



## COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS



Lincoln Commission on  
HUMAN RIGHTS

Discrimination? Act!

# 2017

# ANNUAL REPORT

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# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Mayor

April 2018

Dear Lincoln Residents,

In 1966, Title 11 on equal opportunity in employment and housing was added to the Lincoln Municipal Code. That important action led to the formation that same year of the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR), which celebrated its 50th year of service in 2016. This Annual Report highlights the work of LCHR in 2017, in enforcing the protections afforded by local, state and federal law.

This past year, LCHR welcomed two new Commissioners to three-year terms – Sheri Blok and Jaine Merliss. A third new Commissioner, Rachel Zeng, joined us at the end of 2017 to finish the term of a prior Commissioner. I appreciate the willingness of all our volunteer Commissioners who share their valuable time and talents with the community. Their service demonstrates a strong commitment to equality and fairness in employment, housing, and public accommodation.

In 2017, Commissioners and our two LCHR investigators closed 14 housing cases, 40 employment cases, and one public accommodation case. LCHR also reached 15,320 residents with 291 educational sessions covering civil rights and responsibilities.

The annual Civil Rights Conference in April 2017 focused on both employment and housing, with presentations from local, regional, and national experts. We appreciate the continued support of our Conference sponsors -- the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the Omaha Human Rights and Relations Department, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Southeast Community College and the Nebraska Housing Developers Association. The success of our Conference depends on their support.

In 2018, we will celebrate 50 years of the Fair Housing Act. We have made great strides in the past five decades, but much remains to be done. The work of the dedicated LCHR Commissioners and staff will ensure that progress continues, and the civil rights protections codified so many years ago remain in full force. We can all take pride in living in a community where inclusion is embraced and hate and discrimination will not be tolerated.

Sincerely,



Chris Beutler  
Mayor of Lincoln

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Executive Director

Dear Friends of the Commission:

Another year has come to a close! In 2017, we bid farewell to Bennie Shobe, Jr. Bennie left after being elected to serve on the City Council. We were sorry to lose him, but welcome his presence on the City Council. We could not begin the task of enforcing discrimination laws without the spirit of commitment and dedication demonstrated by all of our Commissioners.

We began the year with Margie Nichols carrying the load as Abby Littrell moved on to serve the City in a different capacity. Margie worked diligently investigating housing, public accommodation, and employment discrimination cases. Later in the year, Michelle Ware joined the team. She has been an asset and a welcome addition to the office.

Francisca Beltran continues in her role as the Community Outreach Coordinator and facilitates LCHR's associations with community agencies. Francisca maintains our tradition of advising Lincoln Public High School students about their rights related to housing and employment as they prepare to move into the workforce and out of the parental home. Francisca also distributes Commission pamphlets at various locations to spread the word about the existence of the Commission and its role in the community.

Our annual Civil Rights Conference was a resounding success! We had 180 professionals present and our speakers came to us from the U. S. Housing and Urban Development Office and the District Office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In addition to the legal updates that are provided every year, we celebrated our 50 year anniversary by highlighting LGBT workplace discrimination, human trafficking and best practices in creating discrimination free housing. All were well received and it was a great opportunity to renew and refresh our commitment to this important work.

As the year came to an end, we acknowledged, with all of you, the changes evident at the federal level and resolved to continue our fight for equity, on behalf of all residents, but particularly DACA recipients and refugees that live and work with us. LCHR is truly thankful for the support it has enjoyed over the years from multiple administrations and the commitment of Mayor Beutler and his staff as we persist in these difficult times. The LCHR continues to enforce civil rights laws while celebrating the inclusion that makes this City a great place to live, share your heritage and contribute to your community!

Best Regards,



Kimberley Taylor-Riley  
Director of Equity and Diversity

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Commission Chair

Dear Citizens and Friends of the Commission,

I would like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the Commission's work throughout 2017. We hope to educate the employers, employees, landlords, and tenants about acceptable practices and discriminatory ones that arise in the daily lives of the residents of the City of Lincoln, Nebraska. I want to acknowledge the Executive Director and staff of the LCHR for their work on behalf of the city. They continue to serve in a professional manner, to investigate complaints, discuss the cases brought before the Commission, and issue findings in a timely and just manner.

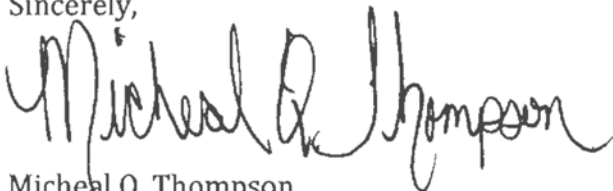
In my first year as Chair of the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights, I want to express my many thanks to all involved for affording me this opportunity. It was also my pleasure to be a part of presenting the Gerald Henderson Human Rights award this past year and also for the Annual Civil Rights Conference. I have to affirm what my predecessor stated last year: "That this diverse complement of individuals allowed the Commission to operate as an experienced set of fact finders, thoughtful problem solvers, and committed dispute resolution specialists." It has been and continues to be an honor to do so.

During 2017, we said goodbye to Commissioner Chair Bennie Shobe. We thank him for his service to the City of Lincoln and wish him well in future endeavors.

The annual Civil Rights Conference was hosted by the LCHR staff in April 2017 and was again a resounding success. The Annual Conference is an educational and instructive how-to seminar focusing on compliance with housing and employment requirements that affect all of us. Each year, the quality of the conference and the number of participants grows. I am extremely proud of the work the staff performs to host the conference. Hats off to them.

Our work continues as we strive for fairness and equality in a city that supports a local Civil Rights Agency to specifically address housing and employment discrimination. How fortunate we are to live in Lincoln, Nebraska, a city committed to equity and fairness for all its residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Micheal Q. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Micheal" being the most prominent.

Micheal Q. Thompson  
Chair, 2017

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Commissioners

### 2017 Commissioners



Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) Commissioners: Front row, left to right: Amanda Baron (Vice-Chair), Micheal Q. Thompson (Chair) and Sheri Blok. Back row, left to right: Melanie Ways, Jaine Merliss, Carlos Garcia, and Susan Oldfield. Not pictured: Jonathan Rehm. In 2017, Jaine Merliss and Sheri Blok joined the Commission.

The LCHR Commission is a nine member board of diverse people who hear and decide the cases presented to them. They are volunteers who are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. One goal of the Commission is to continue educating the public on discrimination laws in the hope of preventing and eventually eliminating unlawful discrimination. They meet on the last Thursday of each month at 4 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of the County/City Building. The public is welcome to attend.



# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Commissioners Continued



Bennie Shobe, Jr.



Rachel Zeng

### Outgoing:

In 2017, one of our dedicated Commissioners resigned from the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights. Shobe was elected to the Lincoln City Council in May 2017.

### Incoming:

In December 2017, Rachel Zeng was sworn in and will be serving a 3-year term beginning in January.

*Thank you for your service!*

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Mission Statement

### Mission

The administration of the Human Rights Division supports the enforcement of all provisions of Title 11 of the Lincoln Municipal Code. To receive, settle, conciliate, investigate, issue findings, and hold public hearings on complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, familial status, age, ancestry, marital status, and retaliation.

To perform functions and activities with community groups, businesses, schools, and governmental entities for the purpose of promoting understanding between races, cultures, and sexes, and to work to eliminate inequalities and sources of inter-racial friction.

Review all City of Lincoln procurement bids and awards in excess of \$10,000.00.

Review Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) program of minority and women-owned businesses and maintain directory.

### Goals

To eliminate and prevent all forms of illegal discrimination, to assure and foster equal opportunity for all citizens of the City, and to act in all matters within its jurisdiction.

## The Commission's Role

The Commission is a NEUTRAL agency. We do not serve as either party's lawyer, advocate, or advisor. We are not prosecutors. We do not take the side of either the complainant (the person who filed the complaint) or the respondent (the alleged discriminator).

The job of the Commission is:

- to *investigate* complaints of discrimination;
- to *settle* complaints, if possible;
- to *determine*, after investigation, whether there was discrimination in violation of the City of Lincoln Equal Opportunity Ordinance; and
- to *order remedies* if the complainant proves at a hearing that discrimination has occurred.



# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## LCHR Staff

**KIMBERLEY TAYLOR-RILEY**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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[ktaylor-riley@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:ktaylor-riley@lincoln.ne.gov)

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INVESTIGATOR



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LCHR is the primary city agency that has the responsibility to address discrimination complaints brought by individuals. Any remedy pursued by LCHR will be based on the enforcement authority of the Equal Opportunity Ordinance, which provides a fair and impartial process for resolving Charges of Discrimination. LCHR also provides community education and technical assistance in order for people to know and understand their rights and responsibilities under the law.

**FRANCISCA BELTRAN**  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
COORDINATOR



402-441-7625  
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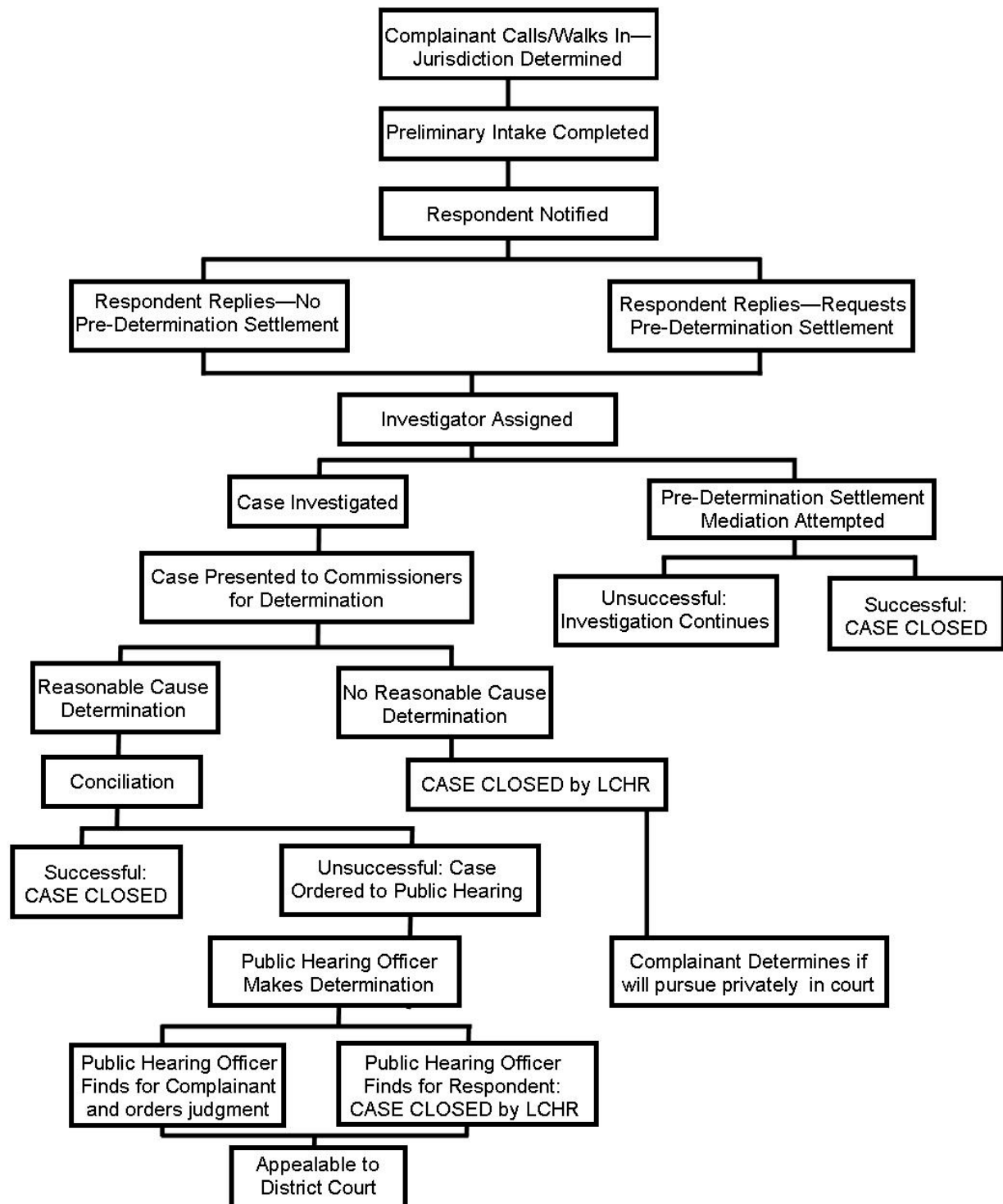
**PEG DILLON**  
SENIOR  
OFFICE ASSISTANT



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# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Complaint Process\*

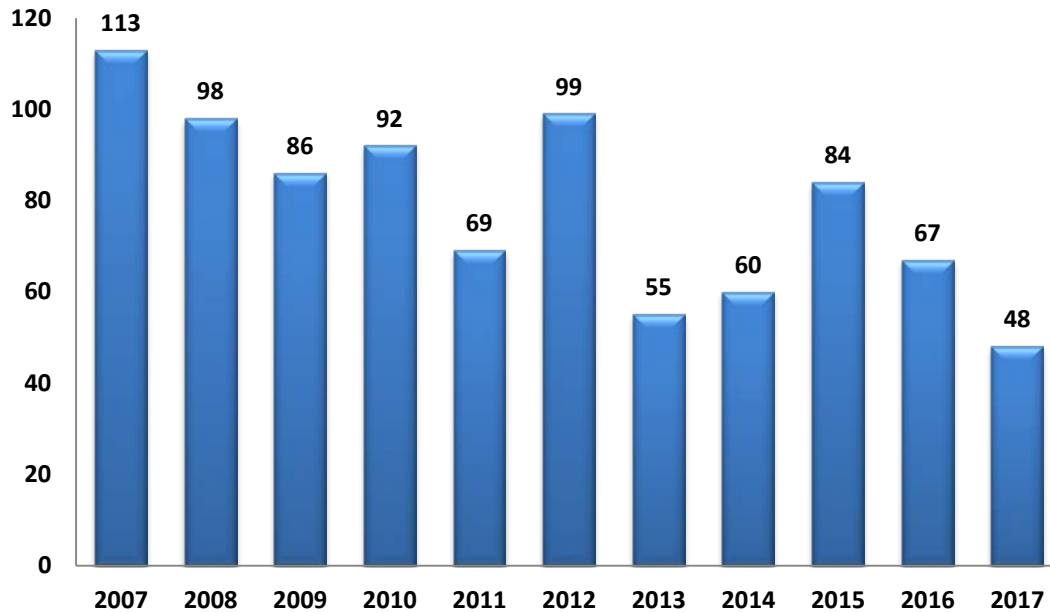


\*In housing complaints, Complainant always has the option throughout the process to pursue his or her case privately in court.

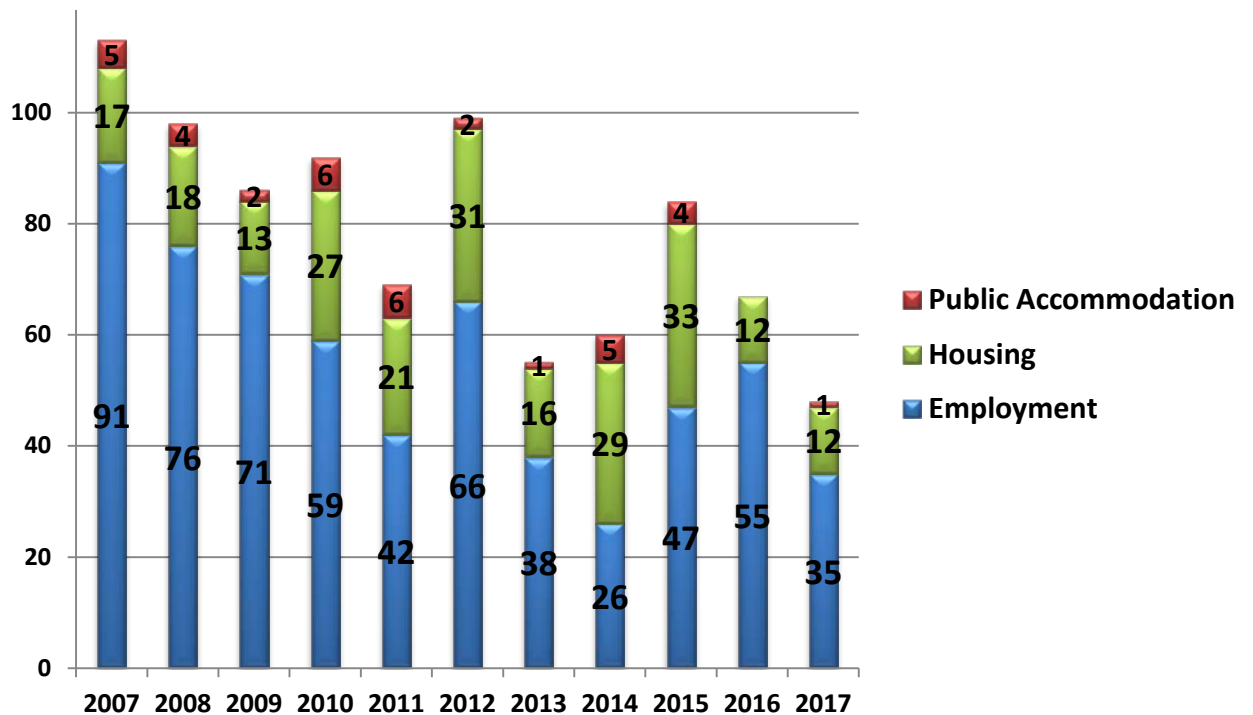
# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Case Statistics

### Cases Filed 2007-2017



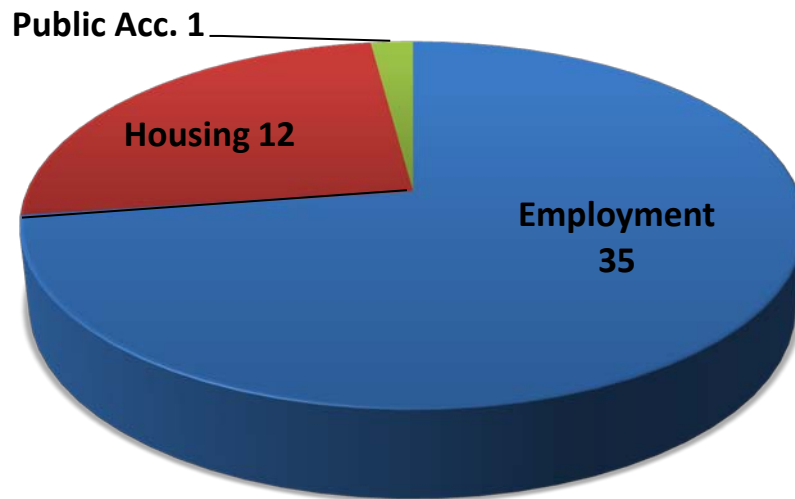
### Cases Filed by Type 2007-2017



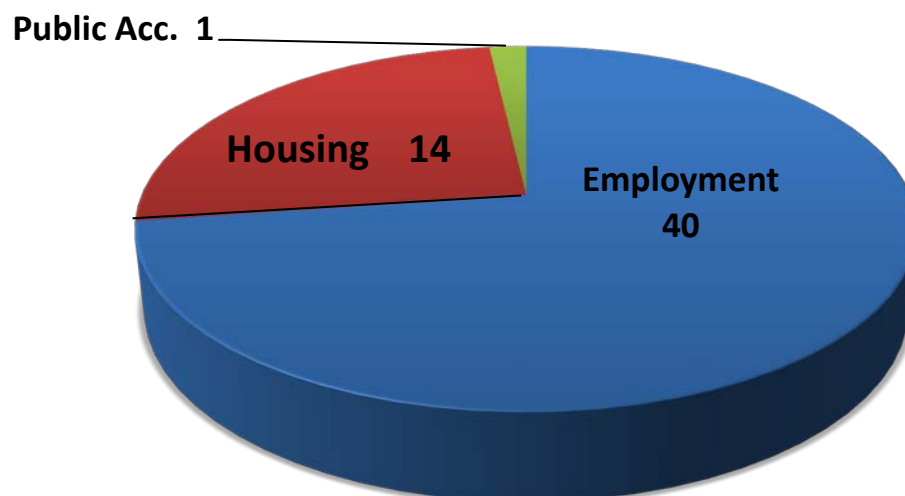
# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Case Statistics Continued

### Cases Filed by Type, Total 48



### Cases Closed\* by Type, Total 55

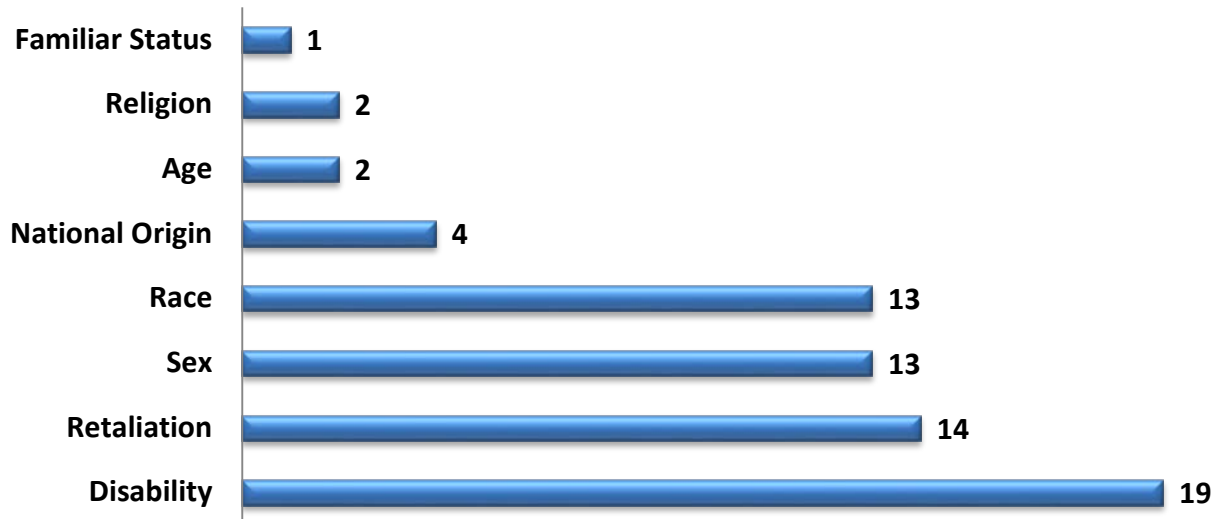


\*Cases closed include cases filed from 2016-2017, but closed in calendar year 2017.

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

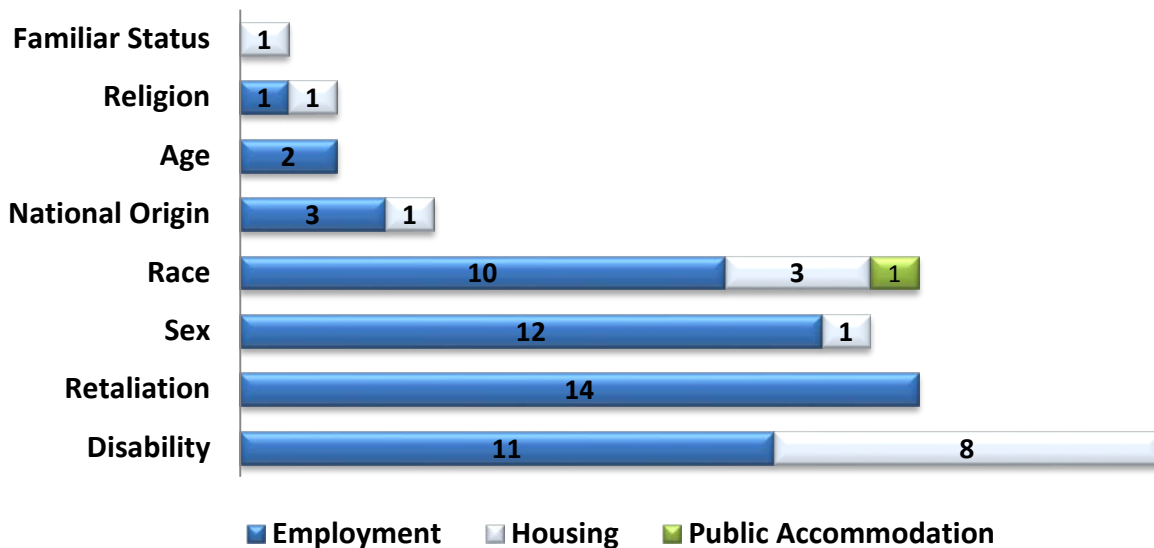
## Case Statistics Continued

### Breakdown of Cases Filed by Basis\*



\*Cases are often filed under more than one basis. For example, cases could be filed on the basis of both sex and disability, or race and retaliation.

### Breakdown of Cases Filed by Basis and Type\*

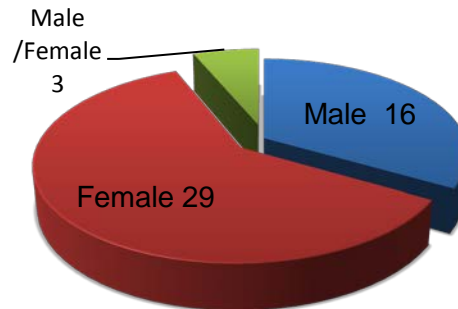


\*The basis of age is only covered in employment cases, while familial status is only covered in housing cases.

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

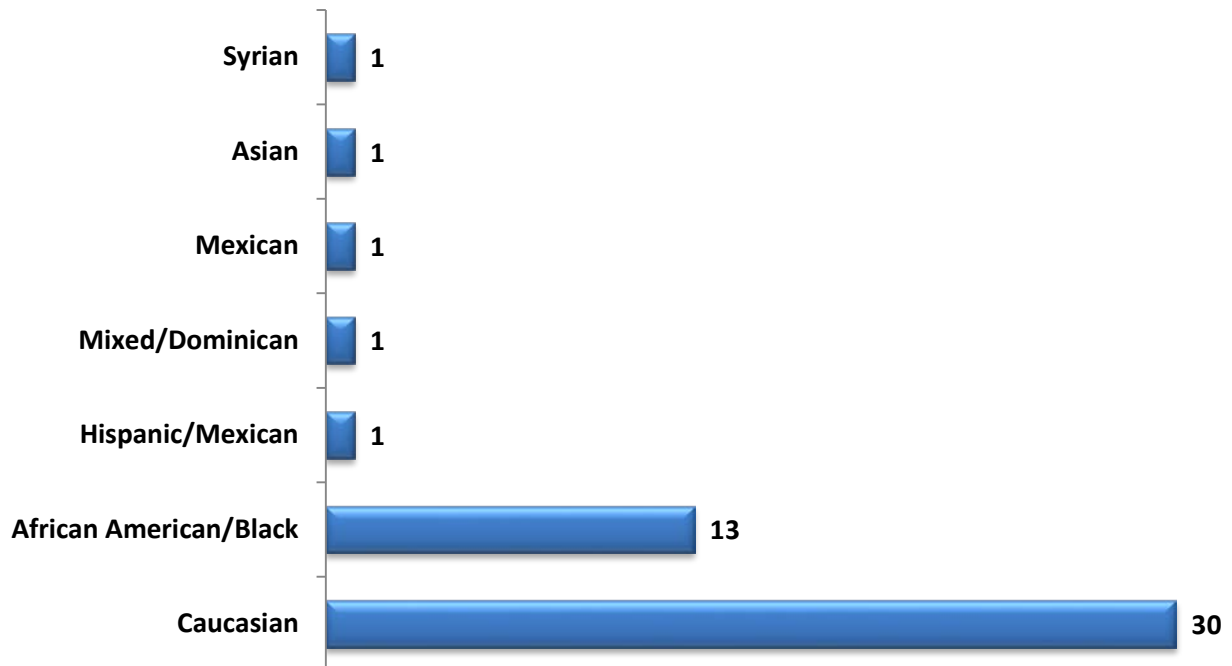
## Case Statistics Continued

### Breakdown of Cases Filed by Gender\*



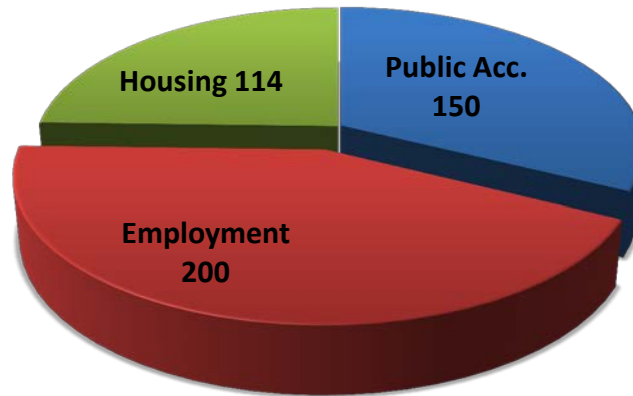
\*Housing cases may be filed by multiple parties.

### Breakdown of Cases Filed by Race / National Origin / Ethnicity\*\* of Complainant

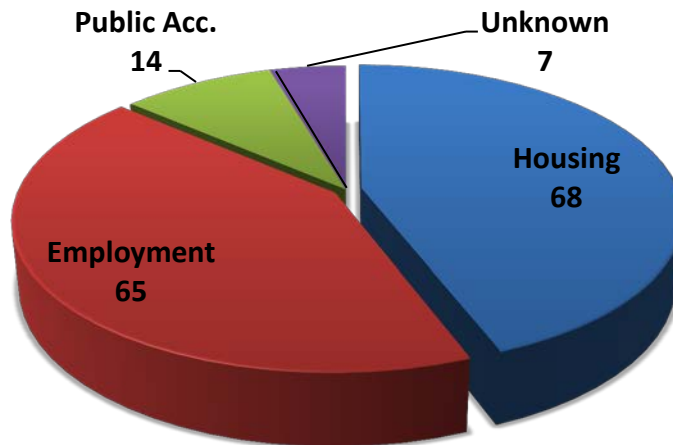


\*\*This provides an approximate demographic report based on the racial, national origin, or ethnic designation provided by the Complainant.

### Average Number of Days from Filing to Closure



### Inquiries Not Resulting in a Complaint\*



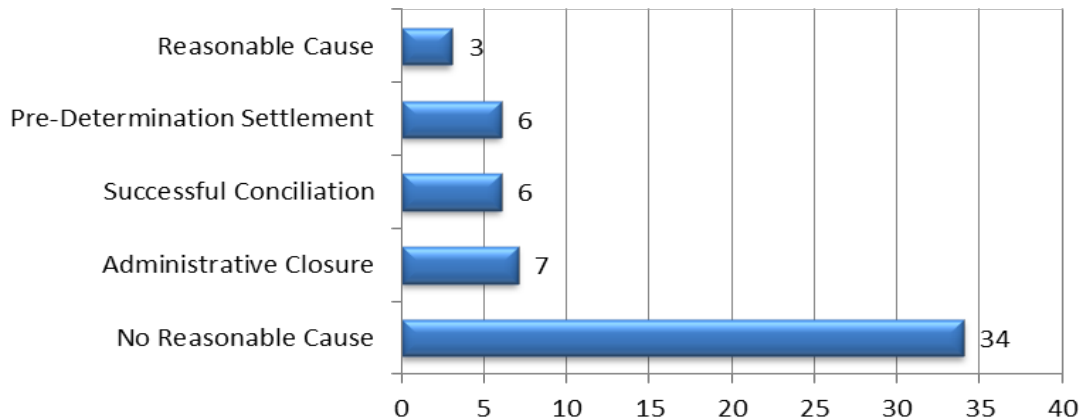
\*There are various reasons why inquiries do not result in the filing of a complaint. They include, but are not limited to, the Commission not having subject matter jurisdiction, the individual not wanting to file a complaint, or the individual failing to follow-through with the filing of a complaint.



# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Case Statistics Continued

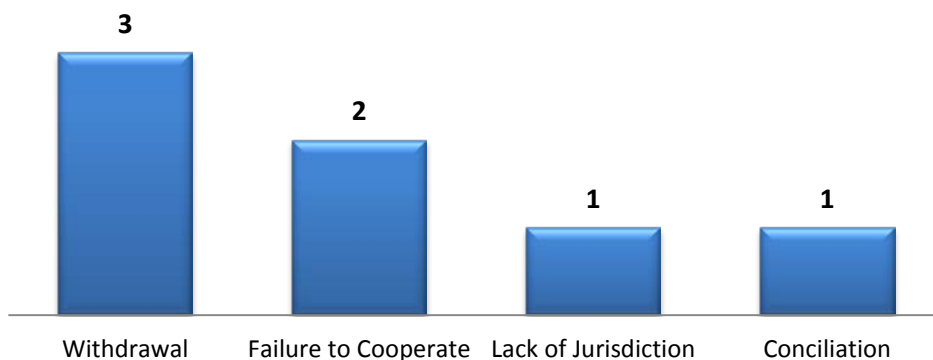
### Breakdown of Commission Decisions



What do the numbers mean? No Reasonable Cause cases are when the Commissioners determine there is insufficient evidence to believe discrimination occurred. In Reasonable Cause determinations, Commissioners believe there is evidence of discrimination. Administrative Closures are cases closed for a variety of reasons (see chart below). Pre-Determination Settlements are cases closed due to a settlement agreement *prior* to a Commission decision. Successful conciliation occurs when the parties reach an agreement *after* the commission makes a reasonable cause finding.

Sometimes the Commissioners make more than one decision in a single case. Commissioners may determine Reasonable Cause exists and those cases may later be closed in the same year by the Commission due to Successful Conciliation, Public Hearing determination, or issuance of a notice of Right to Sue. Because of this, the total number of Commission decisions may be greater than the number of cases closed.

### Administrative Closures



## Settlement Summaries

### **Pre-Determination,\* Conciliation Settlements, and Withdrawals with Settlements**

#### **Employment**

Pay Complainant:

- \$3,000, Provide training on harassment including sexual harassment to managers and supervisors
- \$500
- \$2250, Employment law training
- \$2250, Employment law training
- \$2250, Employment law training
- \$45,000, Employment law training
- \$17,000, Employment law training

#### **Housing**

- Provide all denied and new lease applications for 1 year; attend Fair Housing training.
- Attend Fair Housing training.
- Respondent waives balance and rent; pays Complainant \$2,000; and posts three Fair Housing posters.
- Complainant pays Respondent \$795.73 for repairs; \$650 security deposit; balance of \$5,400.12 is waived; and Respondent posts three Fair Housing posters.
- Respondent agrees to the following: allows support animals for Complainant; rents to Complainant at \$625 per month; and distributes Fair Housing handouts.
- Respondent to notify Complainant when notices are placed on her door and display three Fair Housing posters.

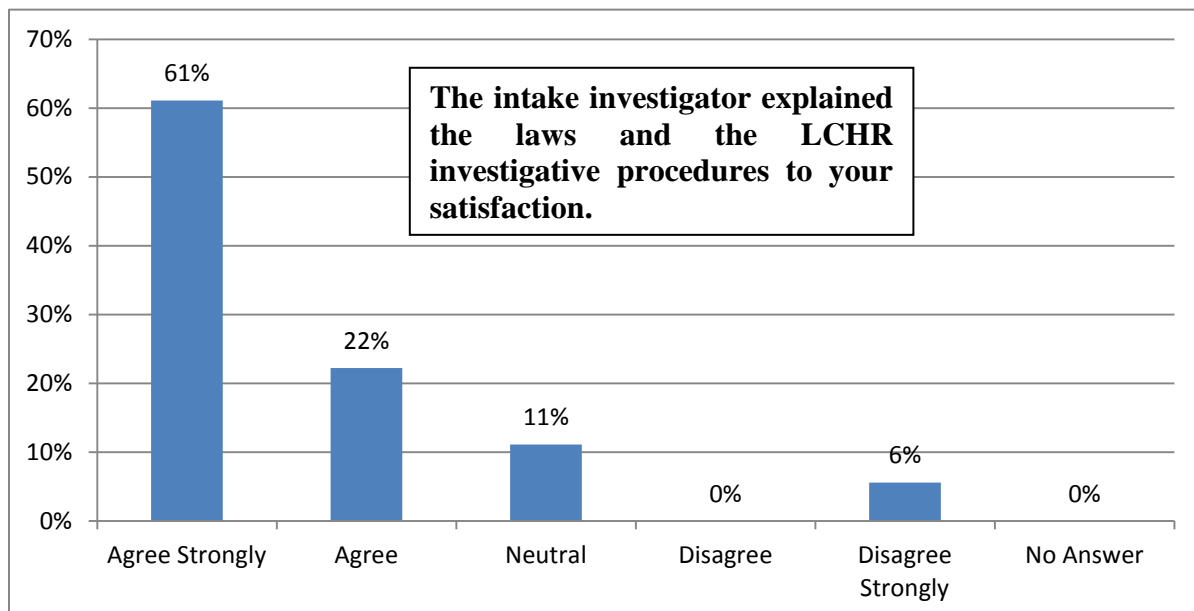
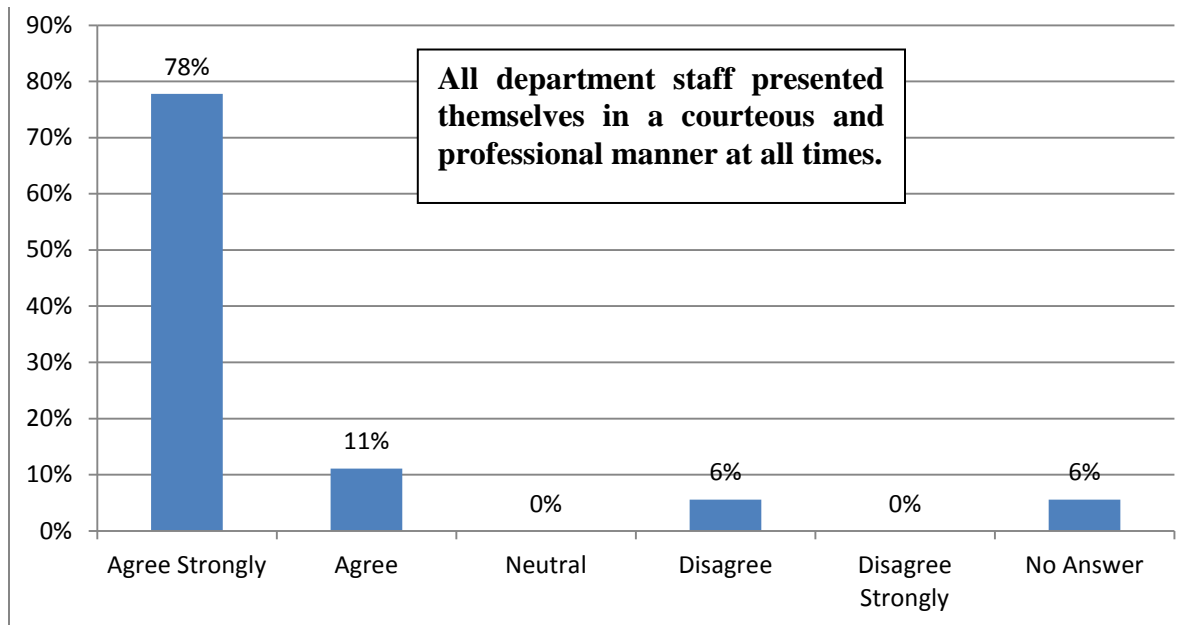
\*A Pre-Determination Settlement (PDS) is a no-fault settlement agreement voluntarily entered into by both parties *prior* to the Commission making a determination in the case. Conciliation is a settlement agreement *after* a reasonable cause finding.

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Service Satisfaction Survey

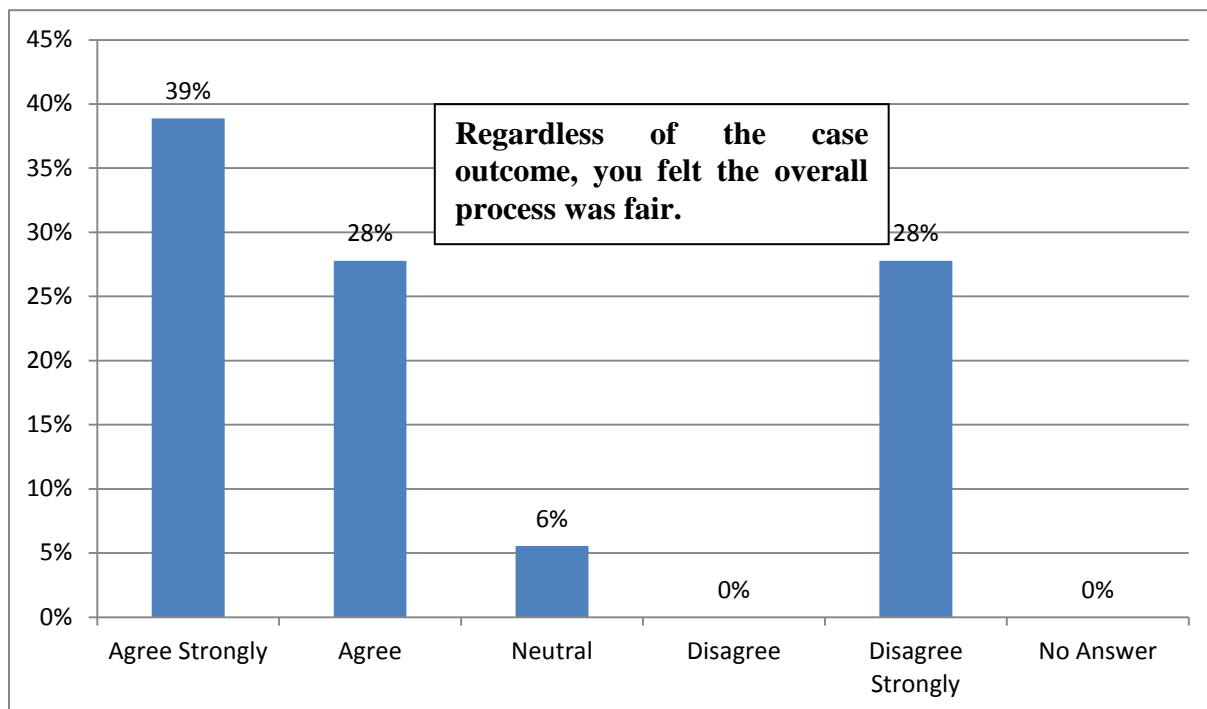
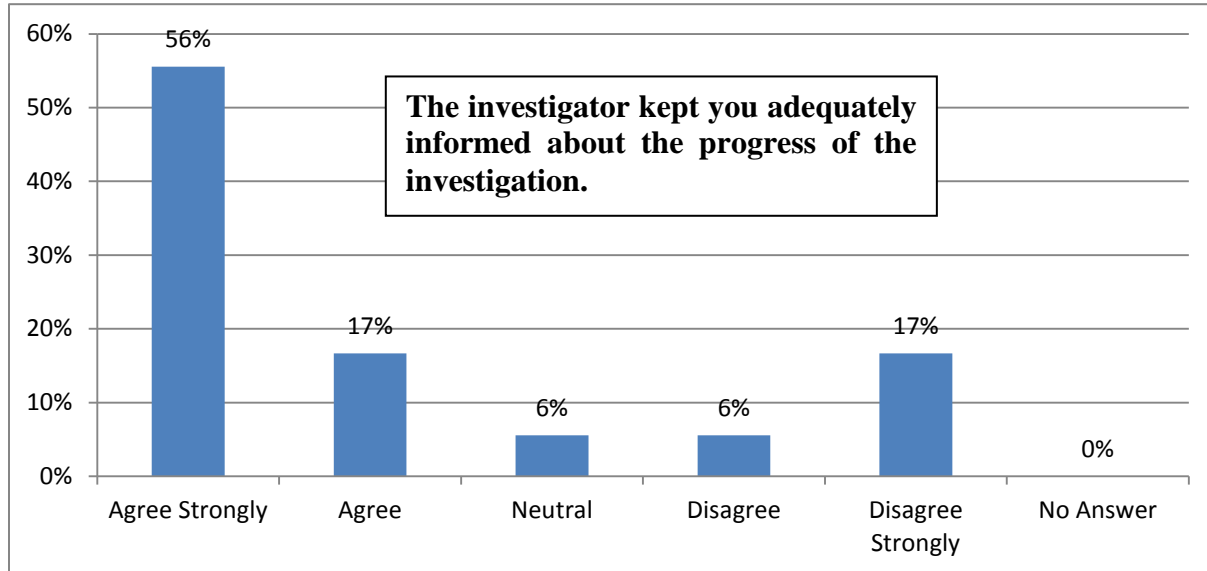
The Commission strives to achieve high satisfaction rates among Complainants and Respondents involved in investigations. In an effort to gauge how the staff and overall process is perceived Complainants and Respondents are asked to participate in a survey following case closure. Survey takers are asked to provide feedback on their comprehension of the process, overall satisfaction, and suggestions on how we could provide better service.

Complainants and Respondents were asked to rank our office on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being “Disagree Strongly” and 5 being “Agree Strongly”.



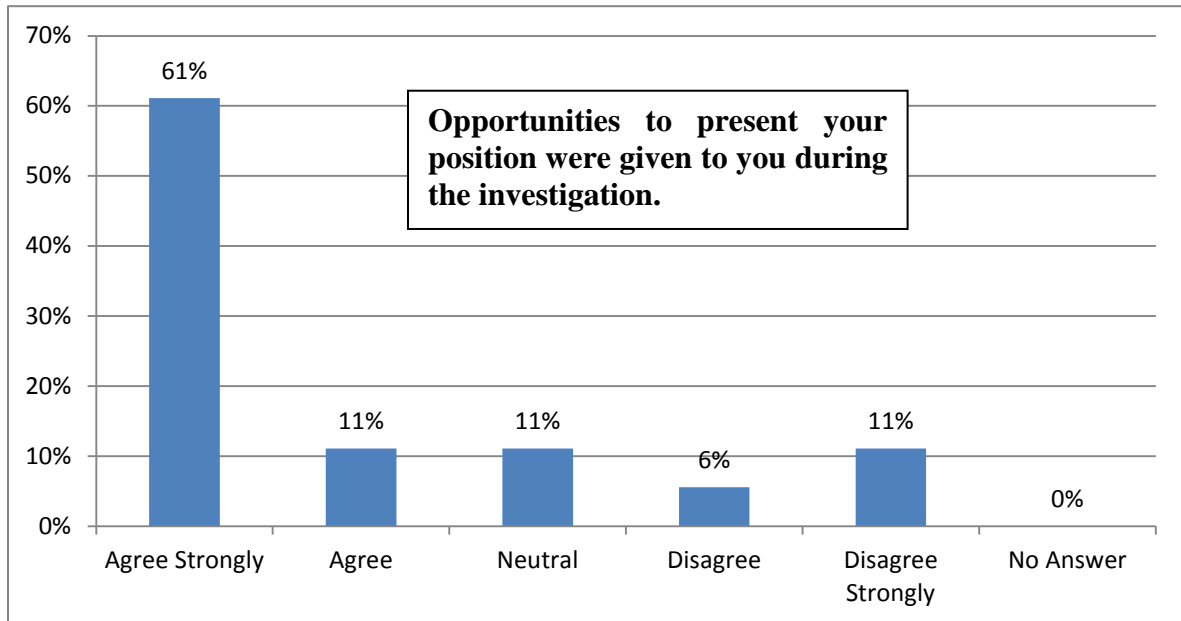
# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Service Satisfaction Survey Continued

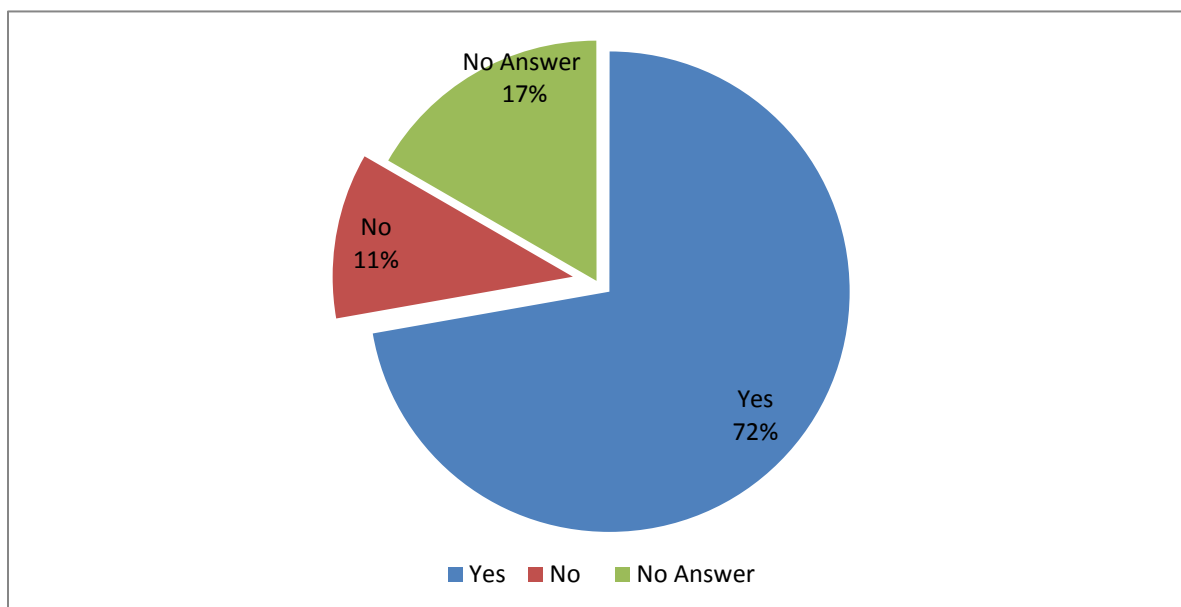


# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Service Satisfaction Survey Continued



### Would you refer someone experiencing discrimination to the LCHR?



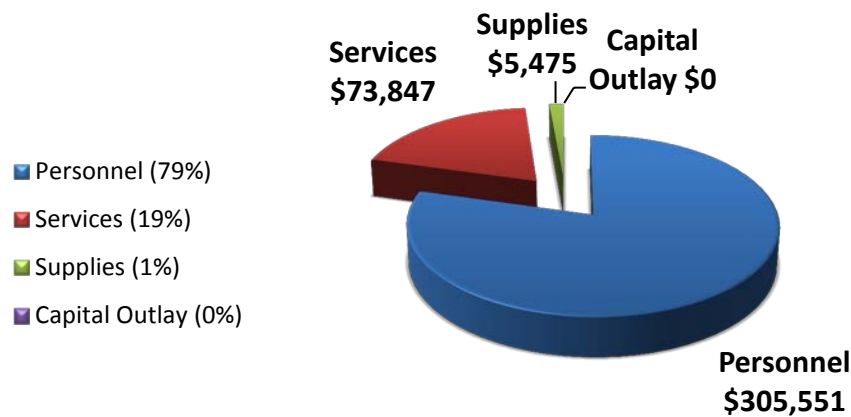
# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Budget Fiscal Year 2016-2017

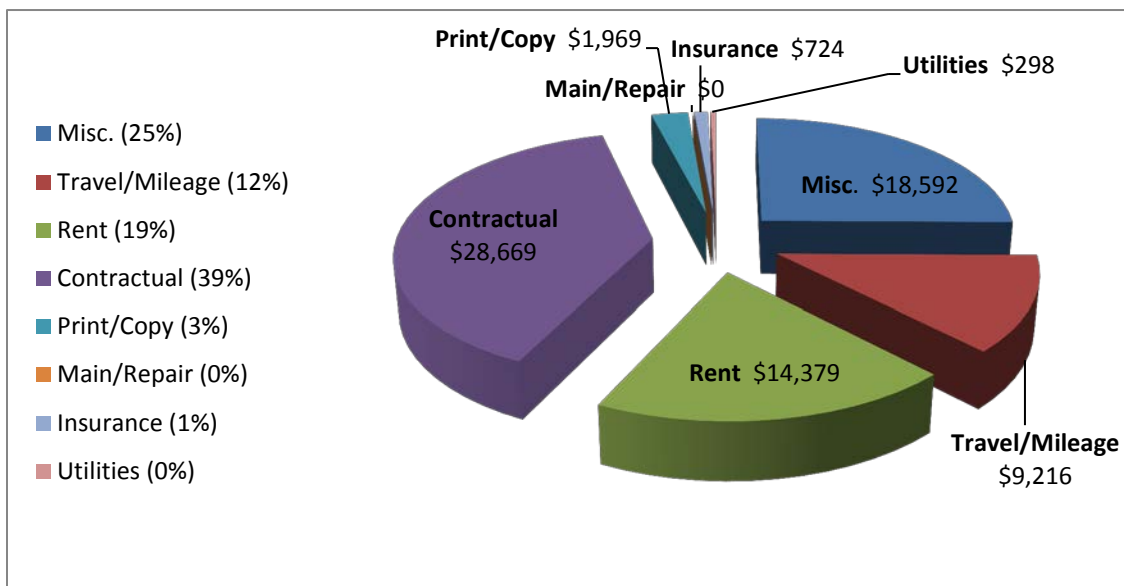
LCHR's budget is comprised of funding from the City of Lincoln General Fund as well as two federal funding sources—the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. For FY 2016-2017, the budget expenditures were supported by \$207,311 from the General Fund and \$177,562 from federal funding sources for a total expenditure of \$384,873.

### Where Did the Money Go?

Of the total \$384,873, the largest percentage went to personnel for salaries and benefits, for a total of \$305,551 or 79%. Services,\* which expenditures cover insurance, travel, mileage, interpretation/translation costs, office rental, copying, printing, and utilities totaled \$73,847 or 19% of the budget. Office supplies account for \$5,475 or 1% of the budget, and capital outlay for computer equipment was \$0.



### \*Services Summary



# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Education and Outreach

The Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) provides services to the community to ensure individuals are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Equal Opportunity and Fair Housing laws. LCHR works to reach as many agencies, groups, community-based organizations, employers, property owners, civic groups, and individuals as possible. These efforts include training programs which can be customized to meet the needs of the target audience. Topics include: racial and sexual harassment, fair employment practices, fair housing laws, public accommodation laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and diversity training.

In 2017, the staff conducted training at a number of organizations for a total of 291 sessions reaching 15,320 people. These organizations include Lincoln Public School's Take Charge Education Classes, Lincoln Housing Authority, Rescare, American Job Center, Rentwise, and various fairs and festivals, such as: Juneteenth, Star City Pride Festival, Health Fairs, Streets Alive, and Project Homeless Connect. New this year was Residents Together Fair, Prosper Lincoln, Mujer Sana with El Centro de las Americas.

The amount of people LCHR reached is significantly higher than previous years due to a grant that LCHR received from HUD in 2017 to educate women about their rights and responsibilities in housing. Thanks to CJJ Communications, we have a refreshed logo and they did a media blast in the Lincoln community. Media outreach and a mailer that account for 3,850 people were reached by these outlets. Additionally, training sessions were held with several Respondents. The Civil Rights Conference was attended by over 180 individuals and continues to provide the attendees with information on a wide range of civil rights topics. Overall, this was a very productive year for outreach.



Participants and Speakers at the  
2017 Civil Rights Conference.



## Award Recipient

### **Gerald Henderson Human Rights Award Recipient Olga Kanne**



The **Gerald Henderson Human Rights Award** was presented to Olga Kanne by LCHR Chair Micheal Q. Thompson during the luncheon at our annual Civil Rights Conference. This award is given to a person or organization to recognize outstanding achievements in furthering human relations in Lincoln, Nebraska including a demonstrated commitment to improving cooperation and understanding among people of different racial, ethnic, religious and diverse backgrounds.

Olga was born and raised in the Republic of Panama. After 26 years, Olga retired from the City of Lincoln's Urban Development Department Housing and Rehabilitation Division, where she worked to build and repair houses for low-to-moderate income citizens. She was very active in the Department's Minority Marketing Committee and represented the Department on the City of Lincoln-Lancaster County Joint Budget Committee.

She has taught Spanish-speaking first-time home buyers the necessary steps to achieve homeownership and has been very involved in promoting minority housing issues. As a past member of the FDIC's New American Task Force and of Wells Fargo Bank's Advisory Board of Directors, she worked on ways to better assist under-represented residents with banking services. She served as Chairperson for the Latino-American Commission to which she was appointed by the Governor in 2002. She also served as Chair of the Board of Directors of El Centro de Las Americas.

Olga is presently a member and past Chair of the Mayor's Multicultural Advisory Committee; a member of the University of Nebraska's Davis-Chambers Scholarship Committee; a member of the FIAT Committee of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, which organizes and sends dentists and doctors on an annual mission trip to Haiti; and offers her artistic advice and help at El Cristo Rey Church. She received her high school education in Kingston, Jamaica and completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in the United States. In her free time, she loves to garden, create new pieces of artwork, travel and spend time with her dogs. She is the proud mother of Nicole.

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## Contact Information



LCHR introduced a refreshed logo and slogan as well as outreach materials directed toward women and minorities. LCHR's website can be reached by the URL listed below. Included on our website is a fill-in form to file a discrimination complaint with LCHR. Commission meeting minutes, the Civil Rights Conference registration form, past Conference materials, local resources and general information are also included.



Discrimination? Act!

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