

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) is the city's official civil rights agency. We enforce an important set of laws that prevent discrimination and promote equity and equality. We do this by educating neighbors, schools, and community organizations on protections afforded to them under the law, by mediating disputes, and overall, by promoting good will to the citizens of Philadelphia.

The Fair Housing Commission (FHC) ensures that renters have a safe space to live in and landlords are following housing laws. We believe rental housing that works for everybody makes Philadelphia a better place to live.

Equal opportunity and treatment as it relates to employment, housing, and public accommodations are necessary for a thriving Philadelphia. As we face difficult challenges within the city, we must embrace diverse ideas, thoughts, and attitudes.

This report highlights key programs and activities facilitated by PCHR and FHC in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which covers a period from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023. Over the past two years, the Commissioners and staff of the PCHR and the FHC have initiated and participated in numerous programs that foster neighborhood cooperation and bring people together in greater understanding.

Sincerely,

Kia Ghee

Executive Director

Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations
and Fair Housing Commission

THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION



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James F. Kenney

Mayor

Shalimar Thomas

Chairperson

Commission on Human Relations

David Rammler, Esq.

Chairperson

Fair Housing Commission

Kia Ghee, Esq.

Executive Director

Staff

Administration: Saterria Kersey, *Public Information Officer*; Jennifer Hayes, *Administrative Officer*; Shaunda Perkins

Central Intake and Fair Housing: Alison deMedeiros, Esq., *Deputy City Solicitor*; Rosemary Branigan, *Supervisor*; Alexis Enlow; Belinda Holguin; Brenda Madera; Evelyn Rosa-Alicea; Alexander Rudolph; Libertu Pastor-Bey; Michael Fontain; Fabian Uyuni; Yomaris Castro-Olmeda

Compliance Division: Pamela Gwaltney, *Deputy Director*; Karen Forman, Esq., *Principal Assistant*; Lynette McClain, *Supervisor*; Miranda Branch; *Supervisor*; Shauna Crutchfield; Adriana Iraci; Anthony Table; Adrienne Stokes; Alexandra Williams; Fangyuan Su; Monica Gonzalez; Karla Acosta-Pizarro; Jorge Pagan

Community Relations Division: Randy Duque, *Deputy Director*; Shawna Holts, *Supervisor*; Carlos Aviles-Marciano; Chanese Drinks; David Oliver; Bunrath Math; Tierra Thompson

Commissioners

Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations:

- Shalimar Thomas, *Chairperson*
- Rabbi Rebecca Alpert;
- Regina Austin, Esq.;
- Tue Ho, Esq.;
- Steven Larin, Esq.;
- Sarah Ricks, Esq.;
- Kareem Thomas;
- Donald Tibbs, Esq.

Fair Housing Commission:

- David Rammler, Esq., *Chairperson*;
- Juan Baez, Esq.;
- Shalisa Brunson, Esq.
- Darlene Butler;
- Jennifer Sang, Esq.;

Role of the Commissioners

The PCHR is composed of nine Commissioners that are appointed by the Mayor of Philadelphia. The Commissioners are the governing and adjudicatory body of PCHR. They support the agency in establishing policy and regulations which describe how the law is to be enforced. They also hold public hearings and render decisions in cases brought before them.

Formal complaints are investigated by the Commission's staff and reported during the Commission's monthly public meeting, which is held every 3rd Friday, for determination.

The FHC is composed of five Commissioners that are appointed by the Mayor. The Commissioners conduct hearings on properties that are alleged to be unsafe or in poor condition and verifies that landlords have necessary rental licenses and certificates. It also educates tenants and landlords on their rights and responsibilities and connects landlords and tenants to resources and assistance.

Tenants also may file complaints with the Commission if their landlord is engaging in other unfair rental practices or is otherwise retaliating against the tenant for having filed a complaint.

MISSION

PCHR is the City's official civil rights agency. The Commission's mission is to fight discrimination, ensure equality, and build strong communities. PCHR enforces an important set of laws that prevent discrimination and promote equality. The PCHR works to: enforce anti-discrimination laws, especially the City's Fair Practices Ordinance; administer the "Fair Chance Hiring" law that prevents discrimination against people with criminal records; investigate complaints of discrimination and violations of civil rights laws; resolve community conflicts through dialogue and other dispute resolution methods; and educate the public on their legal rights and responsibilities.

ABOUT US

Established in 1951 under the City Charter, the Commission is the quasi-judicial agency empowered by the City to enforce its civil rights laws and to deal with all matters of inter-group conflict within the City. The Commission has the authority to receive and investigate complaints, may initiate its own investigation of practices of discrimination, and may hold public hearings for purposes of investigation and to make the findings public.

The Commission also has the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and to compel the production of documents. The Commission is further mandated to institute and conduct educational programs to promote the equal rights and opportunities of all Philadelphians. The Commission's Dispute Resolution Program provides mediation, conciliation, counseling, and referral services to neighbors and others who have ongoing conflicts.

Established in 1993, the City's Fair Housing Commission (FHC) addresses unfair rental practices and other landlord-tenant disputes. The Commission has the power to hold hearings and conduct investigations in connection with any unfair rental practice upon complaint or upon its own initiative.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

COMMISSIONERS

Mayor James Kenney appointed PCHR Commissioners Kareem Thomas and Tue Ho, Esq. as well as FHC Commissioner Shalisa Brunson, Esq.

PERSONNEL

The PCHR hired a new Administrative Officer in October 2022. Jennifer Hayes ensures the fiscal, budget, procurement, and staffing functions in support of the Commission's work.

STAFF RECOGNITION

Sept. 22, 2022

Executive Director Kia Ghee was named one of Philadelphia's Most Influential Leaders by the *Philadelphia Tribune*.

Dec 7, 2022

Deputy Director Randy Duque was honored at the 2022 Peace Islands Institute's Public Heroes Appreciation Dinner alongside other leaders in local and federal law enforcement, including Jacqueline Maguire (Special Agent in Charge, Philadelphia Field Office of the FBI), and Philadelphia Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw.

June 12, 2023

Executive Director Kia Ghee was named to City & State Magazine Pennsylvania's Law Power 100.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

PCHR and FHC staff members are available who are fluent in:

**MANDARIN
SPANISH
KHMER**

PCHR recognizes that the population eligible for services includes individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP). PCHR is committed to ensuring these individuals have proper access to services. It is the City's policy to grant access to services or programs to every person, even when the person has a limited ability to speak, understand, read or write English.

PCHR intends to take reasonable steps to provide LEP persons with meaningful access to service and programs.

Our Language Access plan is located online:

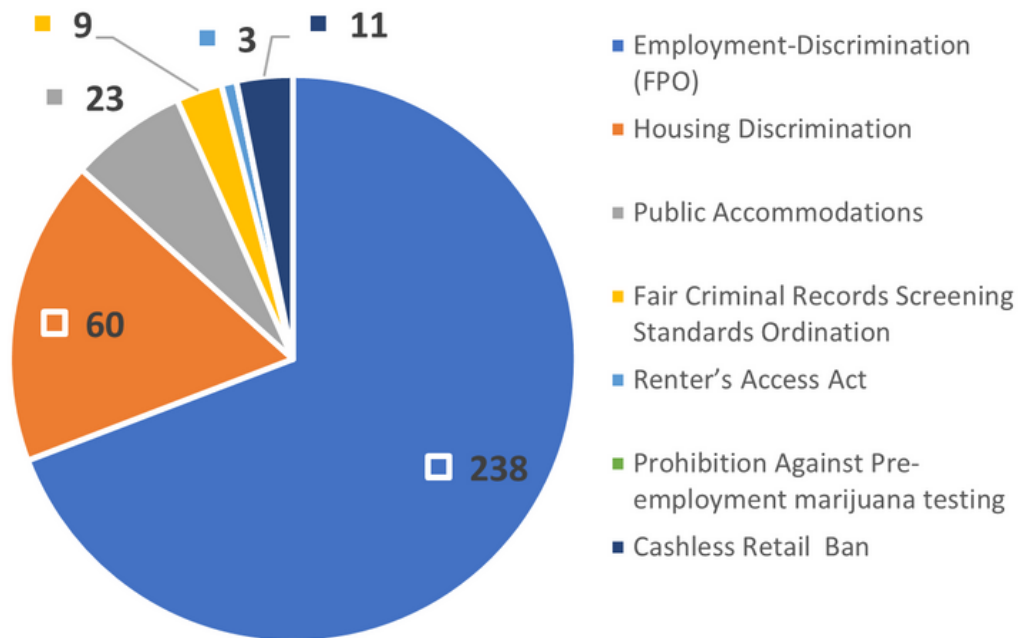
<https://tinyurl.com/languageplan>

COMPLIANCE DIVISION

The Compliance Division enforces laws that prohibit discrimination and promote equality by conducting thorough investigations and recommending findings. If an investigation results in a finding of probable cause, the Commission will hold a public hearing and issue an order aimed at remedying the discrimination.

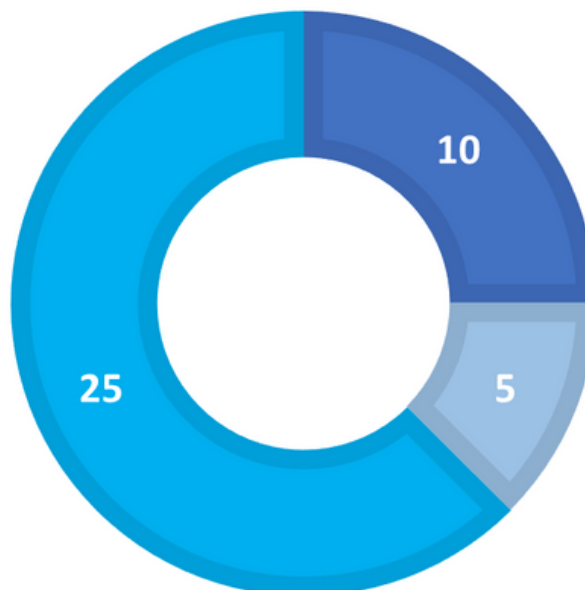
The Compliance Division also educates the public and conducts training on discrimination law.

CASES INVESTIGATED FY 23



REVENUE TYPE FY 23

- Private/Confidential Settlements
- Non-Monetary
- Financial compensation



REVENUE GENERATED FY 23

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| Settlements | \$653,003 |
|-------------|-----------|

TYPES OF CASES FY 23

| | |
|--|----|
| Mediated cases | 3 |
| Case conciliated after a finding of Probable Cause | 12 |

Mediation: The Compliance Division also operates a Discrimination Mediation Program, which resolves employment, housing, and public accommodations discrimination cases efficiently by drawing upon support from volunteer lawyers who have trained in mediation. Mediation makes processing cases more efficient by settling issues at an early stage and avoiding lengthy investigations.

EEOC/FEPA: The PCHR has a work-sharing agreement with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Under contract with EEOC as a Fair Employment Practices Agency (FEPA) that aligns with the federal fiscal year, the PCHR receives dual-filed discrimination cases, which it investigates and closes.

In FY23, the PCHR closed 90 cases, a joint FEPA project, and other trainings which generated \$79,600 from the EEOC for its case closings and outreach activities.

Regulation No. 9: In July 2022, the Commission promulgated regulations for §9-1133 (Policy of Non-discrimination as to Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Youth). These regulations institute some very important requirements for institutions serving youth, including:

- **Names/pronouns** - Institutions shall use the name and pronouns with which a youth identifies.
- **Privacy/confidentiality** - Institution personnel shall not disclose information that may reveal a youth's transgender identity.
- **Restroom /Locker Room Access** - Youth shall have access to the restroom/locker room that corresponds to their gender identity.
- **Dress Codes/Uniforms** - permitted to dress in clothing that corresponds to their gender identity.
- **Training** - Institutions shall regularly conduct training for all staff members.

CENTRAL INTAKE UNIT

The Central Intake Unit reviews client concerns of discrimination, unfair rental practices, and neighborhood disputes.

The Central Intake Unit determines if a client has a jurisdictional complaint that can be addressed by either the PCHR or the FHC.

If a concern is not within the jurisdiction of either the PCHR or the FHC, the client will be notified and, if appropriate, referred to another agency.

| CENTRAL INTAKE SERVICES | FY 2023 |
|---|---------|
| Clients Assisted – Total Requests for Information | 1,492 |

OPERATING BUDGET

| EXPENDITURE DESCRIPTION | FY 2023 |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Personnel services | \$2,340,114 |
| Services | \$22,125 |
| Materials/supplies | \$13,939 |
| Equipment | \$11,728 |

FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION

The FHC enforces the Fair Housing Ordinance and addresses unfair rental practices within Philadelphia. The FHC is a neutral agency that advocates fairness in rental property relationships. A Fair Housing complaint may be filed if:

- A tenant is being threatened with illegal eviction;
- A landlord is raising rent in the face of housing code violations;
- A landlord is retaliating against a tenant for reporting housing code violations to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) or for filing a complaint with the FHC

| FHC Services | FY 2023 |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Number of reported cases | 575 |

Eviction Taskforce: FHC leadership has played an active role in the Mayor's Eviction Task Force since the task force's formation. The task force is charged with issuing recommendations on how to ease or end the eviction crisis that is affecting many low-income Philadelphians. Among other initiatives, members of the task force have focused on promoting and strengthening the Fair Housing Ordinance to provide greater protections for tenants and landlords in the city.

The FHC enforces the Fair Housing Ordinance (FHO) (Chapter 9-800 of the Philadelphia Code), which addresses unfair rental practices in housing, particularly when a property has been cited for code violations. Each year, hundreds of tenants file complaints with the FHC seeking redress after their landlords engage in unfair rental practices, such as terminating a lease when a property is cited for code violations or retaliating against tenants for exercising their legal rights. The FHC also conducts educational outreach to inform tenants and landlords of their legal rights and responsibilities.

In FY23, the FHC adjudicated nearly 700 cases alleging violations of the Fair Housing Ordinance to resolve unfair rental practices occurring in Philadelphia. The FHC also provided training on the FHO and its protections to Philadelphia Eviction Diversion Program as well as the Pennsylvania Bar Association. In FY 24, The FHC will pilot a program to provide free hearing transcripts to low-income tenants who wish to appeal a ruling of the FHC.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIVISION



The PCHR Community Relations Division (CRD) deals with all matters of intergroup conflict and neighborhood disputes within the City. The CRD uses a variety of approaches to encourage people of all backgrounds to cultivate mutual understanding and respect among Philadelphia's diverse communities.

A key function of the CRD is to help empower communities by building coalitions that work together to solve common problems. This is achieved by working in cooperation with the police department, local businesses, community-based organizations, religious leaders and other government agencies.

The CRD also provides schools, communities and government agencies with informational sessions and training programs on issues relating to cultural diversity and intergroup harmony. These educational activities are designed to reduce and prevent intergroup tension, addressing issues before they rise to the level of inter-group conflict.

| CRD SERVICES | FY 2023 |
|--|---------|
| Intergroup Conflict Cases Investigated | 56 |
| Neighbor Dispute Cases Investigated | 263 |
| Hate & Bias Incidents Investigated | 101 |
| Prevention/Education Activities | 381 |

NOTEWORTHY CONFLICT RESPONSES

Human Relations Representatives worked hard to provide conflict resolution and other support to area high schools including: Dobbins, Overbrook, Northeast, and Roxborough High Schools. Representatives also worked with students at Penn Alexander.

Human Relations Representatives mediated a complex intergroup neighborhood conflict involving multiple neighbors in the 24th Police District which resulted in agreement.

PCHR worked with the District Attorney's office and Police Department to monitor updates following the vandalism of Masjidullah Mosque.

Hate and Bias Incidents: The PCHR continues to respond to many hate crimes and bias incidents. In FY23, the PCHR recorded 65 separate incidents. Of these incidents: 2 were not hate-related, 60 were confirmed, and three were unconfirmed (insufficient information to establish as hate-related). To combat further hate and bias incidents, the CRD staff increased outreach to many communities including immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ+ residents, and various religious groups.

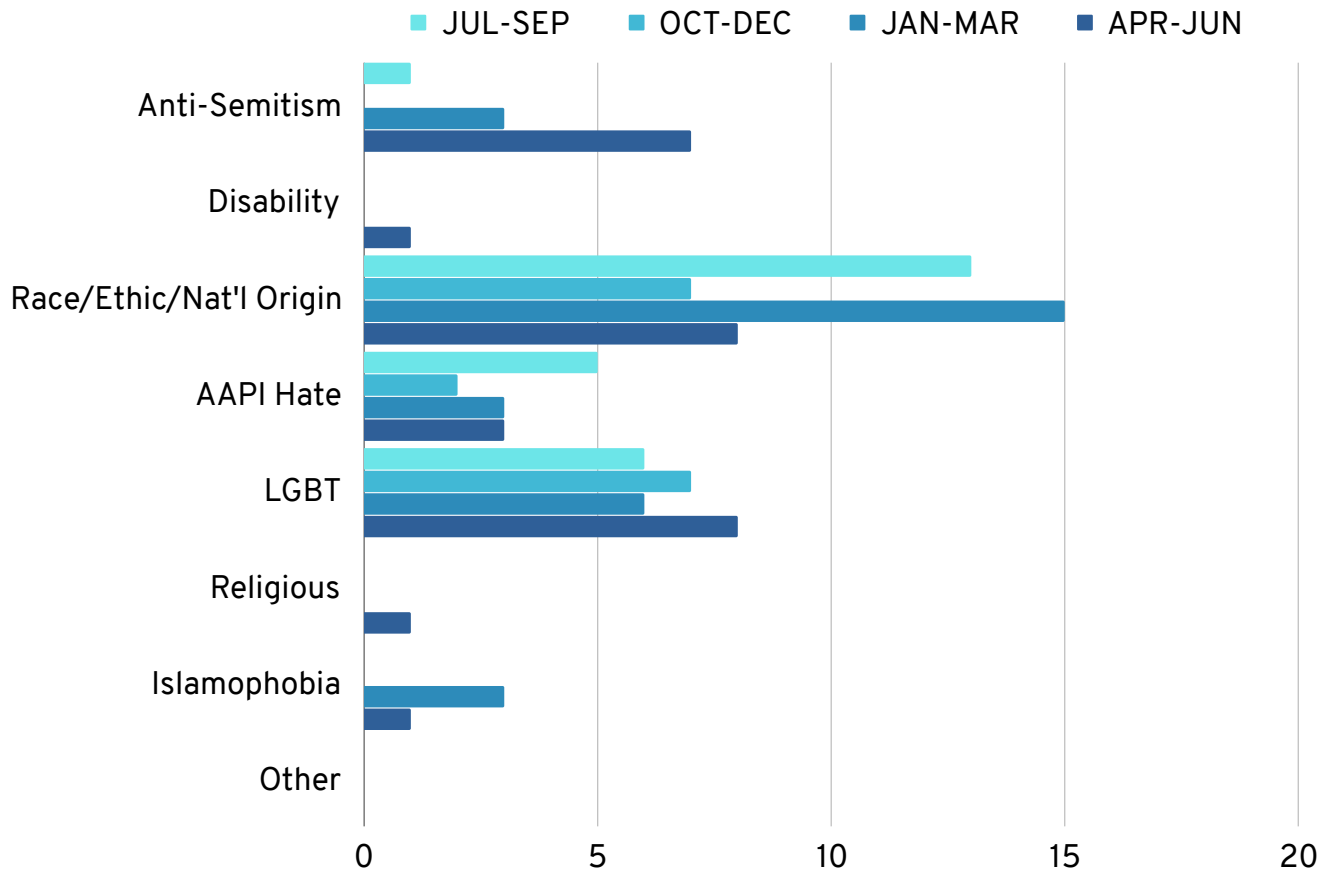
Civil Rights Rapid Response Team: The PCHR continues to deploy its Philadelphia Civil Rights Rapid Response Team, an interdisciplinary group of civil rights leaders from City, state, and federal agencies, the School District of Philadelphia, and advocacy groups that respond to hate crimes, bias incidents, and violent acts that have bias potential. The team also is involved in creating education programs.

Civil Rights Task Force: On a bi-monthly basis, the PCHR convenes an Interagency Civil Rights Task Force that is made up of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and community partners who work to prevent intergroup tension and bias crimes.

Intergroup Conflict Response Program: The CRD provides a variety of conflict resolution and mediation services to resolve neighborhood disputes and works to engage people of different backgrounds to promote intergroup harmony. The CRD also conducts skills-building workshops and serves as the general educational arm of the PCHR. Through its Dispute Resolution Program, the CRD responds to requests from residents, policymakers, and law enforcement to help quell neighbor disputes and other volatile situations that have not yet escalated to violence and are not being litigated in court. It is one of the most frequently accessed initiatives offered by the PCHR, helping to divert police presence or constituent services resources to more pressing matters by preventing neighborhood problems from escalating.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIVISION

HATE AND BIAS INCIDENTS



EXAMPLES OF HATE REPORTED

- Anti-LGBT (trans) - A group of adults destroyed a trans woman's home and property and repeatedly call her an anti-trans slur.
- Racial (anti-Black) - Black woman called racial slurs and threatened with a gun by two males after she parked too close to their car.
- Racial (anti-Black) – Woman found the "N-word" written in chalk in front of her home.
- Religious (Antisemitic) – Neo-Nazi stickers found posted in Chestnut Hill.
- Racial (Asian) - Parent sent vulgar text and email to a school principal calling him an anti-South Asian slur
- Religious (Islamophobia) - Person threatened to kill his ex-wife's current husband because he is Muslim.
- Festival organizer received a letter allegedly from the Proud Boys reading, "Let us entertain at your festival. Pedophiles. Perverts, Liberals don't belong here. Get out now or you will pay the price. We don't like your kind around here anymore."
- Elementary school was vandalized by arson and graffiti by several teens where the graffiti calls a faculty member anti-black and LGBT slurs.

HIGHLIGHTS

TRAINING

PCHR and the Office of LGBTQ Affairs developed training for the Office of Parks and Recreation to ensure that Mummer's staff receive training in understanding cultural appropriation, rules of satire, LGBTQ cultural competence, and bias awareness.



PREVENTION



PCHR and Muflehun (a Washington, D.C. based nonprofit research organization) convened the CREWS (Community Resiliency Early Warning System) Summit which brought together representatives across various city departments and offices to understand the risk and protective factors that contribute to hate and bias in the city and begin working on a inter-city agency strategy to prevent acts of hate.

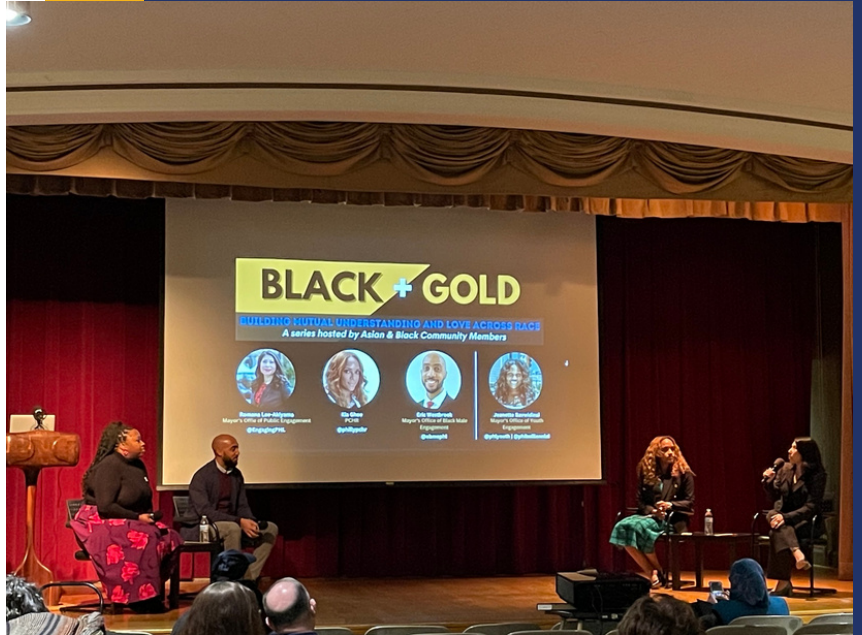
Human Relations Representative assisted the 12th Police District Advisory Council develop events for Mental Health Awareness Month.

HIGHLIGHTS

BLACK + GOLD SERIES

The Black + Gold Leadership Boot Camp series was able to give the city's Commissioners and key community leaders tools to help them strengthen their understanding and interaction between Black and Asian communities through experiential learning. The first-ever workshop was hosted by PCHR and the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement (OPE), the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA).

The Black + Gold Series focused on building cross-racial conversations and dialogue to promote cooperation and mutual understanding. OPE invited community leaders and organizations to submit their ideas for programs that can create dialog and unity across specific neighborhoods, schools, community centers, or virtually. OPE maintains a calendar of events that promote Black + Gold Series activities through its weekly newsletter and social media channels.



July 2022

PCHR and the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement held the final session Black + Gold Series Leadership Boot Camp at Shofuso Japanese House on July 21, 2022. This series invited the City Commissioners and community leaders to come together in dialogue on the topic of Black and Asian community relations. Through the series, participants were guided through discussions that allowed them to learn more about each other and empowered them to continue the work in their respective communities.

November 2022

PCHR conducted a train-the-trainer training session for participants from the Black + Gold Leadership Summer Bootcamp Series who expressed interest in continuing the program in their respective communities.



HIGHLIGHTS

PUSH SYMPOSIUM



PCHR brought federal, state, and City leaders, alongside community leaders and experts in Civil Rights and public safety to host prototypic People United to Stop Hate (PUSH) Symposium. The discussion focused on combating hate across the commonwealth.



LEGISLATION



Reproductive Rights Amendment (#220664) on **Nov. 10, 2022**, Executive Director Kia Ghee testified in support of City Council's legislative package aimed at protecting and expanding an individual's fundamental right to reproductive healthcare and abortion access.

The bill amended the Fair Practices Ordinance to add protections for individual reproductive health autonomy and will provide reasonable accommodations for those who have medical needs related to their reproductive healthcare services.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act became effective on **June 27, 2023**. However, Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance has prohibited discrimination based on pregnancy status has been unlawful since 2013. Protection extends to all qualified employees or job applicants affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition.

There are five prohibited practices under Section 103 of the PWFA. An employer cannot:

Deny Reasonable Accommodation: Deny a reasonable accommodation to the known limitations of a qualified employee or applicant absent undue hardship.

Requiring Acceptance of Reasonable Accommodation without Interactive Process (Forced Accommodation): Require a qualified employee or applicant affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions to accept an accommodation other than any reasonable accommodation arrived at through the interactive process.

Denying Employment Opportunity: Deny an employment opportunity to a qualified employee or applicant because it will have to provide a reasonable accommodation.

Forced Leave: Require a qualified employee to take leave, whether paid or unpaid, if another reasonable accommodation can be provided to the known limitations under the PWFA.

Taking Adverse Action: Take an adverse action in terms, conditions, or privileges of employment against a qualified employee or applicant on account of the employee requesting or using a reasonable accommodation.

YEAR IN REVIEW

September 2022

Executive Director Kia Ghee spoke on the importance of ending racism as a way to build peace at the Peace Day Philly Program.

November 2022

PCHR's Intake Team and Fair Housing Reps participated in a housing clinic sponsored by State Representative Morgan Cephas, distributing information on Housing Discrimination as well as Tenant Screening Guidelines under the Renter's Access Act.

January 2023

PCHR Attorney Karen Forman presented information on PCHR's age discrimination protections for the Philadelphia Corporation on Aging Joint Advisory Council.

August 2022

Deputy Director Randy Duque spoke on the importance of dialogue and celebration to promote understanding and combat anti-Asian hate at the "Celebrate Asia Festival," PECO Multicultural Series event which was co-sponsored by the Mayor's Advisory Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs.

October 2022



Deputy Director Pamela Gwaltney spoke as a panelist at PHRC C.R.O.W.N. Act event alongside Ajoa Asamoah who pioneered a nationwide legislative strategy to increase protection against race-based discrimination based on hair.

December 2022

Executive Director Kia Ghee spoke on bias in the Philadelphia legal system and its impact on access to justice at the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

YEAR IN REVIEW

March 2023

Executive Director Kia Ghee spoke at the flag raising ceremony for Trans Day of visibility.

April 2023

PCHR and the Mayor's Commission on Faith-Based and Interfaith Affairs co-sponsored an interfaith Iftar with the Peace Islands Institute. The theme of the Iftar was "Breaking Fast, Confronting Hate."

Executive Director Kia Ghee, spoke on the nuanced forms of housing discrimination and what PCHR is doing to combat housing discrimination at the National Bar Association Women Lawyers Division.

Deputy Director Pamela Gwaltney conducted a training for City Council constituent services staffers on the Renters Access Act.

May 2023

Executive Director Kia Ghee was a guest on the WPHL 17 Politics in Focus program where she discussed the overlapping increase anti-Semitic and anti-Black hate and bias incidents in Philadelphia and PCHR's ongoing efforts to combat hate.

PCHR co-sponsored a Gun Violence Education Campaign with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. The campaign featured a gun violence summit with a panel discussion featuring, Deputy Police Commissioner Joel Dales, Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, Victim Advocate Adara Combs, Executive Director Marla Davis Bellamy of Philly Cease Fire, Black Voters Matter, and Jeanette Bavwindinsi, Director of Youth Engagement for the City of Philadelphia.

June 2023

Deputy Director Randy Duque provided remarks at the City of Philadelphia's Philippine flag raising event at City Hall.

SUPPORTING PHILADELPHIA



We continue to support communities in Philadelphia to fight discrimination, ensure equality, and build strong communities.

