



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2021

December 31, 2021

*Report amended on 8/2/2022 to reflect that Commissioner Ellis was re-appointed for a second five-year term.

HRC Commissioners and their Terms of Appointment

All appointments are for five-year staggered terms and expire on the last day of February.

Kevin “Coach” Christie, Chair	2018-2023
Nathan Besio	2007-2022
Donald Vickers	2008-2021
Dawn Ellis	2015-2025
Joan Nagy	2019-2024

HRC Staff

Name/Position	SOV Date of Hire
Bor Yang, Executive Director	11/30/2015, Appointed ED 11/13/2018
Cassandra Burdyshaw, Staff Attorney Investigator	11/26/2018
Big Hartman, Staff Attorney Investigator	9/13/2021
Eli Kriv, Staff Attorney Investigator	10/25/2021
John McKelvie, Executive Staff Assistant	11/13/2018
Amanda Garcés, Director of Policy, Education and Outreach	12/2/2019

HRC Contact Information

Office hours:	7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday
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Mailing address:	14-16 Baldwin Street, Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
E-mail address:	human.rights@vermont.gov
Website:	hrc.vermont.gov

Vermont Human Rights Commission

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Vermont Human Rights Commission is to promote full civil and human rights in Vermont. The Commission protects people from unlawful discrimination in housing, state government employment and public accommodations.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE MISSION AND VISION

The Commission pursues its mission by:

- Enforcing laws through investigations and litigation
 - Complaints alleging violations of anti-discrimination laws are investigated impartially and decided in a timely manner by the Human Rights Commission.
- Conciliating disputes pre and post investigative reports
 - Complainants and Respondents are offered timely and meaningful access to mediation services or informal means of conciliation that promote mutually satisfactory resolutions to their disputes.
- Educating the public and providing information and referrals
 - HRC staff offer information, referrals, educational programs, and educational training to those who request these services. Additionally, HRC staff requests relief in the form of training in all post-investigative settlements and when appropriate, in pre-investigative settlements. HRC staff engage in coalition and community activities that address the needs of members of protected categories.
- Advancing effective public policies on human rights
 - The HRC provides leadership in public policy development with respect to civil and human rights issues in Vermont and presents testimony to the Legislature on such issues as well as advice to the executive and judicial branches upon request.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governor's moratorium, closures of schools, places of employment, and public accommodations all had an impact on the number of calls received at the HRC, reducing it significantly this fiscal year. While the Commission received fewer calls, it opened nearly the same number of formal complaints as it did in the previous year. The number of settlements continue to rise. More cases reached the final determination stage and Commissioners found reasonable grounds to believe discrimination had occurred in more cases than it had in previous years, which resulted in more litigation.

The result of more cases reaching a final determination and litigation, plus staff transitions and the pressure to close out aged cases forced the Commission to halt all intakes for several months. The Commission continues to be in need of more staffing, specifically another Staff Attorney Investigator and full-time Litigator. Ideally, the Commission should separate the work of the Executive Staff Assistant into two positions: Office Manager and Intake Specialist. Similarly, the work of the Director of Policy, Education and Outreach should be divided between a Director of Policy and an Education and Outreach Coordinator.

Investigations, educational programming and policy work at the Human Rights Commission reflected the pain and discomfort of a society in the midst of change, brought upon by a virus and civil unrest. Although the Commission was at times discouraged to see the prevalence and extent of discrimination in the state, it too was encouraged and mobilized by the shared effort to combat it. This Annual Report is provided pursuant to the HRC's enabling statute but may the words and information herein encourage all of us to keep moving the work forward.

LIMITATIONS OF STATISTICS

Regardless of the increase or decrease in numbers from year to year, it is important to note that the frequency, nature, and state of discrimination in Vermont is not reflected in the number of calls, complaints, or investigations opened or closed at the Human Rights Commission or the number of cases that reach a reasonable grounds determination or litigation.

First, many people who have experienced discrimination never file complaints. In general, individuals fear that by coming forward they risk retaliation and potentially losing their housing, job, or future positive or neutral references. These circumstances are exacerbated in a small state like Vermont where economic and housing opportunities are scarce, and an individual's identity and reputation are more public.

Second, following through with a complaint and investigation requires an investment of time and resources that complainants who have experienced the trauma and stress of discrimination, homelessness, and/or unemployment, may lack. For example, an individual wrongfully denied housing due to a protected status is not likely to file a complaint for housing discrimination at the same time they are frantically seeking shelter for themselves and their family.

Third, individuals who have experienced discrimination are disillusioned by a system that reliably fails to hold perpetrators accountable. Employers, landlords, and rental managers may have unclear or nonexistent policies and procedures for reporting concerns. Pursuing a claim may subject the complainant to scrutiny of their allegations and their character. Furthermore, court interpretation of federal and state laws has made it extremely difficult for a plaintiff to prevail in their discrimination lawsuit.

For the minority of individuals who have already lost their housing, their positions, their future employment references, and/or have found security in their current situations and have the time and resources to pursue a claim, there may be several forums available to them outside the HRC. These include filing a complaint at the Office of Civil Rights or Agency of Education. Complainants may pursue a private cause of action through private attorneys or the American Civil Liberties Union or Vermont Legal Aid. Some complainants also grieve their discrimination claims before their employer, landlord, property managers, school boards, the Labor Relations Board, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY

Collective liberation requires collective action. So often, the work of each agency is siloed. This year, the Commission made a concerted effort to reach out to community partners and agencies that have traditionally operated outside of the enforcement arena. Those connections were necessary to gain knowledge about all of the barriers to mitigating discrimination in Vermont. The Commission's recommendation to its community is to develop a strategic plan for collaboration. In the same way the HRC must participate in the discussions around building and maintaining housing, advocates for prisoners' rights must also address school disciplinary issues, disparities in traffic stop violations. Likewise, entities that have traditionally focused on one protected class of people must prioritize learning and expand efforts to capture intersectionality. We must work for each other and together.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE

A necessary instrument for change are the laws that govern the people. They must reflect the morals, values, and principles of a fair and just society. As such, the HRC makes the following recommendations for change:

1. Protect employees who bring forth claims of discrimination by protecting their jobs and future employment opportunities with the same employer. See H.320.
2. Eradicate the "severe or pervasive" standard of proof for hostile environment/harassment cases under the anti-discrimination laws of the state as it is confusing, inconsistently applied, and not reflective of current norms. See H.329.
3. Improve rental housing health and safety and reduce disparities in home ownership rates between White and BIPOC Vermonters. See S.79/H.256 and S.101.

4. Create a safe and welcoming environment for new residents to Vermont by ensuring language access and justice. See S.140 and S.147.
5. See all recommendations made in previous Annual Reports.

HRC JURISDICTION

By its enabling statute, the Human Rights Commission enforces state anti-discrimination/civil rights laws: the Vermont Fair Housing and Public Accommodations Act (VFHPA), 9 V.S.A. §4500 *et seq.*, and the Vermont Fair Employment Practices Act (FEPA) and Conditions for Employment under 21 V.S.A. §309 (flexible working arrangements) for State government employees only.¹ Places of public accommodations include government entities, hospitals, prisons, roads, schools, businesses, and any office or establishment that provides goods or services to the general public. These statutes prohibit individuals or entities from taking adverse action (discriminating) against individuals in protected categories based on their membership in one or more of the protected categories.²

Protected Category	Housing	Public Accommodations	State Government Employment
Race	X	X	X
Color	X	X	X
National Origin	X	X	X
Religion	X	X	X
Sex	X	X	X
Disability	X	X	X
Sexual Orientation	X	X	X
Gender Identity	X	X	X
Marital Status	X	X	
Age	X		X
Minor Children	X		
Public Assistance	X		
Breast Feeding		X	X
HIV blood test			X
Ancestry			X
Place of birth			X
Credit history			X

¹ Individuals with discrimination complaints concerning private employment file their complaints with the Vermont Attorney General’s Office, Civil Rights Division.

² The Human Rights Commission enforces state anti-discrimination/civil rights laws; it does not enforce federal laws. Vermont law is broader than federal law in terms of the categories of people who are protected from discrimination.

Pregnancy Accommodation			X
Crime Victim			X
Victim of Domestic and Sexual Violence	X		X
Family/Parental Leave Act Retaliation			X
Flexible Working Arrangements			X
Workers' Compensation			X

In 2018, the State of Vermont adopted the gender-neutral bathroom law for all single-stall restrooms in the state, 18 V.S.A. § 1792. The Legislature assigned responsibility for inspections of these facilities and related signage to the Department of Public Safety’s Division of Fire Safety. However, gender identity is a protected class in accommodation law, so as a public accommodations issue the law falls under the enforcement authority of the Vermont Human Rights Commission.

HRC COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

There are five Human Rights Commissioners appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for five-year terms. Commissioners may be re-appointed. The Commissioners are tasked with hiring, supervising, and directing the Executive Director and setting the overall policy of the organization. The Commissioners also meet regularly, usually monthly, to discuss and decide the merits of individual discrimination complaints.

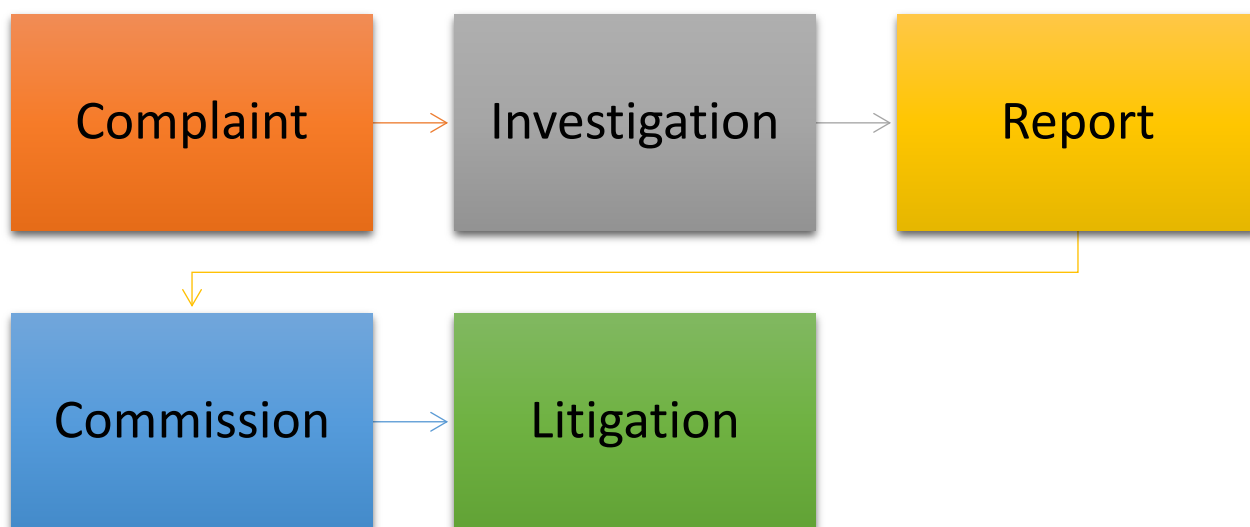
The HRC also has a staff of six state employees. The Executive Director is responsible for the administration of the office, management, and supervision of staff. The Executive Director oversees the development of civil rights training, develops the policy and legislative agenda at the direction of the Commissioners, serves as the legislative liaison and testifies before the Legislature, in addition to serving on taskforces and committees. Additionally, the Executive Director is the legal counsel and reviews all complaints, investigative reports, provides legal advice to the Commissioners, and serves as the senior attorney on all litigation arising out of investigations at the HRC that proceed to a formal recommendation and Commission vote of “reasonable grounds.”

In the 2019 legislative session, the Legislature supported a new position at the HRC: Director of Policy, Education and Outreach. This position serves as the other legislative liaison and testifies before the Legislature in addition to developing training, organizing community events and forums, and maintaining the agency’s website and social media platforms. The Director of Policy, Education and Outreach, the Executive Director, and the Commissioners are charged with developing and implementing a strategic outreach and education plan.

The HRC employs three staff attorney investigators whose responsibility is to investigate complaints of discrimination under all statutes within the HRC’s jurisdiction, write investigative reports, and make recommendations. Their duties and responsibilities are discussed in greater detail below, under Investigations.

The primary responsibility of the Executive Staff Assistant (ESA) is to receive, analyze and respond to inquiries regarding potential complaints of discrimination, in addition to serving as the administrative assistant to Commissioners, Executive Director, and Staff Attorney Investigators. These duties include drafting complaints, resolving “informal” investigations, preparing and performing all administrative tasks associated with Commission Meetings, monitoring legislative bills, serving as vendor and records liaison, maintaining the case management system, performing data entry and analysis, and assisting with managing the federal grant to ensure compliance.

THE ENFORCEMENT PROCESS



Informal and Formal Complaints

The HRC receives inquiries regarding potential complaints of discrimination through phone calls, email correspondence, and walk-ins. Through consultation with the Executive Director, the ESA analyzes and responds to all inquiries. Where inquiries and complaints relate to laws not within the HRC’s jurisdiction, the ESA will refer the individual to the relevant agencies or organizations. Some inquiries are opened as an “informal” investigation because they raise narrow, limited, or new legal issues that do not merit a full investigation. Informals are opened by means of an agency letter sent to the Respondent, outlining the allegation that a violation of the State’s anti-discrimination laws has occurred. The Executive Director and/or ESA attempts to resolve these matters confidentially. Informals that do not resolve may be opened as a full

investigation by means of a complaint. Types of complaints processed in an informal manner range from a business's failure to adequately display accessible parking signage, to the failure of gas stations to post legally required accessible stickers on pumps, to violations of the state's gender-neutral bathroom law.

Most inquiries to the HRC that fall within the HRC's jurisdiction are opened as formal investigations and commence with a "complaint." Typically, a complaint is made to the HRC from an individual or their representative. All complaints must be signed under oath. For an allegation of discrimination to become a formal investigation, a complainant must allege the *prima facie*³ elements of a violation of Vermont's discrimination laws in one of HRC's areas of jurisdiction: housing, public accommodations, or State government employment.

Statutorily, the HRC may bring a complaint and open an investigation without a complainant. However, this is rare. The HRC typically does not have sufficient information from anecdotal evidence or the media to support a complaint alleging a violation of any of the aforementioned anti-discrimination laws. In the past, the HRC has opened agency-initiated investigations only when the violation was clear. For example, when an identifiable respondent states in an advertisement that they are unwilling to accept Section 8 or minor children in a rental property.

Investigations, Conciliation & The Investigative Report

After a case is opened and assigned to one of the three Staff Attorney Investigators, they independently investigate formal complaints of discrimination by developing an investigation plan and examination strategy; interview witnesses; request and review voluminous records and other evidence; and research relevant state and federal statutes and case law on all issues.

Staff Attorney Investigators are statutorily responsible for making efforts to conciliate in all matters. While Staff Attorney Investigators are impartial investigators during the course of an investigation, they represent the HRC and the public interest at all stages of both the investigation and any subsequent litigation. Thus, Staff Attorney Investigators may provide input on the strengths and weaknesses of cases to assist the parties in settling.

When matters do not result in a settlement either through conciliatory efforts or mediation, Staff Attorney Investigators write Investigative Reports that are reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. Investigative Reports are lengthy, involving exhaustive factual findings and conclusions of law, and include a recommendation of "reasonable grounds" or "no reasonable grounds" to believe discrimination occurred. In many instances, a Staff Attorney Investigator may recommend a "split" finding – that there are reasonable grounds to believe discrimination occurred with respect to one protected category (or respondent or set of facts) but not another.

³ A *prima facie* case lists the facts that if proven to be true would be a violation of the specific law. (e.g., in a housing discrimination case the complainant must allege that she is a member of a protected class, that she experienced an adverse housing action and that the adverse action was due to her membership in the protected class.)

For example, the Staff Attorney Investigator may recommend that the Commissioners find reasonable grounds to believe an employer discriminated against an employee on the basis of sex but not race. Also, the Staff Attorney Investigator may find that one department of the state government violated the public accommodations act but that the other named state department did not. Investigative Reports are distributed to the parties who then have an opportunity to provide a written response and appear before the Commissioners at the next scheduled Commission Meeting.

Commission Meetings

Commissioners review and consider the reports and responses prior to the Commission Meeting. The parties to the complaint and their representatives are invited to attend the meeting, present the reasons why they agree or disagree with the staff recommendation, and answer questions from the Commissioners about the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The hearings are non-evidentiary. The information considered is the evidence presented in the investigative report from the Staff Attorney Investigator. Commissioners discuss the individual cases and make a determination in executive session. Commissioners vote on the record.

If the Commissioners determine there are no reasonable grounds to believe that discrimination occurred, the case is closed and remains confidential. Additionally, the complaining party may decide to pursue legal or other administrative action, but the HRC is not a party to those actions. If the Commissioners determine that the evidence is sufficient (using a preponderance of the evidence standard) to show discrimination, they reach a finding of reasonable grounds. The Investigative Report becomes a public record only when there is a majority vote by the Commissioners of reasonable grounds. As stated earlier, an Investigative Report may contain several recommendations. If Commissioners vote reasonable grounds on some issues but not on others, the HRC redacts the report so that only the reasonable grounds case is available to the public.

Post-Investigation Settlement & Litigation

If the Commissioners issue a reasonable grounds finding, the Executive Director actively pursues settlement negotiations for a period of up to six months, either directly or through a professional mediator. Past settlements have included the adoption or modification of policies, protocols, and/or best practices, the modification of inaccessible premises, anti-discrimination education, letters of apology, compensation, attorneys' fees and modest civil penalties, or reimbursement of costs to the HRC.

The HRC has legal authority to bring an action in court for injunctive relief, declaratory judgment, and damages. If illegal discrimination is proven to a judge or jury, the court may impose fines, monetary damages, costs, and attorneys' fees against the Respondent/Defendant as well as require other remedial measures to avoid further violations of law.

FY2021 HRC STATISTICS

Phone Contacts

In FY21 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021), the HRC received 514 calls for assistance from the general public, in comparison to FY20 when the agency logged 656 calls.

July – Sept. 2019	196	July – Sept. 2020	139
Oct. – Dec. 2019	153	Oct. – Dec. 2020	112
Jan. – March 2020	184	Jan. – March 2021	126
Apr. – June 2020	123	Apr. – June 2021	137
FY20 Total	656	FY20 Total	514

The reduction in calls in FY21 is possibly due in part to the pandemic and the shortage of staffing at the HRC which required the HRC to not accept any cases for several months. The temporary protocol was shared and publicly posted.

The vast majority of phone calls do not result in formal complaints. Many of the calls are individuals seeking assistance for issues beyond HRC’s jurisdiction. Those are referred to other appropriate organizations. Other calls require HRC staff to answer basic questions regarding Vermont’s various anti-discrimination laws. The HRC does not provide legal counsel or advice. Some of the calls result in informal cases and others in formal complaints.

Callers attempting to file private employment discrimination complaints are referred to the Civil Rights Unit in the Attorney General’s Office. Individuals with landlord/tenant concerns not related to fair housing are referred to Vermont Legal Aid and, if located in or near Chittenden County, the Vermont Tenants program at the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity. Those seeking general legal advice receive referrals to Vermont Legal Aid, the American Civil Liberties Union and/or the Vermont Bar Association’s Lawyer Referral Service.

Website Analytics

The volume of traffic on the HRC’s website during FY21 increased approximately 10% over the previous year:

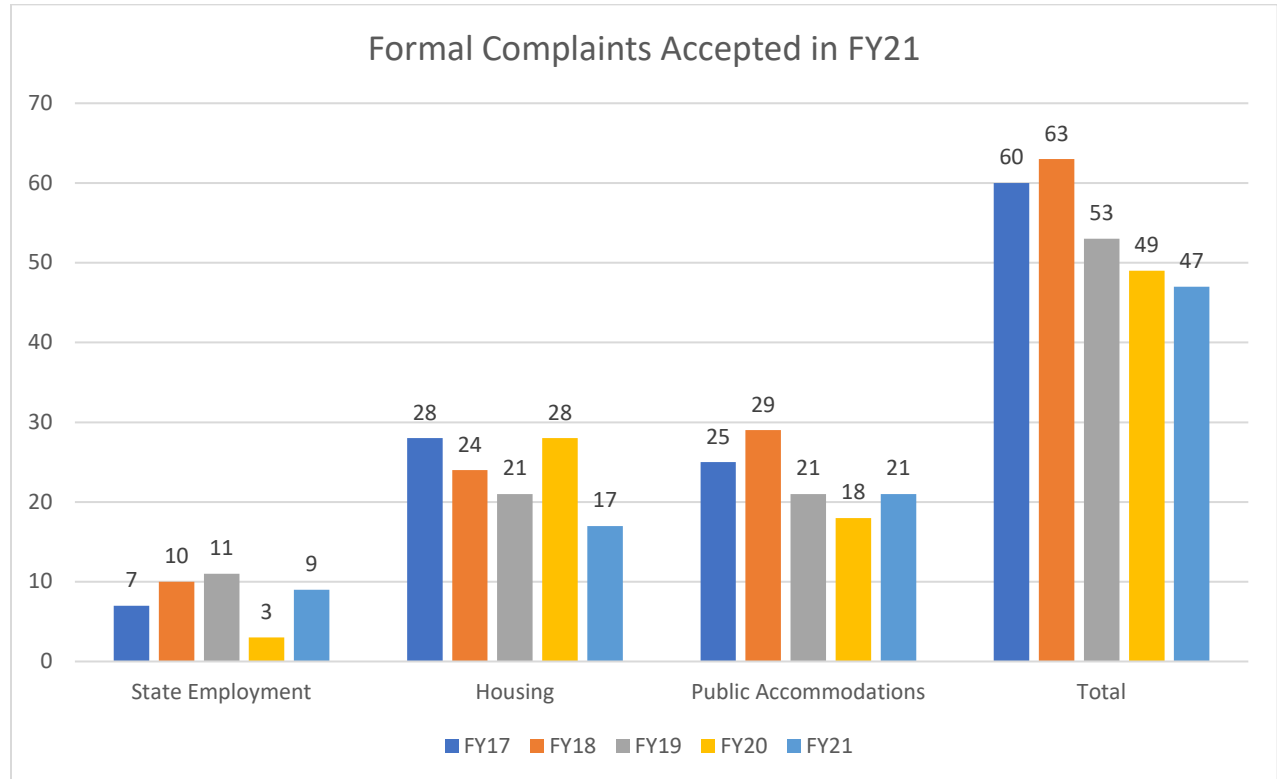
	FY19	FY20	FY21
Total Pageviews	26,554	25,870	28,602
Total Users	7,771	7,903	9,844
Total Sessions	11,014	11,094	13,754
Pages per Session	2.41	2.33	2.08
New Visitors (% of traffic)	85.6%	86.7%	86.5%

Of the total, 30% of users accessed the website from a mobile device. Approximately 82% of visitors were from within the United States, down from 94% the year prior. Visitors to the website came from various parts of the world: 7% from China; 3% were from Canada; 10% of traffic came from visitors in the U.A.E., Philippines, India, and Australia.

Complaints Accepted

In FY21, the HRC accepted 3 informal cases and 47 formal complaints for processing and investigation. Formal cases remained approximately the same with a small decrease from 49 to 47 cases. However, informal cases decreased dramatically from 21 to 3. The vast majority of informal cases in FY20 (20 out of 21) were the result of complaints related to gender-free restroom violations. The data may be driven in part by the passage of time since the enactment of the law, 18 V.S.A. § 1792 and efforts by the HRC and community advocates to raise community awareness. But also the closure of places of public accommodations during the pandemic may also explain the decrease in calls related to gender-free restrooms.

The chart below shows the number of formal complaints accepted in FY21. While state employment and public accommodations complaints increased, housing complaints decreased. One of the impetuses for housing-related calls and complaints is housing instability, which was heavily impacted this past year by The Governor’s moratorium on evictions and the limited operations of courts.

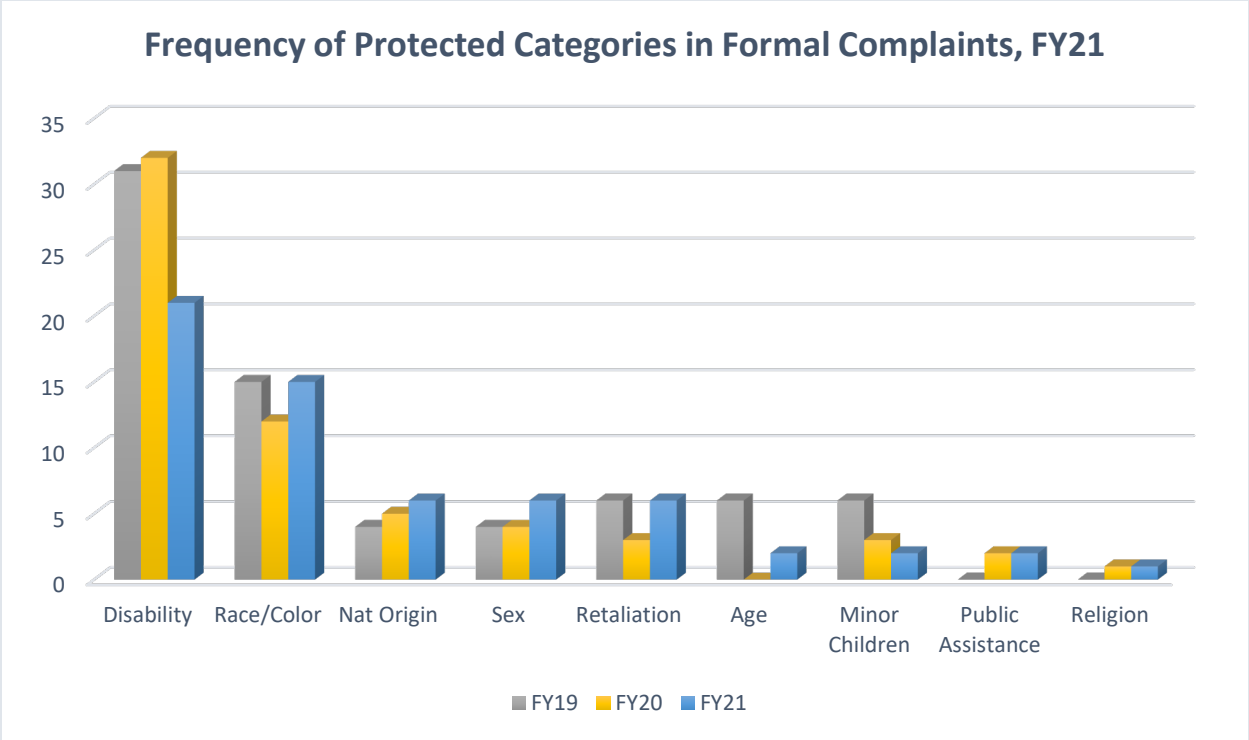


As shown below, disability and race/color remain the most frequent types of complaints filed at the Commission. Race/color discrimination cases often raise claims of disparate treatment and/or harassment. The majority of disability cases involve a denial of reasonable accommodation requests.

Protected Categories by Type of Formal Case – FY21⁴

Protected Category	Housing	PA	Employment	Total
Disability	9	8	4	21
Race/Color	4	10	1	15
Nat Origin	1	5		6
Retaliation		2	4	6
Sex		3	3	6
Age	1		1	2
Minor Children	2			2
Public Assistance	2			2
FMLA			1	1
Gender Identity		1		1
Religion			1	1

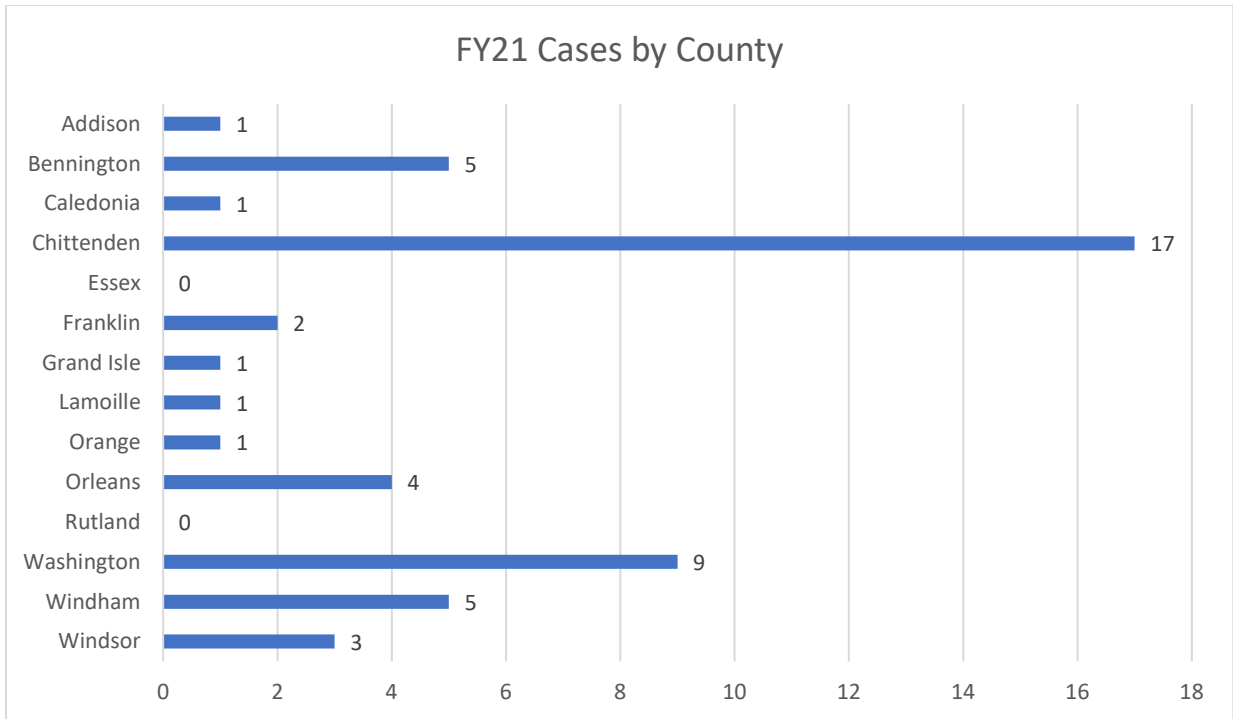
⁴ The chart does not include all protected categories as the HRC did not see formal complaints of discrimination in all areas, including pregnancy accommodations, breastfeeding, crime victims, victims of domestic violence, pregnancy accommodation, credit history, place of birth, ancestry, workers' compensation, sexual orientation, etc.



The chart above provides an overview of the most commonly-cited protected categories in formal discrimination complaints over the past three fiscal years. Since complainants may claim more than one protected category per complaint, these numbers do not necessarily reflect the exact number of complaints accepted per year.

AREAS OF THE STATE SERVED

In FY21, the HRC accepted formal and informal complaints from 12 of Vermont’s 14 counties: the exceptions being Essex and Rutland counties. Out of the two counties with the most complaints, Chittenden County was the source for 34% of total complaints and Washington County was the source for 18%.

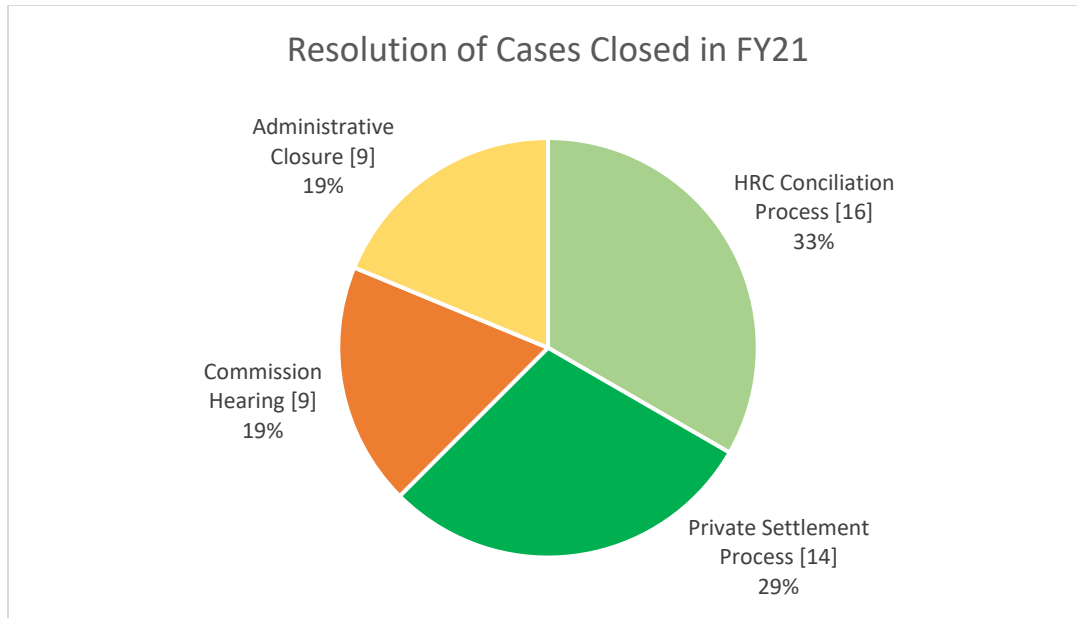


Disposition of Closed Cases

Cases are disposed of by hearing, conciliation/mediation, or administrative closure. Out of the 47 formal cases opened in FY21, 13 were resolved by the end of the fiscal year.

In total, 48 formal cases were resolved in FY21, representing a 23% increase over FY20 (when 39 formal cases were resolved). Those 48 resolved cases included 13 opened in FY21, 19 opened in FY20, 12 opened in FY19, 3 opened in FY18, and 1 opened in FY17.

Just over 60% of the cases closed in FY21 were resolved by a settlement between parties, either within the Human Rights Commission conciliation framework or through a withdrawal of the case with a private settlement. The remaining 38% of closures were split equally between resolutions at Commission meetings and administrative closures without a settlement.



Conciliation/Mediation: Settlements present an opportunity to achieve outcomes that may not be available through a lengthy investigation or litigation such as policy changes, employment opportunities, maintenance of housing or benefits and services, etc. Parties can reach a settlement through a conciliation agreement at the HRC, which may occur either before or after a determination at a Commission hearing, or through a privately mediated agreement. While private agreements technically require a withdrawal of the complaint and a dismissal, they are considered a successful outcome of the HRC’s process because when the parties resolve privately, it is typically at a mediation session paid for in part by the HRC. Furthermore, private settlements often occur in the middle or end of an investigation because preliminary findings come to light during the investigation. Lastly, staff attorney investigators work diligently to encourage and support settlement.

The number of cases resolved through conciliation and mediation increased for the second year in a row; from 17 in FY19, to 26 in FY20, to 30 in FY21.

Administrative Dismissals: A dismissal may occur for several reasons. Occasionally, after participating in the intake process and receiving an assigned case number, the complainant fails to return a signed and notarized complaint. Sometimes, the complainant fails to cooperate with the investigation (i.e. unwilling to be interviewed or to provide information). Other times, a respondent files a Motion to Dismiss and provides compelling facts or case law that merit a dismissal. An initial interview with witnesses may reveal facts not previously disclosed by the complainant that places the allegations outside the jurisdiction of the Commission.

From time to time, complainants withdraw their complaints without settlement because they have moved out of state or filed an action in a different forum. Other times, parties enter into an

informal agreement not requiring a formal memorialization (i.e. the parties agreed the tenant could remain in their home, or a change in office-space, etc.). Complainants may also withdraw their complaints because they are satisfied with their current circumstances (the complainant got a different and better job, different housing, etc.).

Commission Hearing: Cases which do not resolve through conciliation efforts may be heard at a monthly Commission hearing. The Staff Attorney Investigator assigned to the case will complete an investigative report which recommends “reasonable grounds” or “no reasonable grounds” to believe discrimination occurred. In many instances, a Staff Attorney Investigator may recommend a “split” finding – that there are reasonable grounds to believe discrimination occurred with respect to one protected category (or respondent or set of facts) but not another. Commissioners review the investigative reports and discuss the individual cases in executive session before voting on the record. Details of the determinations made by Commissioners in FY21 are described below.

COMPLAINTS BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMISSION FOR HEARING

In FY21, the Commission heard 16 cases, compared to 12 in FY20 and 13 in FY19.

Several cases contained multiple parties and/or alleged discrimination on the basis of multiple protected categories. Of the 16 cases heard by Commissioners, 24 separate findings were delivered. Commissioners found no reasonable grounds 12 times, and reasonable grounds 12 times, which resulted in 7 cases continuing on to the post-determination settlement phase.

The breakdown by case type is as follows:

Outcome	Employment	Housing	Public Acc	Totals
Reasonable Grounds	0	8	4	12
No Reasonable Grounds	3	5	4	12

RELIEF OBTAINED IN CASES CLOSED IN FY21

Type of Case	\$ Relief for CP	Non-\$ Relief for CP	Public Interest Relief
Employment	\$185,000	<p>Respondent removes certain documents from Complainant’s personnel file</p> <p>Respondent agrees to specific work hours for Complainant</p>	<p>Respondent agrees to conduct implicit bias training for all staff for five years, and to work with Exec. Director of Racial Equity to develop strategy to recruit/retain more diverse workforce</p> <p>Respondent agrees to train all employees on State's reporting policy for sexual harassment, post policy throughout facility, and require all employees to take sexual harassment training annually</p>
Housing	\$24,798	<p>Respondent adjusts HOA bylaws to restrict off-lease dog walking, and clears ice off sidewalks</p>	<p>Respondent undergoes Fair Housing training conducted by HRC (6)</p> <p>Respondent allows HRC to review existing policies and procedures (4)</p> <p>Respondent agrees to publicly post a fair housing policy and notice of fair housing laws</p> <p>Respondent adopts and/or updates existing policies, including policies on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fair housing practices - Reasonable accommodation requests - Emotional support animals
Public Accommodation	\$292,700	<p>Respondent provides public apology to Complainant</p> <p>Complainant is permitted to attend</p>	<p>Respondent agrees to provide space to a non-profit legal organization at no cost for at least five years, and will prepare a proposal for law enforcement oversight and seek public comment.</p>

		another school in the district free of charge, with transportation	<p>Respondent's employees undergo training conducted by HRC (3)</p> <p>Respondent agrees to designate an accessible parking space that is compliant with the ADA</p> <p>Respondent agrees to seek knowledgeable and appropriate professionals in addressing disciplinary actions for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.</p>
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Relief obtained refers specifically to cases closed in the fiscal year that resulted in monetary and/or non-monetary outcomes. Some cases reached a reasonable grounds determination in the fiscal year but did not settle until after July 1, 2021. These cases were not counted here.

OUTREACH AND TRAINING

The HRC endeavors to reach all Vermonters and therefore met with employees and managers of the State government, Legislators, community members, victims' advocates, housing providers such as landlords and rental managers, tenants, tenant associations, private and non-profit attorneys, and a variety of service providers.

During FY21, the HRC reached a total of 2395 individuals through 50 training and outreach events compared to FY20 when it conducted 46 events that reached approximately 2664 Vermonters.

Type	Number of events	Number trained
Fair housing trainings	14	290
Implicit bias & trainings in bystander intervention & microaggressions.	17	636
Other trainings (Know Your Rights, workplace harassment, confirmation bias)	9	566
HRC Civil Rights Conference, November 2020	3	616
Outreach Events	7	287
Total Training and Outreach Events	50	2395

SUMMARY OF REASONABLE GROUNDS CASES

Below is a summary of each case brought before the Commission in FY21 wherein the Commission found reasonable grounds to believe that discrimination occurred. The status of the case is as of the date of this report, not the status at the end of the fiscal year.

Employment

Commissioners did not find reasonable grounds that discrimination occurred in any employment case in FY21.

Housing

HRC Case Number: HV20-0020 – Commissioners found reasonable grounds to believe that Respondent neighbors discriminated against the Complainants on the basis of race, color, and national origin. This matter is currently in litigation.

HRC Case Number: HV20-0023 – Commissioners found reasonable grounds to believe that Respondent landlord discriminated and retaliated against the Complainant on the basis of her reasonable accommodation request, and discriminated against the Complainant on the basis of her sex. This matter is currently in litigation.

HRC Case Number: HV20-0025 – Commissioners found reasonable grounds to believe that Respondent property manager discriminated against the Complainant, and that Respondent landlord discriminated and retaliated against the Complainant, after the Complainant made a disability-related reasonable accommodation request. The matter settled prior to litigation.

HRC Case Number: HV20-0028 – Commissioners found reasonable grounds to believe that Respondent landlord denied housing to Complainants because of a disability when Respondent refused to deal with Complainants after learning of an assistance animal. This matter is currently in litigation.

Public Accommodations

HRC Case Number: PA20-0010 – Commissioners found reasonable grounds to believe Respondent, a place of public accommodation, denied to Complainant the services and benefits it offers to the general public because of Complainant's service animal. The matter settled prior to litigation.

HRC Case Number: PA18-0017/PA19-0006 – Commissioners found reasonable grounds to believe the Respondent denied to the Complainant the services and benefits it offers to the general public because of Complainant's race, skin color, and sex. This matter is currently in post-determination negotiations.

HRC Case Number: PA19-0018 – Commissioners found reasonable grounds to believe the Respondent denied to Complainant the privileges and benefits it offers to the general public because of Complainant’s race and skin color. The matter settled prior to litigation.