

TENNESSEE

HUMAN RIGHTS

COMMISSION

Annual Report

Race

Religion

Gender

Creed

National Origin

Age

**Familial
Status**

Color

Disability

Fiscal Year 2010-2011

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Beverly L. Watts
Executive Director



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The Honorable Bill Haslam
Governor
State of Tennessee
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

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

Dear Governor Haslam and Members of the General Assembly:

I am pleased to provide you with the Tennessee Human Rights Commission 2010-2011 Annual Report. This report covers the period of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011.

This report provides a summary of the services and accomplishments of the agency. We continue to meet and exceed our goals as we provide prompt service to the public.

We will continue to safeguard individuals within the state of Tennessee from discrimination through enforcement and education.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Beverly L. Watts
Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



It has been a great privilege to serve three terms as Chair of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission Board of Commissioners. As Tennessee's population continues to become more diverse with varied social issues, the work of the Commission is critical to ensure that every person's civil rights are protected. Our goal is and will continue to be eliminating unlawful discrimination.

This has been a busy and challenging year as staff endeavored to safeguard individuals in Tennessee from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and programs and activities through enforcement and education. I am proud to work with dedicated Commissioners, well trained and hard working staff, and one of the most recognized leaders in the human rights field-our Executive Director.

Budget cuts and staff shortages have again challenged the Commission, but with diligence and perseverance the Commission carried out its responsibilities to the citizens of Tennessee. The Commission processed complaints in accordance with timeframes set forth by the EEOC and decreased the timeframe significantly for housing complaints. The Commission sponsored six educational "listening/discussion" programs where staff and Commissioners shared information and listened to the concerns of citizens as well as participated in 95 community events. One of the events was the YWCA "Stand Against Racism." This important nation wide program raises awareness of the prevalence of racism in our society and the importance of collaborating with organizations and individuals in taking a stand against unfair and unlawful race discrimination. A well attended educational program was held by the Commission in Nashville, 2011 *Employment Law Seminar* with the general counsel of the EEOC as the keynote speaker.

I am pleased to submit more detailed information about the Commission's work and activities in this annual report for 2010-2011. I thank the Governor and the Legislature for their continued support and 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Pierce". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Patricia Pierce
Chair

COMMISSIONERS

The Commission's 15-member board is made up of Tennesseans that represent employers, business owners, religious groups, trade unions, human rights groups and the general public. These individuals are appointed by the Governor to serve terms of six years. Commissioners are appointed to serve on a non-partisan basis with five coming from each of the state's three Grand Divisions, East, Middle and West.

The Board met a total of six times during fiscal year 2011 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](#).

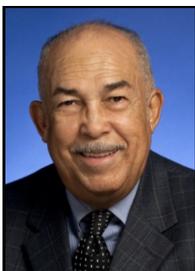
East Tennessee



Patricia Pierce
Chair
Harriman



Ralph Davis
Johnson City



Paul McDaniel
Chattanooga



Ruby Miller
Oak Ridge



Edwin Osborne
Morristown

Middle Tennessee



Stacey Garrett
Nashville



Karla Hewitt
Nashville



A.J. Starling
Nashville



Joseph Walker
Nashville



Spencer Wiggins
Nashville

West Tennessee



Dennis Blalock
Jackson



David Cocke
Memphis



Robert Jones
Memphis



Nathan Pride
Jackson



Jocelyn Wurzburg
Memphis

HISTORY

The Tennessee Human Rights Commission (Commission) has existed under a number of different names and purposes throughout its 48 year history but has maintained the same core duties which are to advise, create, promote and encourage equal opportunity for all Tennesseans.

In 1963, Governor Frank Clement created the Commission under the name the Tennessee Human Relations Commission. The Commission was initially created 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.

The Commission served in this capacity until four years later when the Public Acts of 1967 passed. The passage of this act created the Tennessee Commission on Human Development. This Commission absorbed the duties of the previous Human Relations Commission but adopted rules and regulations that governed its proceedings. It also expanded the Commission's protected classes to include sex.

A significant event which changed the dynamics of the agency's operations occurred in 1978 when the Tennessee Human Rights Act (THRA) became law. This law brought the Commission out of the advisory role and transformed it into the enforcement agency that it is today. In 1979 and 1980, the law was amended to include two more protected classes, disability and age. In 1983, the name of the Commission officially became the Tennessee Human Rights Commission. The Commission continued to evolve. An amendment to the THRA, which passed in 1984, expanded the parameters of the law to include provisions prohibiting discrimination in housing. In 1990, the provision was extended to include familial status and disability as protected classes. Today, the THRA prohibits discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, familial status and national origin.

In July of 2009 the THRA was expanded to include the authority to verify that all state governmental entities comply with the 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.

The Commission has substantial equivalency with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Due to the Commission's similarities to these two federal agencies, the Tennessee Human Rights Commission can enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title VIII of the Fair Housing Act. The Commission has had a work-share agreement with HUD since 1994 and with the EEOC since 1979.

Today, the Commission has an office in Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga and Knoxville. The 28-person Commission staff is made up of investigators, mediators, attorneys and administrative personnel.



Chair Patricia Pierce and Wanda Sobieski at the Knoxville Women's Suffrage Coalition celebration of the 19th Amendment and the Knoxville League of Women's Voters 90th Birthday .

OVERVIEW

The Mission of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission is to safeguard individuals from discrimination through enforcement and education.

Our Vision is to ensure that all those in the State of Tennessee are treated with respect and equality.

All Commission staff share a commitment to the following Values: Integrity, Respect, Equality, Competence, Dependability and Dedication.

The following is an overview of the agency's accomplishments for the 2010-2011 fiscal year:



L to R-Ted Fellman of THDA; Executive Director Beverly Watts; Governor Bill Haslam; Mary McLennan with HUD Nashville Field Office receiving the 2011 Fair Housing Month Proclamation.

- ◇ *The Commission received and answered 10,893 calls from the public which resulted in a total of 1,056 inquiries; 215 in the Housing Division and 841 in the Employment Division. Of these inquiries 673 were accepted for investigation: 509 employment, 140 housing and 24 public accommodations.*
- ◇ *The Commission developed rules and regulations for the Title VI Compliance Program which were passed by the legislature and became effective February 13, 2011.*
- ◇ *The Legal Division reviewed over 600 cases, 450 investigative plans, 36 reconsiderations and found reasonable cause in six (6) cases.*
- ◇ *The Employment Division closed 602 cases; these cases were closed on an average of 248 days. The Housing Division closed 138 cases; these cases were closed on an average of 175 days.*
- ◇ *The Commission settled 144 claims of discrimination through settlements, conciliations and mediations for a total of \$501,966. In employment, 74 claims were settled for a total of \$201,468 in benefits and there were 32 successful mediations with a total of \$81,377 in benefits. In housing, there were 38 settlements and conciliations with a total of \$219,121 in benefits.*
- ◇ *Non-monetary benefits included training on the law, reconsideration of an application for housing, letters of reference, removal of eviction records, job reinstatement, attorney's fees and promotions.*
- ◇ *The Commission launched a Facebook page, a statewide radio campaign and partnered with over 125 organizations in 95 different education and outreach events reaching over four million individuals.*
- ◇ *The Tennessee General Assembly passed the Commission's sunset legislation extending the agency's operations until June 30, 2013.*

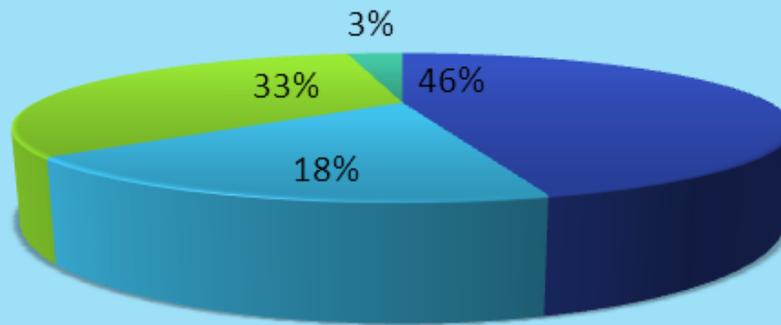
CUSTOMER SERVICE & INTAKE

The Customer Service and Intake units serve as the initial point of contact for the Commission. They provide information on how to file a complaint, provide clarification on the law and make referrals to other agencies if necessary. They interact with the public through phone calls, website, email contact, facsimile forms and in-person visits at any of the Commission's four regional offices. Through these divisions, interested parties can obtain the necessary information and documents to file a complaint of discrimination.

During fiscal year 2011, Customer Service answered a total of 10,893 calls from the public. It is estimated that 5,011 or 46% of calls originated from Middle Tennessee followed by 3,595 or 33% from East Tennessee and 1,960 or 18% from West Tennessee. Over 300 calls or 3%, originated from outside of Tennessee.

FY 2011 Call Origin by Grand Division

■ Middle TN ■ West TN ■ East TN ■ Out of State



As a result of the thousands of calls answered, 1,239 complaint forms were sent out by either U.S. mail or email and forms were accessed over an estimated 5,100 times through the Internet.

Complaint forms are completed, signed, and returned to the Commission's Intake unit. Intake is responsible for determining jurisdiction, notifying respondents of the charges filed against them, and requesting the respondent's position statement. Before an employment complaint is assigned to an investigator, the Intake unit offers mediation to both the complainant and the respondent involved in a case. If both parties agree, then the complaint is referred to mediation. If both parties do not agree to attempt mediation, the complaint is forwarded to either the Employment or Housing divisions for a full investigation.

(continued on next page)

CUSTOMER SERVICE & INTAKE

Employment complaints that are accepted for investigation are entered into the Integrated Mission System (IMS) for tracking while housing complaints are entered into the Title Eight Automated Paperless Office Tracking System (TEAPOTS).

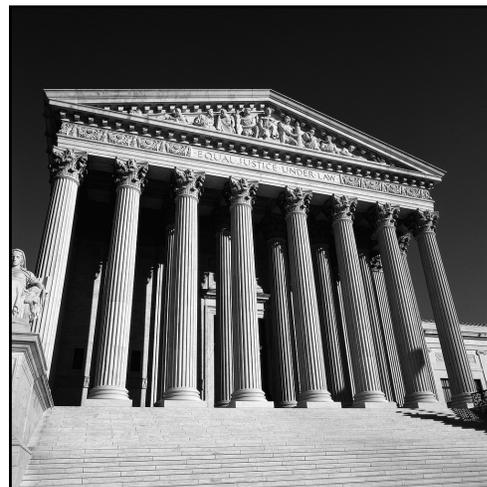
The Intake unit also captures information from complaint forms about how complainants heard about the Commission and its services. Most complainants reported that they learned about the Commission through word of mouth from friends (280). The following table details this information:

How Complainants Learned of the Commission	
Method of Referral	Total
Friends	280
Other	128
Internet	98
Attorney	92
Department of Labor	48
EEOC	40
Family	32
Employment Office	23
Phone Book	19
Radio	11
Television	11
Legal Aid	9
Posted	3
Total	794

ENFORCEMENT

The Commission is responsible for enforcing both the Tennessee Human Rights Act (THRA) and Tennessee Disability Act (TDA), which prohibit discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations, and verifying state government agencies comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Each of these laws specifies the bases that are safeguarded from discrimination:

- Fair housing laws make it illegal to discriminate in the sale, rental, or financing of housing based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, disability or familial status.
- Employment laws prohibit employers from discriminating based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age (40 and over).
- Public accommodation laws make it illegal for a place that offers goods, services or facilities to the public to refuse or deny full and equal enjoyment of accommodations based on an individual's race, creed, color, religion, sex, age or national origin.
- Title VI prohibits recipients of Federal financial assistance from discriminating under any program or activity based on a person's race, color or national origin.



The Commission enforces these laws through the **Employment, Housing, Title VI Compliance and Legal divisions** of the Commission. These four divisions receive, mediate, investigate and litigate allegations of discrimination. Persons who believe that they have experienced discrimination in employment, housing or at a place of public accommodation may file a complaint if the issue(s) and basis(es) are covered by the THRA or TDA and the complaint is filed no more than 180 days from the last alleged incident of discrimination on behalf of our federal counterparts.

The Commission has agreements with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to facilitate the administration and enforcement of these statutes. Through these agreements with the EEOC and HUD, the Commission dual files and processes complaints of discrimination based on state and federal law.

The purpose, duties and accomplishments of the Employment, Housing, Title VI Compliance and Legal divisions are detailed in the following sections.

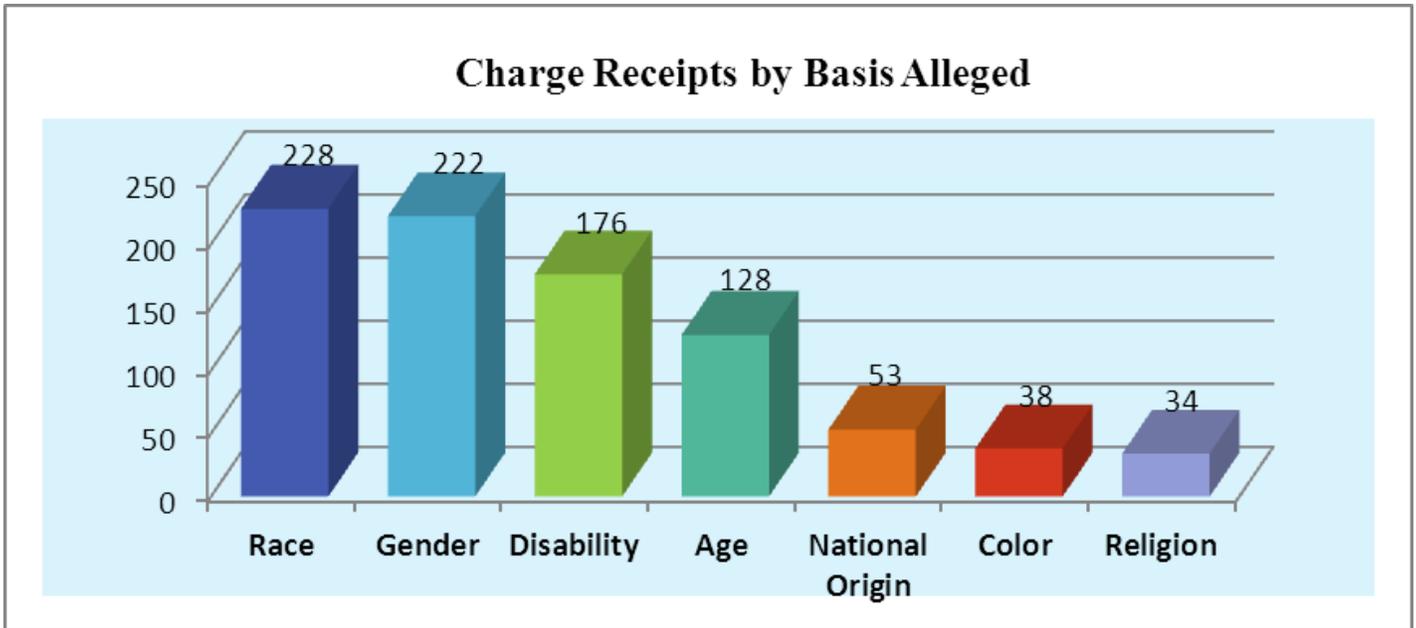
EMPLOYMENT



Deputy Director, Tiffany Baker-Cox, explaining Commission procedures at a Tennessee Disability Pathfinder event.

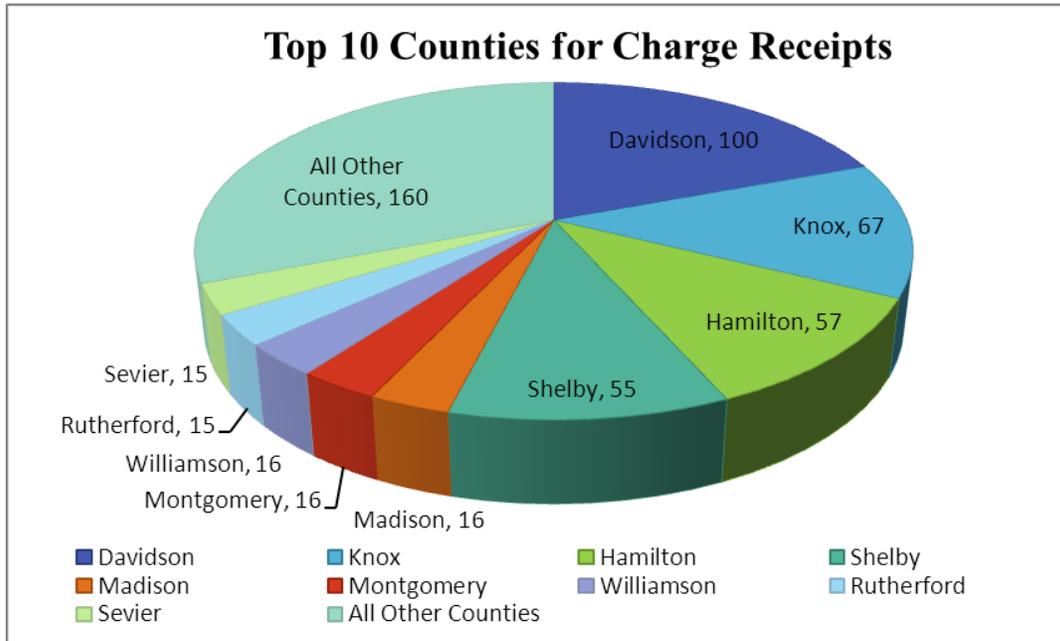
The Employment division is responsible for processing and investigating complaints in the areas of employment and public accommodation based on race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin and age (40 and over). There are eight full time employment investigators who work out of the Nashville, Chattanooga and Memphis offices.

During the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the division received 841 inquiries, accepted 533 complaints for investigation and closed 602 cases. In complaints filed during this timeframe, the most common basis of alleged discrimination was race at 228 or 26% of complaints, followed by gender at 201 or 23% and disability at 176 or 20%.

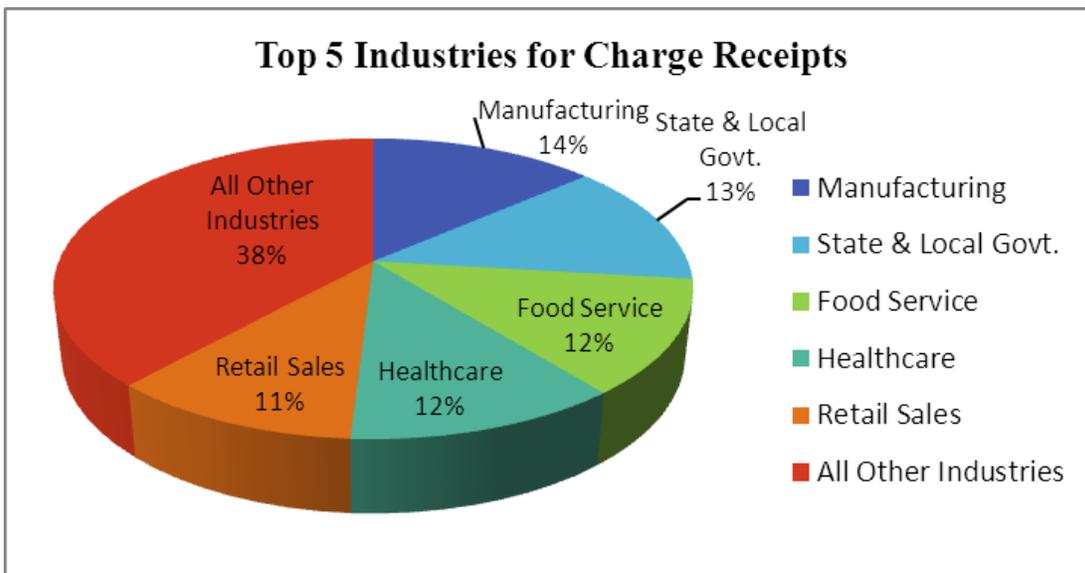


Davidson County accounted for 20% of complaints filed with a total of 100 received. There were 67 complaints from Knox County which was 13% of the total and 57 from Hamilton and 55 from Shelby counties, each accounting for 11% of total complaints.

EMPLOYMENT



A review of complaints filed by industry revealed that the top five industries for complaints accounted for over 60% of all complaints. The Manufacturing industry accounted for 72 or 14% of complaints received; more complaints than any other industry. The next most reported industries were State and Local Government with 70 or 13%, Food Service with 62 or 12%, Healthcare with 62 or 12% and Retail Sales with 57 or 11%.



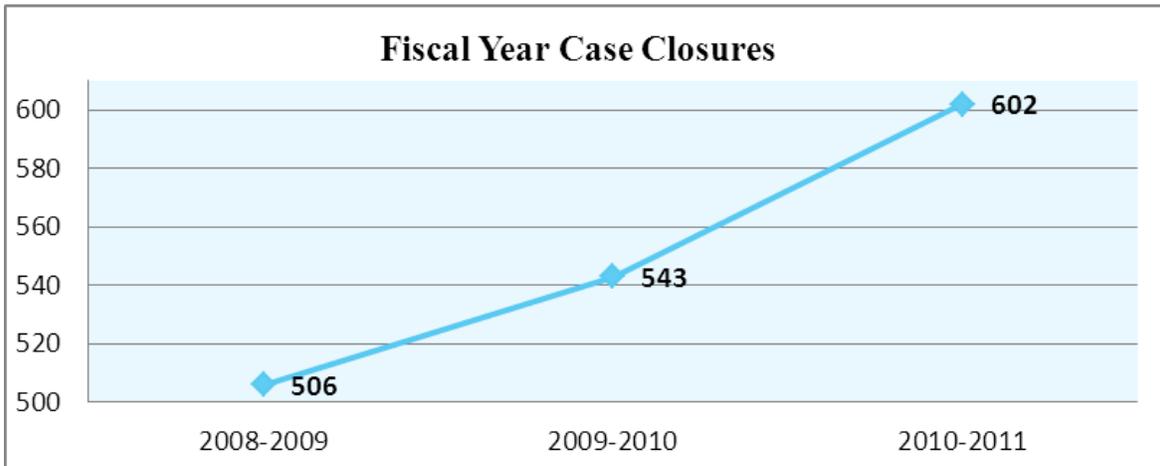
Benefits from settlements were \$201,468 and mediations were \$81,377 for a total of \$282,845 including job reinstatement, attorney's fees, promotions and training.

EMPLOYMENT

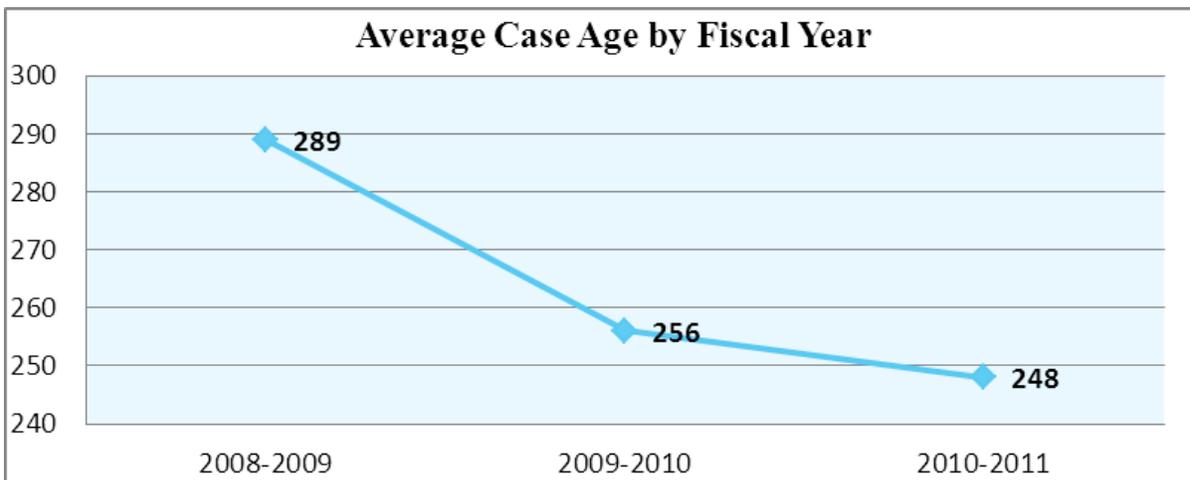
The Commission has a work-share agreement with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to process cases of employment discrimination. The division met its contracting goals by closing the contracted 430 cases and received an upward modification of 30 cases bringing the contract total to 460 cases.

The division strives to complete investigations in a timely manner. As such, one of the Employment Division's goals has been to reduce the number of cases over 270 days old. During this time the division reduced the number of open cases over 270 days old from 148 to 105 cases or 31% of the inventory. A comparison of the last three fiscal years shows that the division accomplished this goal by increasing the number of cases closed and decreasing the average case age.

The division closed 96 more cases than two years ago which was a 19% increase.



Cases were closed on average 41 days less than closures in fiscal year 2008.



MEDIATION



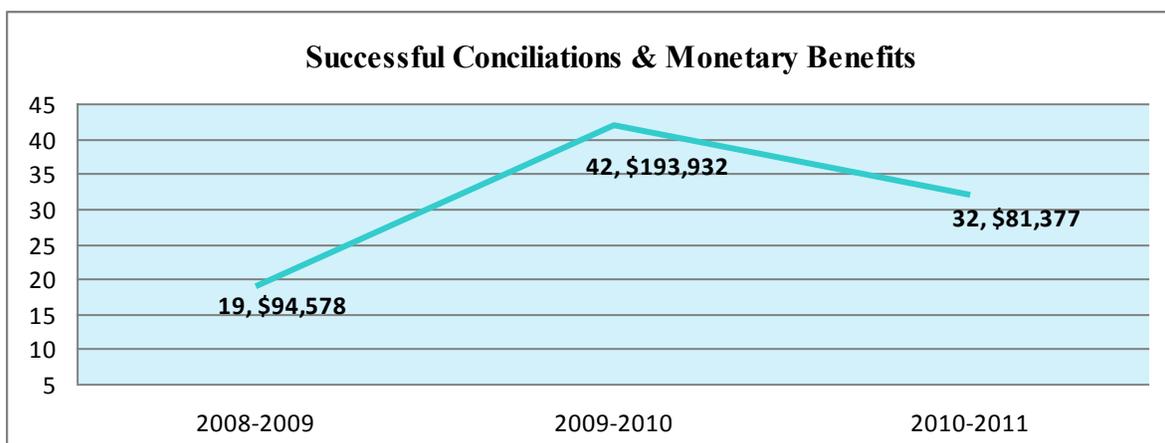
Deputy Director Tiffany Baker-Cox giving a presentation on the benefits of mediation at Vanderbilt University Law School.

When an employment discrimination complaint is filed, one of the first actions the Commission takes is to offer mediation. Mediation gives both parties an option to resolve a complaint without undergoing a full investigation or litigation. The purpose of mediation is to provide a way for both parties to learn from each other by discussing their perspectives on the issues and work toward a possible resolution of the dispute. The Commission has ten Rule 31 trained mediators on staff and has a contract with the Nashville Conflict Resolution Center to provide mediation for Spanish speaking parties.

Mediation is provided at no cost to either party and is done in a secure and controlled environment that allows parties to address issues that can lead to the filing of a complaint. Complainants and respondents agree to attempt mediation with the understanding that the service is voluntary, and if settled, the details of the settlement are kept confidential. If an agreement is not reached, the case is then reentered into the investigative process. However, if the mediation brings about acceptable terms for all parties and there is a settlement, then the case is closed.

In fiscal year 2011, the Commission held a total of 60 mediations. Thirty-two or 53 % of these cases were resolved through mediation while 28 were unsuccessful in reaching a resolution. There was a total of \$81,377 received in monetary benefits from mediations with individual awards ranging from \$500 to \$10,000. Non-monetary benefits included letters of apology, policy changes, training, promotions and uncontested unemployment.

The following graph shows the total number of successful mediations and benefits received over the last three fiscal years:



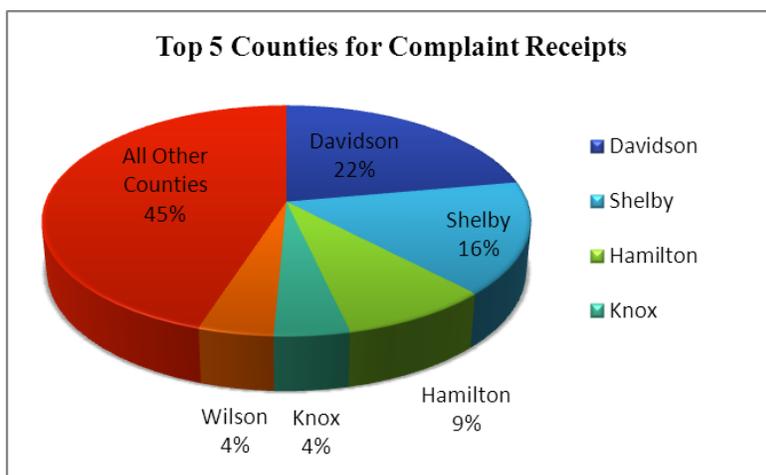
HOUSING



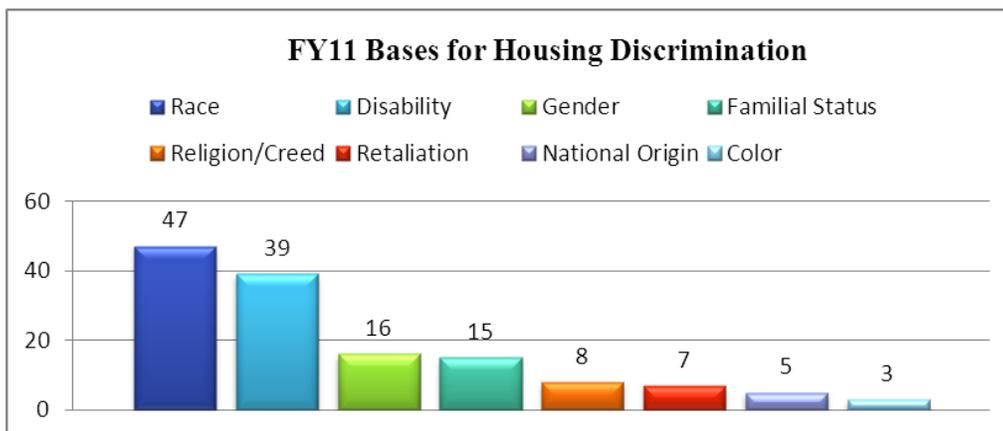
Housing Coordinator, Richard Gadzekpo, at a presentation at Middle Tennessee State University

The Housing Division is responsible for investigating claims of housing discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, creed, and familial status in the sale and rental of real property. The Commission has a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to dual file and investigate cases of housing discrimination. The division is comprised of five full time housing investigators; four in the Knoxville office and one in the Nashville office.

In fiscal year 2010-2011, the Housing Division received a total of 215 inquiries which was a 43% increase from the previous year. Of those inquiries, 140 were accepted as complaints. The division closed a total of 138 complaints, of which 31 complaints (22%) were received from Davidson County, followed by 22 complaints (16%) from Shelby County and 12 complaints (9%) from Hamilton County.



The top three alleged bases for housing discrimination were race, which accounted for 47 or 34% of total complaints, disability with 39 or 28% of complaints and gender with 16 complaints or 11% of complaints filed.



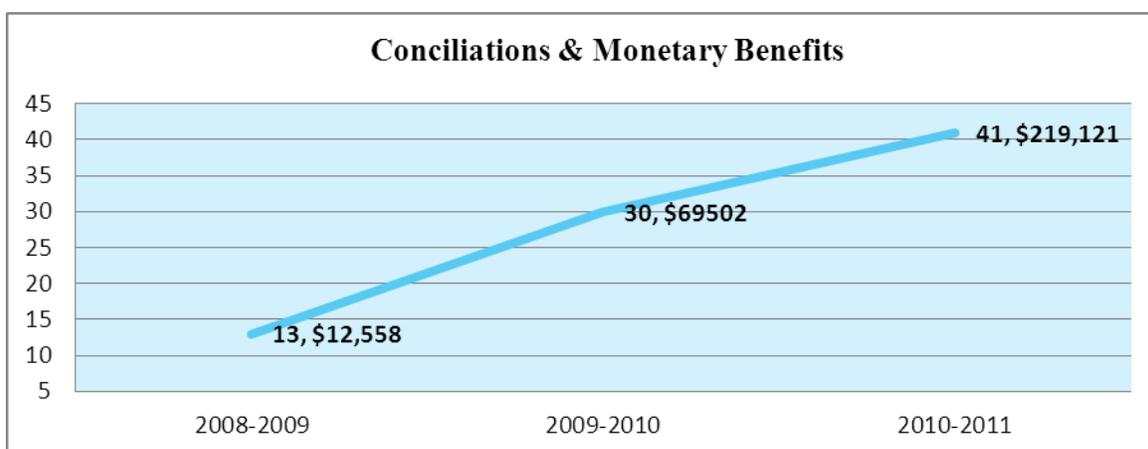
HOUSING

The Housing Division improved its case processing procedures which resulted in a 39% decrease in the average case age from the previous fiscal year. On average, cases were closed 110 days sooner than last year with 50% of cases closing within 100 days or less. The following table reflects total case closures by age:

CASE CLOSURES BY AGE					
100 Days or Less	101 Days to 150 Days	151 Days to 200 Days	201 Days to 250 Days	Over 250 Days	Total
69	35	11	6	17	138
50%	26%	8%	4%	12%	100%

The division met its HUD cooperative agreement standard performance goals to close 50% of cases within 100 days of filing and close 95% of aged cases (cases over 100 days old) before the end of the fiscal year. The Housing Division closed 66 cases or 50% of cases within 100 days, an improvement from the 24% of cases last fiscal year. The division met and exceeded the aged case closure goal by closing 100% of the 19 aged cases that were in the inventory at beginning of the fiscal year.

The division conciliated 38 cases resulting in a total of \$219,121 in monetary benefits. This amount included the sale of property to a complainant, fee waivers, deposit returns, payment forgiveness and free rent. Non-monetary benefits were received such as reconsideration of an application for housing, letters of credit reference, removal of eviction records and fair housing training.



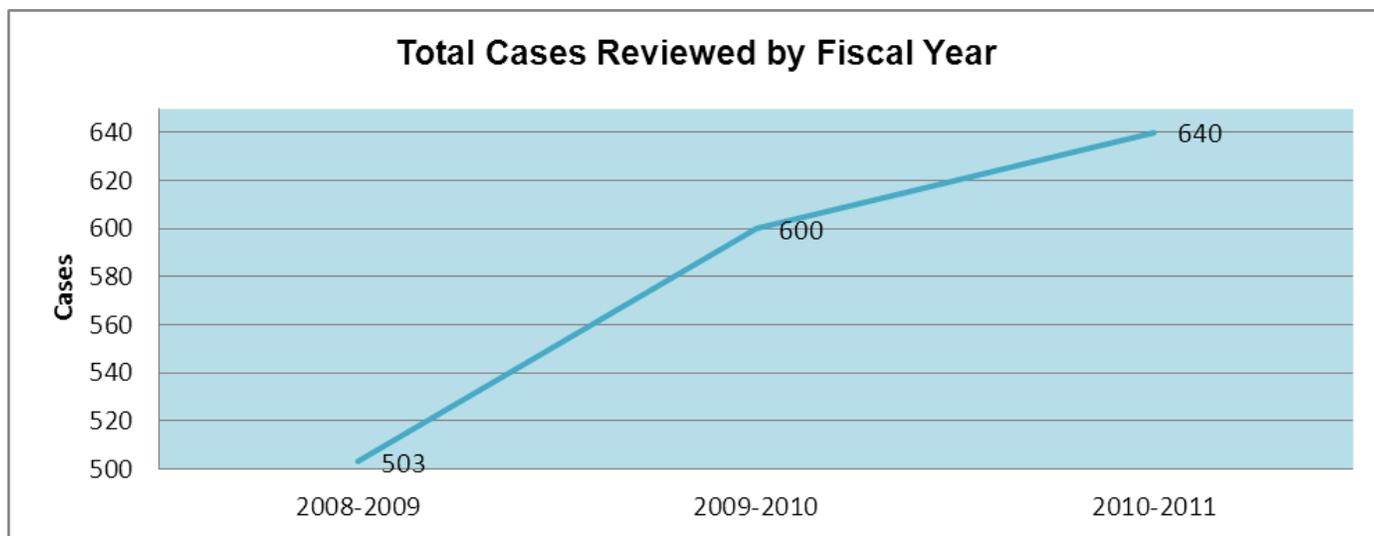
LEGAL



General Counsel, Shay Rose, presenting to the Board of Commissioners at a Commission meeting.

The Legal Division serves as in-house counsel by providing guidance and training to staff and Commissioners; conducting reconsiderations of cases; 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 prosecutes cases where the Commission has found that there is reasonable cause to believe that 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 investigator's recommendations in cases are legally sufficient. In this past fiscal year, the department reviewed and recommended for closure approximately 640 cases, a 27% increase over the last three fiscal years (see chart below). The department reviewed 463 investigative plans, over 105 copy requests, conducted 36 reconsiderations, found reasonable cause in six cases, conciliated five cause cases and several pre-cause cases.



LEGAL

When discrimination occurs that has no direct victim, the Legal division works with the agency's Board of Commissioners to initiate a complaint for investigation. During this past fiscal year, the Commission filed a commission-initiated complaint that involved a property owner who was responsible for placing an advertisement with regard to familial status that the Commission believed to be discriminatory. A case was also filed against the newspaper that printed the advertisement. The settlements in these cases included both monetary and non-monetary benefits. The monetary benefits will go toward future agency outreach & education. The non-monetary benefits included training for the respondents and an agreement that the respondents will not use familial status as a basis to rent housing units or when placing advertising for rental units.

The department monitors state and federal legislation and recent court decisions in discrimination law. There were numerous bills introduced during the 2011 session of the 107th General Assembly of Tennessee that had the potential to affect the Commission. During the session, which began on January 11, 2011 and adjourned on May 21, 2011, there were three (3) bills that passed which have an impact on the Commission's mission:

House Bill 675 / Senate Bill 203 (Passed):

Also known as "sunset" legislation, was passed by the legislature and extends the Human Rights Commission's mission until June 30, 2013.

House Bill 1641 / Senate Bill 940 (Passed):

Establishes a framework for the consideration of evidence offered during all stages of the proceedings in employment discrimination and retaliation cases. This bill specifically overturned the Tennessee Supreme Court case, *Gossett v. Tractor Supply Company*, and conforms to the federal standard.

House Bill 600 / Senate Bill 632 (Passed):

Also known as the "Equal Access to Intrastate Commerce Act", this bill creates definition for "sex" in the Tennessee Human Rights Act. It also prohibits local governments in Tennessee from enacting anti-discrimination policies that are broader than state law.

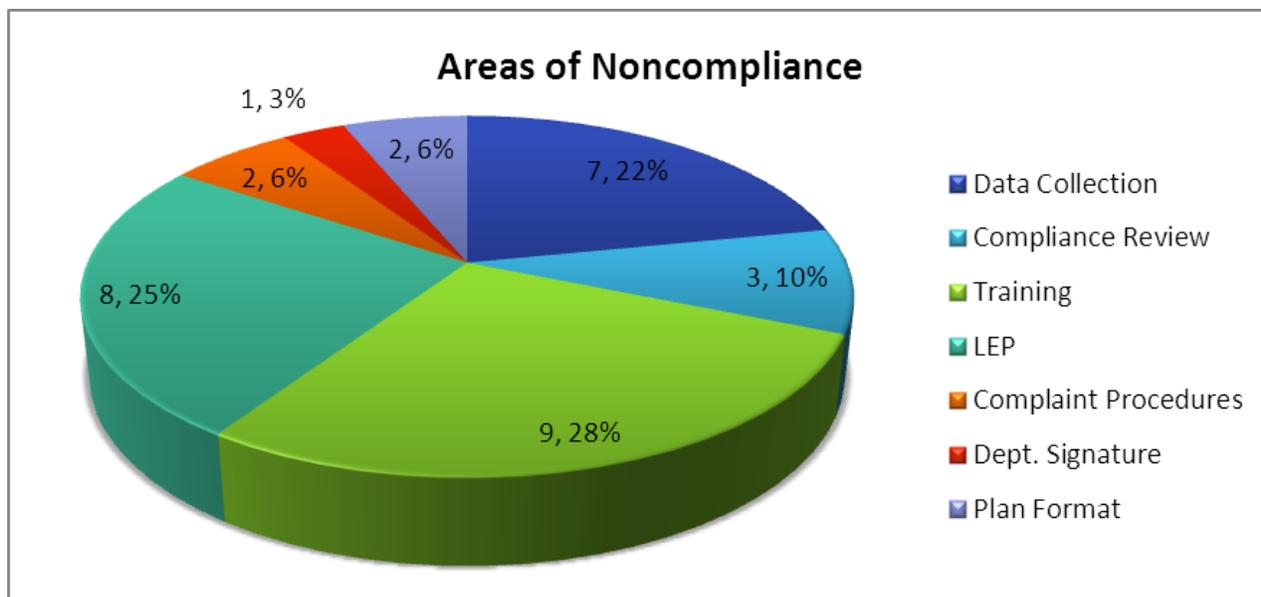
TITLE VI COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

The Title VI Compliance Program is responsible for verifying that state governmental entities that are 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, or 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.

During fiscal year 2010-2011, the Commission developed proposed rules and regulations for the Title VI Compliance Program that were unanimously passed by the Tennessee General Assembly Government Operations Committee and became effective on February 13, 2011.

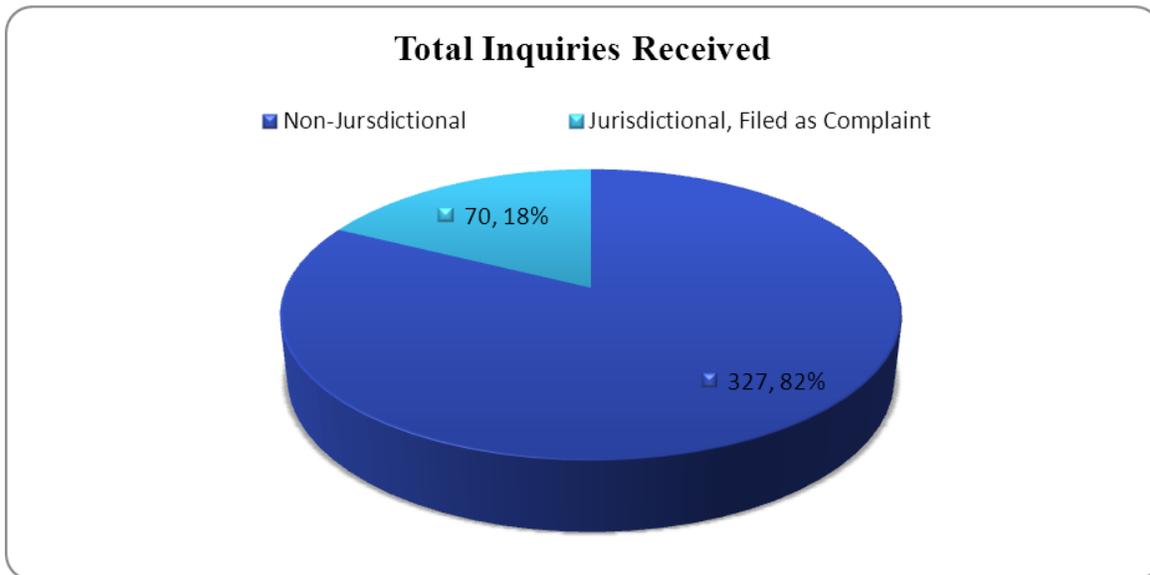
State agencies subject to Title VI must annually report measures taken to meet requirements of by submitting implementation plans. There are 41 state agencies that are required to submit an implementation plan. Review of these plans, which are due October first of each year, is a significant role of the program. In the review, agencies are analyzed on departmental training on Title VI, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policies, data collection and the monitoring of subrecipients' use of federal funds.

Based on the implementation plan review, 20 departments met implementation plan requirements and did not receive any findings. The Title VI Program issued a "Notice of Final Findings" to 21 departments that did not meet Title VI implementation plan requirements. Of those departments: two departments received three findings; seven departments received two findings; and 12 departments received one finding. The most common area of noncompliance was failure to train, representing 28% of findings.



TITLE VI COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

Another responsibility of the compliance program is 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. In the past fiscal year the program received 397 inquiries. Three-hundred-twenty-seven (327), or 82%, of the inquiries were non-jurisdictional; 70 were accepted as complaints. Complaints are not closed with the Commission until written notification of the resolution is received from the referring department. For the fiscal year, 19 cases were closed.



The Commission provided policy guidance to state departments and agencies on Title VI compliance by developing implementation plan guidelines, training on the Title VI prohibition against national origin discrimination affecting LEP persons and establishing topics for overall training of departmental staff. On August 17, 2010, the Commission conducted training for state agency Title VI personnel that covered an explanation of the Title VI Compliance Program and implementation guidelines and plans.

For a full report on the activities, findings and accomplishments of the Title VI Compliance Program please see the [Report to Governor and General Assembly](#).



Title VI Director Marcus Thomas at a training event with state employees regarding Title VI Implementation.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



Commission staff and Joe Rowe, V.P. of the Chattanooga Hamilton County NAACP at the Chattanooga Office of Multicultural Affairs Fair Housing workshop.

Through education and outreach efforts, the Commission seeks to promote an understanding of its work, prevent discrimination and educate the public about the civil rights laws enforced by the Commission. The Commission partners with state and federal agencies, grassroots, faith-based and private organizations to achieve these goals.

The Commission participated in a total of 95 education and outreach events across various communities throughout the state. A range of interest groups were reached at these events including groups focused on issues related to women's equality, the immigrant population, minority business and professional groups and disability advocacy. These events included conducting

workshops, making educational presentations, exhibiting and distributing agency materials at venues, attending meetings, organizing educational seminars and giving speeches.

The Commission had guest appearances on three local network news programs and had an agency hosted event covered on Nashville public television. There were seven radio interviews in the timeframe with three of the interviews on programs dedicated to the Spanish-speaking community. Eight opinion/editorial articles, written by Commissioners and staff, were published in newspapers in Nashville, Oak Ridge and Memphis.

The Commission launched a statewide radio and Internet media campaign during April 2011 in recognition of National Fair Housing Month which advertised the agency's services and mission. The radio campaign reached over three million persons and the Internet campaign reached over 40,000.

In addition to the traditional methods of education and outreach, the agency launched an official Facebook page in February of 2011 that generated over 600 unique visitors. On average, the Commission website was visited over 27,000 times a month.

In summary, the agency expanded its efforts to include social media and radio. We worked with over 125 different organizations statewide to educate the public about their rights reaching an



R to L– Commissioners Spencer Wiggins; Patricia Pierce and A.J. Starling along with Executive Director, Beverly Watts at the Nashville Roundtable and Listening Session event.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

estimated four million individuals. These efforts helped the Commission to reached more areas of the state and connect the agency with various demographics of the population.

The following is a list of some the Commission's community partners and programs in which we participated:

- * *Apartment Association of Greater Knoxville*
- * *April 4th Foundation Commemoration of Dr. King*
- * *Belmont University Mediation and Negotiation Program*
- * *CABLE 2011 Power of Inclusion Luncheon*
- * *Celebration of Cultures*
- * *Chattanooga Office of Multicultural Affairs*
- * *City of Knoxville-Community Development Department*
- * *Community Nashville*
- * *Equality Coalition for Housing Opportunities*
- * *Fair Housing Alliance of Greater Memphis*
- * *Gandhi-King Conference on Peacemaking*
- * *Interdenominational Ministries Fellowship*
- * *International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies*
- * *International Human Rights Day Celebration*
- * *Knoxville Area Urban League*
- * *Let's Talk with Ernie Allen- WQQK FM*
- * *Lipscomb University*
- * *Memphis Bar Association*
- * *Memphis Area Legal Services*
- * *NAACP State Convention*
- * *Napier-Looby Bar Association*
- * *Nashville Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*
- * *Nashville Conflict Resolution Center*
- * *Society of Human Resource Managers- State Conference*
- * *Tennessee AFL-CIO Conference*
- * *Tennessee Association of Affordable Housing*
- * *Tennessee Disability Pathfinder*
- * *Tennessee Fair Housing Council*
- * *Tennessee Fair Housing Matters Conference*
- * *Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition*
- * *Tennessee Labor-Management Foundation Conference*
- * *Tennessee State University*
- * *Umoja Festival*
- * *Vanderbilt University*
- * *Women's Economic Summit 2010*
- * *West Tennessee Legal Services*
- * *YWCA-Stand Against Racism*

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Listening Sessions and Roundtable Discussions

The Commission expanded its statewide listening session tour to include roundtable discussions with community organizations. The purpose of these meetings is to learn more about the issues facing Tennessee's communities and to foster an understanding of the state's civil rights laws as well as the Commission's purpose. These meetings gave commissioners and agency staff an opportunity to conduct an in-person outreach project that allowed members of the general public to bring forward their concerns, questions and challenges with discrimination in the state.

On this three-stop tour, we set up town hall-style meetings in Memphis, Johnson City, and Nashville, Tennessee. These commissioner-facilitated sessions brought out a variety of citizens, human rights organizations and issues. Individuals brought their questions that related to housing, employment, public accommodations and Title VI. In response to these questions, staff provided answers and, where applicable, gathered information to begin the complaint process.

The Commission effectively reached more individuals through this effort than in the initiative's inaugural year. In the second year of this effort, the Commission reached over 130 individuals and saw representation from more than 77 different organizations compared to 75 individuals and 15 organizations last fiscal year. The information gathered at the sessions will be used to identify different areas to extend outreach efforts as well as develop new partnerships with organizations in the coming years.



Memphis



Nashville



Johnson City

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Employment Law Seminar

The Commission hosted the annual Employment Law Seminar at the One Century Place Conference Center in Nashville on June 23, 2011. Chair of the Board of Commissioners, Patricia Pierce, and Executive Director, Beverly Watts, opened the one day meeting with greetings on behalf of the Commission to the attendees.

The seminar covered a variety of topics including: Social networking in the workplace; new regulations for ADA and GINA; cultural differences in the workplace and the complaint process of the EEOC and the Commission. Presenters were: Kim Vance of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz; Deborah Walker of the Nashville EEOC office; Bryan Pieper and Kathleen Pohlid of Drescher Heller Pieper Martin, P.C.; Betty Johnson of Goodwill Industries; Janice Snow-Rodriguez of the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute; Danielle Barnes of the Tennessee Department of Human Resources and Waverly Crenshaw and Jeb Gerth of Waller, Lansden, Dortch & Davis.



L to R– Frank Guzman; DOHR Commissioner Rebecca Hunter; EEOC General Counsel, David Lopez; Executive Director Beverly Watts; Deputy Director Tiffany Baker-Cox

The featured keynote speaker for the seminar was David Lopez, General Counsel for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Mr. Lopez extended his stay in Nashville to include a “Meet & Greet” event the following morning which included local employment plaintiff attorneys, defense attorneys and area advocacy groups. The purpose of the event was to get a better understanding of the employment issues taking place in Tennessee and answer specific questions from participants. It is estimated that 40 people attended the meet and greet event.

The seminar offered participants an opportunity to obtain 6.33 hours of continuing legal education and 6.25 hours of Human Resource Recertification credits. There were 131 attendees at the event. Audience survey results showed that participants felt that the event was very informative and was relevant to their everyday work.



Participants at the 2011 Employment Law Seminar

Photo Highlights of Commission Education and Outreach Events



Regional Coordinator, Matthew Stephenson, interacts with participants at the Scarritt Bennett's annual Celebration of Cultures festival in Nashville.



The Commission is recognized along with other sponsors at the Tennessee Fair Housing Matters Conference.



L to R– Housing Coordinator Richard Gadzekpo, Executive Director Beverly Watts, Knoxville Mayor Brown, and Kendra J. Mansur with Legal Aid of East Tennessee at the annual ECHO Fair Housing Conference.



L to R– Shirley Simms-Saldana of the Metro Human Relations Commission; General Counsel Shay Rose; Associate Counsel Seth Yu at the Fair Housing Matters Conference in Nashville



2010 Human Rights Advocate Awardees (L to R) Don Beisswenger; Tommie Morton-Young and Commissioner, Jocelyn Wurzburg at the celebration of International Human Rights Day



L to R- Representative Janice Sontany; TN Tourism Commissioner, Susan Whitaker; Chair Patricia Pierce; Clarksville Mayor Kim McMillan; Ex. Dir. Beverly Watts at the Women in Government Luncheon.

Photo Highlights of Commission Education and Outreach Events



Executive Director Beverly Watts bringing greetings at the annual conference of the Business and Professional Women of Tennessee.



L to R- Deputy Dir., Tiffany Baker-Cox; Yuri Cunza of the Nashville Hispanic Chamber of Commerce & Special Projects Officer Frank Guzman at the CABLE Nashville Power of Inclusion Luncheon



Commissioner David Cocke and Mrs. Cocke with Executive Director Beverly Watts at the April 4th Foundation MLK banquet in Memphis.



Housing Coordinator, Richard Gadzekpo and Regional Coordinator, Linda Reed with a participant at the Fair Housing Alliance of Greater Memphis Conference.



Deputy Director Tiffany Baker Cox served on a panel with Dept. of Justice Senior Counselor Vicki Schultz at the TN Fair Housing Matters Conference.



THRC Commissioners and Staff, EEOC General Counsel David Lopez and Meet & Greet Breakfast co-host, Waverly Crenshaw at Landsen, Waller, Dortch & Davis in Nashville.

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