015, the Employment Division received:

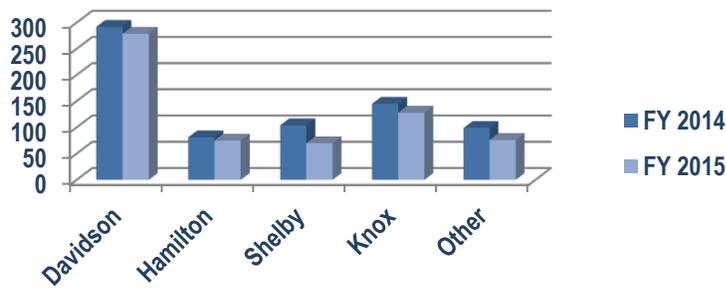


Alleged Bases for Discrimination in Employment from Total Complaints

The 361 accepted and filed complaints included 738 bases (due to multiple alleged bases for discrimination). The percentages to the right are based upon allegations involving protected classes.



EMPLOYMENT DIVISION, continued

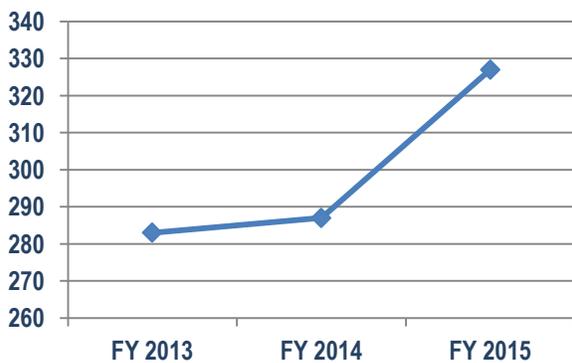
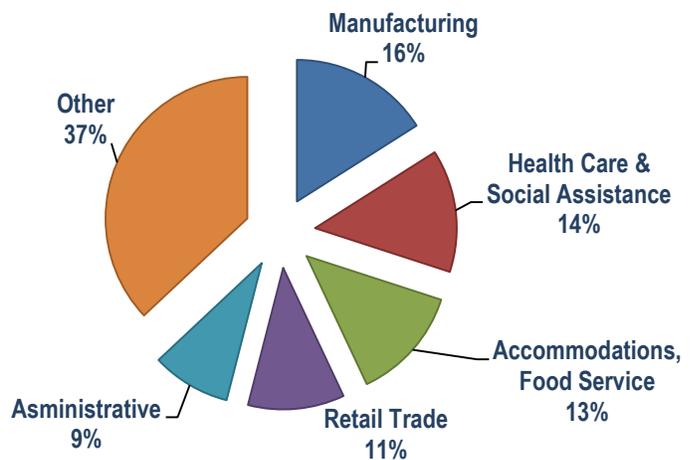


Complaint Inquiries by County

A review of complaint inquiries by county showed that Davidson, Hamilton, Shelby, and Knox Counties continue to lead in receipt of complaints, accounting for more than 87% of all complaint inquiries.

Complaints by Industry (Top Five):

A review of complaint inquiries by industry revealed that the top five industries accounted for approximately 63% of all complaints filed. The “other” category comprises 12 major industries, such as Public Administration, Educational Services, and Construction. The chart to the right illustrates complaint inquiries based on industry.



Complaints by Days of Investigation:

The Employment Division strives to complete investigations in a timely manner by reducing the average complaint closure to 270 days or less. The increase in days of investigation is a reflection of the agency focusing on the completion of aged complaints. As we continue to work with investigators to enhance complaint management tools and better prioritize complaints for closure, the next fiscal year should reflect a steady decline in days of investigation.

Benefits Resulting from Settlements:

Twelve (12) complaints were resolved through outside settlements, resulting in monetary benefits of **\$61,025 to complainants.**

HOUSING DIVISION

The Housing Division is responsible for resolving complaints of discrimination in housing based on the areas of sale, rental, advertisement, and financing of housing and commercial property on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status. Five full-time investigators located in Knoxville resolve complaints through conciliation and investigation.

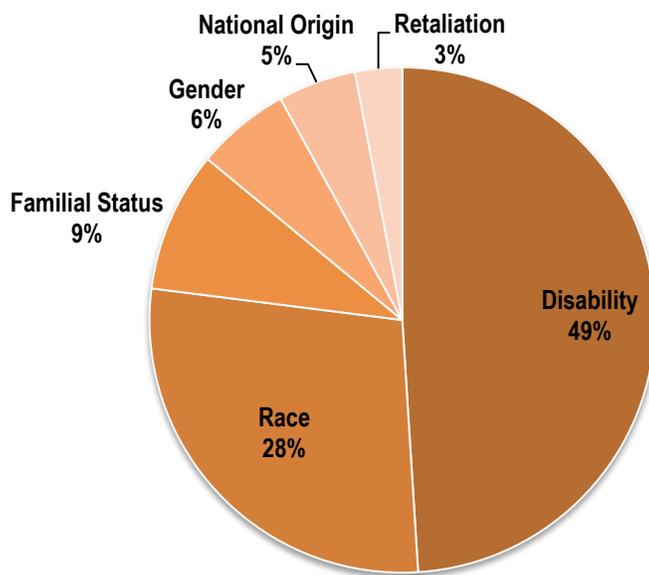
The Commission has a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to process complaints of housing discrimination when landlords have four or more properties. This partnership allows the federal and state agencies to coordinate their investigations and avoid duplication of efforts in seeking to end discrimination.

In fiscal year 2015, the Housing Division received:



Alleged Bases for Discrimination in Housing from Total Complaints

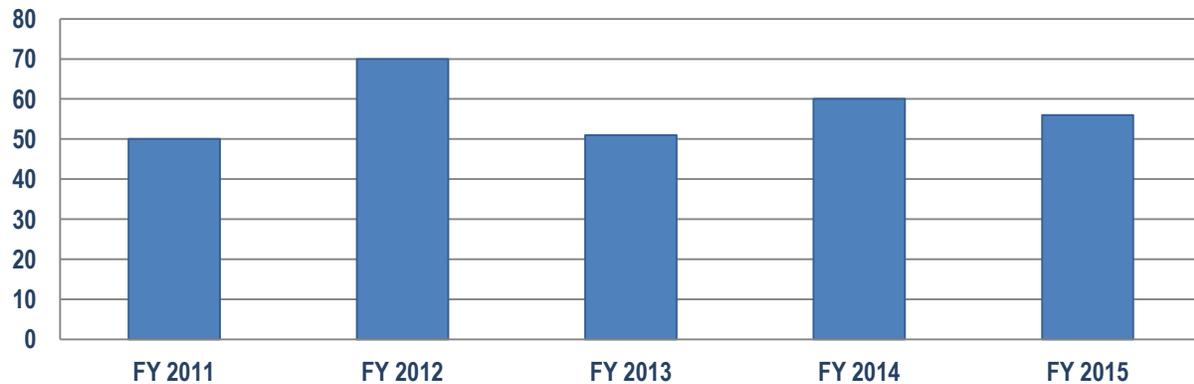
The 152 accepted and filed complaints included multiple bases of discrimination. The percentages to the right are based upon allegations involving protected classes.



HOUSING DIVISION, continued

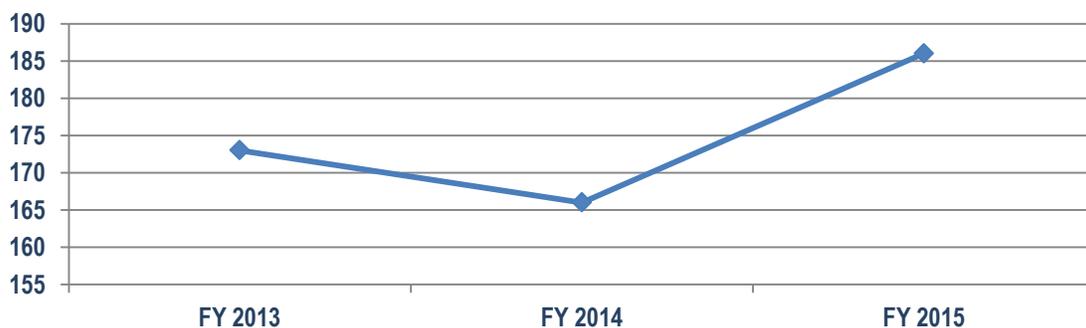
HUD Efficiency Goal, Case Age:

The Housing Division in the fifth consecutive year continues to meet or exceed its HUD cooperative agreement standard performance goals to close 50% of cases within 100 days of filing and close 95% of aged complaints that are more than 100 days old. The chart below reflects the Division’s efficiency in closing complaints within 100 days (as percentage of total complaints).



Days of Investigation:

The Housing Division endeavors to investigate complaints in 100 days or less. We continue to work with investigators to enhance complaint management tools and better prioritize complaints for closure. The following is a representation of the average case age (in days) for the past three fiscal years.



Benefits Resulting from Complaints

The Housing Division resolved 45 complaints through conciliations, **resulting in \$63,228** in monetary benefits to complainants. Non-monetary benefits awarded include reasonable accommodations, modifications, structural modifications, removal of eviction records, fair housing training, third party monitoring, policy revisions, as well as housing opportunities

LEGAL DIVISION

The Legal Division serves as an in-house counsel by providing guidance and training to staff and Commissioners, conducting internal policy reviews, monitoring legislation and court cases that impact the Commission, drafting rules to comply with legislative changes, ensuring compliance of conciliation agreements, and conducting educational presentations for stakeholders.

The division reviews and reconsiders complaints investigated and prosecutes cases where the Commission has found reasonable cause to believe that an act of discrimination has occurred. The Legal Department's primary role is to work with the other divisions of the agency at the various stages of the investigative process to ensure that the investigators' recommendations in cases are legally sufficient.

Throughout fiscal year 2015, the Legal Division:

REVIEWED & RECOMMENDED FOR CLOSURE 243 CASES

REVIEWED 24 INVESTIGATIVE PLANS

APPROVED 27 COPY REQUESTS

CONDUCTED 9 RECONSIDERATIONS

FOUND REASONABLE CAUSE IN 6 CASES

CONCILIATED 1 CAUSE CASE

Cause Cases

When the Commission issues a finding of reasonable cause to believe discrimination occurred in a case, our statute requires us to make attempts at conciliation. If these attempts fail, the case proceeds to an administrative hearing.

Not all cases are resolved (whether by conciliation or by hearing) within the same fiscal year as a reasonable cause finding is issued. For this fiscal year, one resolved cause case was carried over from the previous year.

Resolved Cause Cases

Housing. Complainant is a person with a disability. The Respondents were found to have evicted the Complainant because of her disability. They considered her medical calls to the local authorities to be a nuisance and decided that the dwelling was unsuitable for her because of her health issues. The Respondents denied Complainant's reasonable accommodation request for a companion animal when they added an additional fee to her monthly rent to cover anticipated damage by the animal. The case mediated with \$3,250.00 for Complainant; \$2,000.00 to THRC's Education & Outreach fund. The Respondents will attend fair housing training to include reasonable accommodations, and they will develop and implement a policy on reasonable accommodations according to fair housing guidelines.

Legislation & Court Cases

The Legal Department monitors state and federal legislation and recent court decisions in discrimination law. The 109th General Assembly of the State of Tennessee convened on January 13, 2015, and adjourned on April 22, 2015. The Commission monitored numerous bills that were introduced which could potentially affect the statutes that we enforce: the Tennessee Human Rights Act (THRA) and the

== LEGAL DIVISION, continued

Tennessee Disability Act (TDA). Only one of the bills monitored was passed; however, the bills can be reintroduced at the next session.

House Bill 57 / Senate Bill 6 (Passed): Enacts the "Racial Profiling Prevention Act" which requires each state and local public law enforcement agency to adopt, on or before January 1, 2016, a written policy that prohibits racial profiling by its employees. This bill became Public Chapter No. 335 after being signed by Governor Haslam on May 4, 2015.

U.S. Supreme Court Cases

Young v. UPS, March 25, 2015. 6-3 decision. Ms. Young, a driver at UPS, was given a lifting restriction by her doctor during her pregnancy. UPS put her on leave without pay because lifting parcels up to 70 pounds was a requirement of the job. Ms. Young subsequently lost her medical coverage. Ms. Young argued that since UPS had a policy of accommodating non-pregnant drivers, she was being discriminated against because of her pregnancy. UPS argued that their policy did not take pregnancy into account. The Court remanded the case back to the lower courts with a new legal standard where the employee must demonstrate that the employer's policies impose a "significant burden" on pregnant workers, and that the employer has not raised a "sufficiently strong" reason to justify that burden. A significant burden may exist if an employer does not accommodate a large percentage of pregnant workers while accommodating a large percentage of non-pregnant workers. The Court was clear to point out that higher cost would not be a sufficient reason for the employer's justification for not accommodating a pregnant woman.

Mach Mining v. EEOC, April 29, 2015. 9-0 decision. The Court found that a court does have the authority to review EEOC's conciliation efforts under Title VII, and Title VII requires that the EEOC try to conciliate unlawful employment practices before it can file a lawsuit against the employer. The Court did find the scope of judicial review to be narrow and that EEOC had "extensive discretion" in determining how much communication was appropriate with the employer.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores June 1, 2015. 8-1 decision. Samantha Elauf, a devout Muslim who wears a headscarf for religious purposes, applied for a job at Abercrombie & Fitch. The company has a dress code that prohibits the wearing of "caps," and Ms. Elauf believed she was not hired because of this policy. The Court found that she was discriminated against based on religion in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Court found that Title VII did not require that the employer know that there might be "a conflict between an applicant's religious practice and a work rule" but that Elauf only needed to show her need for Abercrombie & Fitch to accommodate her religious beliefs was a "motivating factor" in its decision not to hire her.

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs v. The Inclusive Communities Project June 25, 2015. 5-4 decision. The court found that under the Fair Housing Act, claims can be based on the disparate impact theory which alleges that laws, policies or practices have a discriminatory effect even if there was no intent to discriminate. However the Court did qualify its holding by clarifying that such claims cannot be based solely on statistical data but had to include actual occurrences. Additionally housing providers are not liable under disparate impact if they can show their policy is needed to achieve a valid goal.

TITLE VI DIVISION, COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

The Title VI Compliance Program is responsible for verifying that state governmental entities, which are also recipients of federal financial assistance, comply with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI). Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

The Commission serves as the central coordinating agency for executive branch departments and agencies for technical assistance, consultation, and resources to encourage and assist with compliance.

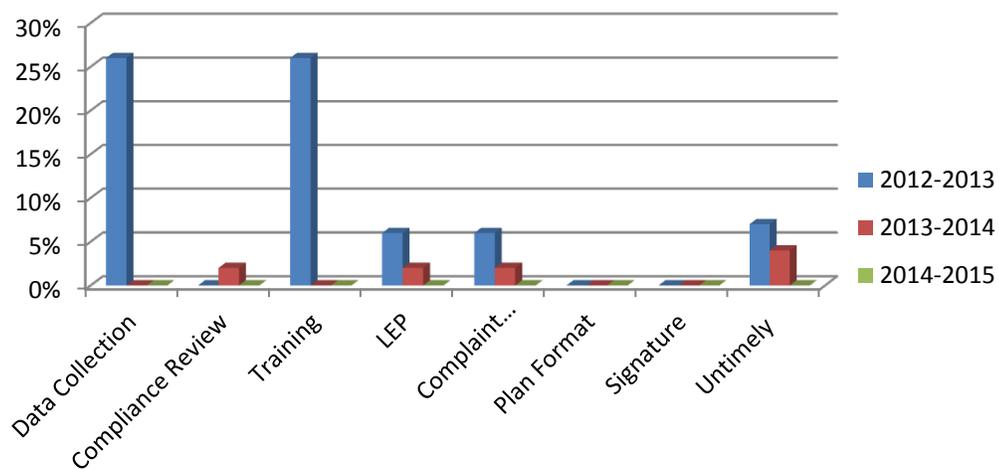
Implementation Plans

State agencies that receive federal financial assistance are required to submit to the Commission an annual implementation plan - a report of measures taken to meet Title VI requirements. This year 42 state agencies submitted a plan. Review of these plans, which are due Oct. 1 of each year, is a significant role of the program.

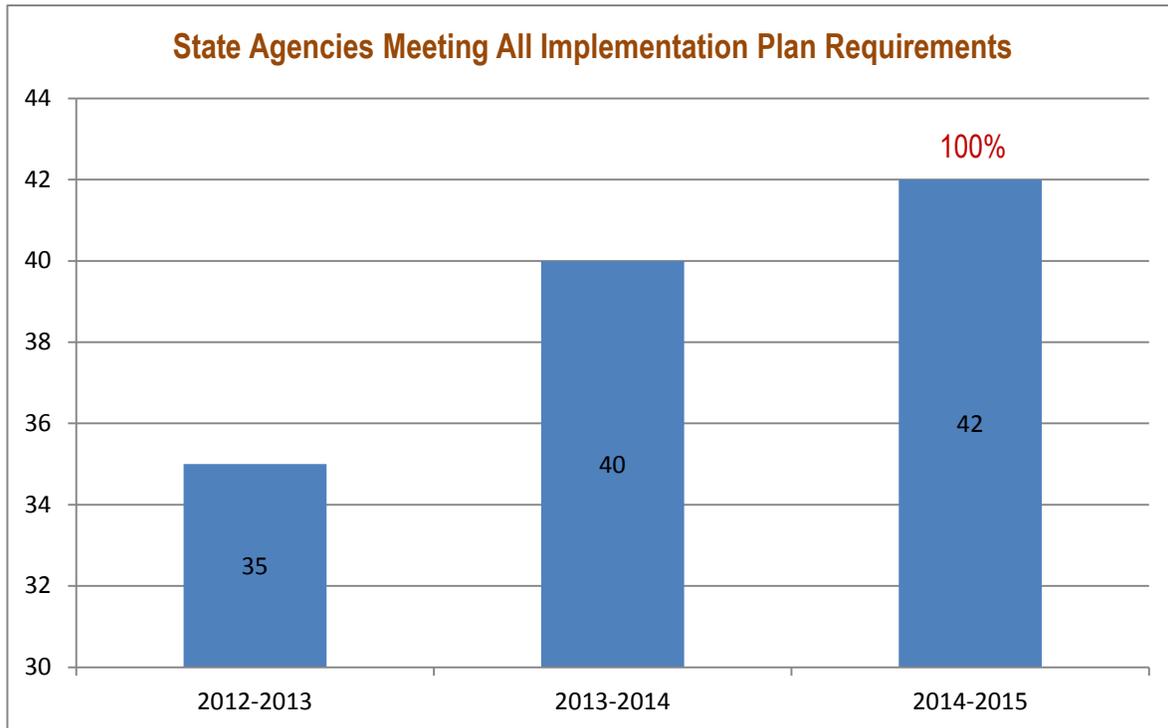
During the review, agencies are evaluated on compliance items such as training departments on Title VI requirements, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policies, data collection and the monitoring of sub-recipients' use of federal funds.

Compliance rates have improved steadily since the program's inception. This is the first year of 100% compliance, resulting in all forty-two departments not receiving any findings. Past areas of noncompliance have included training, data collection, and timeliness of the submission.

Title VI Implementation Plans Areas of Non-Compliance



TITLE VI DIVISION, COMPLIANCE PROGRAM, continued



Compliance Reviews

The Title VI program periodically reviews state agencies to verify compliance and ensure best practices are in place to prevent discrimination in any public program.

During fiscal year 2014-2015, the division conducted five (5) compliance reviews:

The **Tennessee Department of Education** was reviewed in September and October of 2013. The Compliance program identified findings in four program areas; Limited English Proficiency, Complaint Procedures, Title VI Training, and Public notice and Outreach. A corrective action plan addressing each area of concern was completed on April 15, 2015. The Tennessee Human Rights Commission currently finds the Department of Education in full compliance with Title VI.

The **Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth** was reviewed in January of 2015. The program issued one finding that was immediately corrected. The Commission on Children and Youth are currently in compliance with Title VI.

The **Administrative Office of the Courts** was reviewed in March of 2015 and found to be in full compliance with Title VI.

The **Department of Finance and Administration** was reviewed in April and May of 2015. The Compliance program identified findings in three program areas; Limited English Proficiency, Complaint Procedures, and

== TITLE VI DIVISION, COMPLIANCE PROGRAM, continued

Title VI Training. The Department is currently making adjustments to its training program to correct the deficiencies. Once the corrections are made, Finance and Administration will be in compliance.

The **Alcoholic Beverage Commission** was reviewed in June of 2014. The Compliance Program identified findings in four program areas, Limited English Proficiency, Complaint Procedures, Title VI Training, and Data Collection. The commission is currently making adjustments to its training program and data collection practices. Once the corrections are made, the Alcoholic Beverage Commission will be in compliance.

Title VI Complaints

The Title VI Division is also responsible for the receipt, review and referral of complaints alleging discrimination by a state agency under Title VI.

Inquiries deemed jurisdictional under Title VI are filed as complaints and referred to the department that administers the program or activity referenced in the complaint for investigation. Complaints are not closed with the Commission until written notification of the resolution is received from the referring department.

In fiscal year 2015, the Title VI Division received:



Training & Technical Assistance

The Title VI Division provided technical assistance to state departments and agencies on Title VI compliance, issued implementation plan guidelines and conducted several training sessions on Title VI compliance requirements to various entities.

The annual training for state Title VI Coordinators was held on July 23, 2014. Information presented during this session included Fundamentals of Title VI Compliance for new Coordinators, Implementation Guidelines for FY2013-2014 and Guidelines for the investigation of Title VI Complaints.

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION: EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Education & Outreach initiatives are Communications Division programs established in order to educate the public of the Commission’s duties and responsibilities. The division is charged with developing and implementing strategies that aid the commission's goal to safeguard individuals from discrimination through enforcement and education.

Each year, the Tennessee Human Rights Commission participates in a variety of programs across the state to provide citizens with an understanding of discrimination laws, what constitutes discrimination, as well as the Commission’s complaint process. During fiscal year 2015, the Commission participated in 140 outreach activities. The Commission partnered with 112 state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, private and faith-based organizations to promote an understanding of the Commission’s work. Through these initiatives, the Commission reached more than 34,400 individuals.

Throughout fiscal year 2015, the Education and Outreach program:

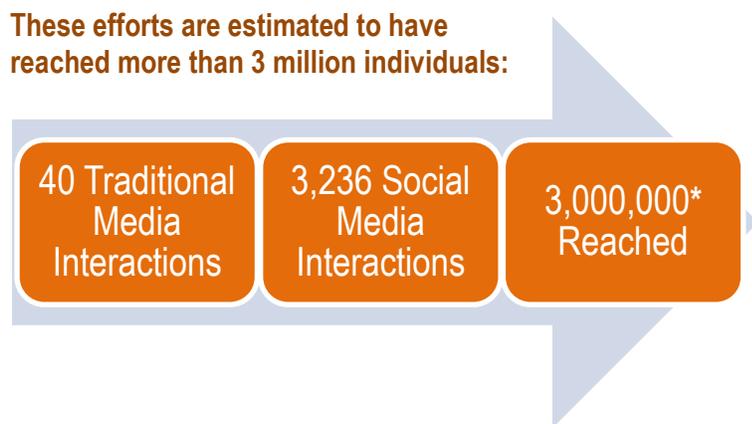
- ✓ Connected with more than **34,400 INDIVIDUALS**
- ✓ Participated in **140 OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**
- ✓ Increase constituent reach by **MORE THAN 4%**
- ✓ Conducted **11 OUTREACH EXHIBITS**
- ✓ Gave **32 EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS**



Director Watts, Attorney General Funk, Inez Crutchfield and Brian Fesler at the YWCA’s Annual Stand Against Racism.

The Commission continues to modernize the ways it reaches the public. Through the coordinated use of social media (Facebook and YouTube), a web presence, numerous radio and television broadcasts as well as the print media (traditional media interactions), the THRC regularly gains exposure to the general public.

These efforts are estimated to have reached more than 3 million individuals:



Father Joseph Breen, Director Watts, and Avi Poster at the 2014 International Human Rights Day Celebration.

*This figured is calculated by incorporating circulation numbers for various traditional media services in which the Commission received coverage, as well as social media interaction reach.

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION: EDUCATION & OUTREACH, continued

Annual Employment Law Seminar

Each year, the THRC hosts, in partnership with the Department of Human Resources, an Annual Employment Law Seminar. This program is meant to educate business professionals, organizations, and employers of their responsibilities under the Tennessee Human Rights Act.

This year’s seminar had **178 attendees** (record breaking attendance) and was held on June 16, 2015 in Nashville. The annual seminar welcomed EEOC Chair Jenny Yang as the keynote speaker. Evaluation results indicated that 100% of attendees “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the information presented at the seminar was valuable.



Jenny Yang, Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Keynote Speaker at the 2015 ELS.



Annual Employment Law Seminar attendees during seminar opening.



Beverly L. Watts, executive director of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, speaks at the ELS.

Participants Earned:

6.5 CLEs



Speakers included:

- Celeste Bradley
- Lesley Farmer
- Brian A. Pierce
- Kara E. Shea
- Kim Vance
- Faye Williams
- EEOC Chair, Jenny Yang

Conversations on the Status of Human Rights in Tennessee

In November of 2014, the Commission released a report entitled *The Status of Human Rights in Tennessee*. The report comprised information received at hearings held throughout the state earlier in the year. At these hearings the public discussed with the state issues of human rights in their communities. Following the release of the report, the Commission engaged the community in **two conversations** in order to garner public input, reactions to the report, and any further issues facing their communities. The Commission will continue holding these conversations throughout the upcoming months. The report is available online at www.TN.gov/HumanRights.

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION: EDUCATION & OUTREACH, continued

Connecting with the Community for Fair Housing

The Division held fair housing events such as the West Tennessee Fair Housing Celebration in Memphis, Fair Housing Matters in Nashville, and Equal Coalition for Housing Opportunities (ECHO) in Knoxville. Through these events, the Commission **engaged 318 community members** and helped to advance fair housing throughout the state.



Diedra Lynn Smith and Speaker Sapna Raj at the West Tennessee Fair Housing Celebration in Memphis.



Speakers at the West Tennessee Fair Housing Celebration on April 10, 2015.

Webinars – A Collaborative Effort to Educate the Public

As part of a Fair Employment Practice Agency (FEPA) Engagement Plan, the THRC collaborated with the EEOC Memphis District Office to develop and present two webinars: **Pregnancy Discrimination** and **Retaliation**. These educational opportunities allowed interested businesses, employers, and various other individuals to learn about the state and federal regulations concerning the aforementioned topics. These presentations **reached 175 participants** and are available online at www.TN.gov/Humanrights.



Katharine W. Kores, Memphis District Director of the EEOC and Webinar Presenter



Carol Berz, Award Recipient

The Jocelyn D. Wurzburg Civil Rights Legacy Award

Each year, the Jocelyn D. Wurzburg Civil Rights Legacy award is given to an individual who has been a life-long advocate of human rights, including commitment to the elimination of discrimination, an equitable community, and leadership in resolving human rights issues. This year the Commission awarded Carol Berz, the Chief Executive Director of Private Dispute Resolution Services, LLC and the Vice-Chair of the Chattanooga City Council.

THRC OFFICE LOCATIONS

CENTRAL OFFICE - NASHVILLE

William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, 23rd Floor
Nashville, TN 37243

Memphis Office

One Commerce Square
40 South Main St., Ste 200
Memphis, TN 38103

Knoxville Office

7175 Strawberry Plains, Ste. 201
Knoxville, TN 37914

Chattanooga Office

540 McCallie Avenue
3rd Floor, Suite 300
Chattanooga, TN 37402

STAFF

Executive Director, Beverly L. Watts

Monica Alexander*

Rachel Appelt

Thierno Bah

Cynthia Bates

Kaleda Bentley

Laura Burch

LaShondia Chambers

Tracy Davidson

Sheena Foster

Richard Gadzekpo

Barbara Gardner

Michael Giove*

Frank Guzman

Billie Jean Haddock

Sabrina Hooper

Leon King

Lisa Lancaster

Erica Kesse*

Suzanne Land

Linda Reed*

Jennell Riddle

Shalini Rose

Dianna Ruch

Renee Smith

Matthew Stephenson

Corey Taylor*

Teresa Thompson

Saadia Williams

*Indicates the individual as a former staff member who served the Tennessee Human Rights Commission during fiscal year 2015

CONNECT WITH THE THRC



/TNHumanRights



@TNHumanRights



/TNHumanRights

www.TN.gov/HumanRights