



CITY OF DECATUR HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR MAY 2012 – APRIL 2013

INTRODUCTION

Included in this report is a chart of the previous years' complaint information; a chart of this fiscal year's statistical data on complaints filed with the Human Relations Commission; highlights of the Human Relations Commission for this fiscal year; and a letter from the Human Relations Commission Chair for FY 2012-2013.

Under the provisions of Chapter 28 UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION, there are thirteen members who serve as Human Relations Commissioners, appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. All Commissioners serve without compensation. The Human Rights Officer is a staff position appointed by the City Manager and serves as liaison to the Commission. The Commission meets at 5:30 p.m. the second Thursday of each month in the City Council Chamber. The meetings are open to the public.

At the end of the fiscal year, in April 2013, the Human Relations Commission consisted of 13 commissioners:

Ida Brooks, Ronald Callow, Carletha Currie, Steve Grimm, Kofi Houston, Jody Hunt (Chair), Phyllis McPherron, Jessica Michael, Jesse Price, Derrick Thaxton, Linda Tyus (Vice Chair), Marty Vigneri, and Robert Whitten.

Commissioners Jason Hood, Jane Canham, and Stephen Hill all left their commissions during the fiscal year. Commissioners Currie, Grimm and Thaxton replaced Commissioners Commissioner Hood, Canham and Hill, while Commissioner Whitten was added to fill the remaining term of a vacancy from last fiscal year.

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COMPLAINANTS

The following is a synopsis of the number of complainants that have brought their allegations to the Commission during the fiscal years 2009-2013

Fiscal Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Number of Discrimination Complaints Filed	70	56	43	87	61
Number of Complaints Closed	53	46	35	51	54
Percent Cases Closed	76%	82%	81%	59%	89%

TYPES OF CHARGES FILED WITH THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Complaints Received/Fiscal Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Disability Charges	9	6	3	10	8
Discrimination: Age	1	2	7	6	3
Housing	5	1	2	1	3
Racial	15	14	10	24	25
Religion	2	3	0	4	1
Sex (Gender)	1	3	9	15	2
Sexual Orientation	4	1	5	7	0
Sexual Harassment	12	3	1	7	0
Union Related	0	0	0	1	1
Marital Status	1	0	0	1	0
National Origin	2	1	0	1	2
Military Discharge	0	0	0	0	0
Retaliation	15	11	5	8	6
Unfair Treatment	2	9	1	1	6
Arrest/Conviction	1	2	0	1	4
TOTAL NEW CASES FOR THE YEAR	70	56	43	87	61

The above chart shows the actual charges filed for the fiscal years 2009-2013. Seventy (70) charges were filed during fiscal year 2012-2013. The racial discrimination and retaliation tied for the majority of claims filed (43%). Two (2) cases were brought before the Human Relations Commission in a public hearing. The closure rate for cases filed during FY 2012-2013 was 76%.

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FY 2012-2013 HIGHLIGHTS

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Steering Committee held a very successful Memorial Service at St. Patrick Catholic Church and MLK Banquet at the Decatur Conference Center Hotel over the MLK holiday weekend. Over 550 people participated in the two days of holiday events. The guest speaker for this year's event was Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr., a 1960s Civil Rights Movement activist.

The Human Relations Commission continued to provide support to its committees, the Public Relations and Education Committee, the Complaints and Compliance Committee, and the Fair Housing Committee by financing the publication of two informative handbooks, "*How Are Discrimination Claims Handled*" and "*Landlord-Tenant Handbook*." Both publications were distributed to community groups and citizens alike. The Decatur Public Library has copies on hand for reference and gives them away to the asking.

The Fair Housing Committee, although deactivated as opposed to being dissolved at the end of last fiscal year, spawned Task Force 2012, which studied ways of assessing potential unlawful discrimination in lending and real estate practices. The Commission participated in Money Smart Week 2013 by video recording a presentation for broadcast on cable channel 18 regarding the issues of unlawful discrimination.

The Commission continued recording its monthly meetings for broadcast on Channel 18 cable and the City's website. Several public information videos were produced by the Commissioners and recorded by Asst. City Manager Billy Tyus which featured the reasons that the Commissioners chose to serve and continue to serve on the Commission. The Commission continued public access to its services by being maintaining its presence on the City's Facebook page as well as having its own Twitter account.

There was a 25% increase in the number of charges filed with the Commission this fiscal year as compared to FY 2011-2012. This increase most likely represents the improvement, albeit slight, in the nation's economic recovery, since most of the Commission's claims originate from employee/employer conflicts.

During FY 2012-2013 the Commission's budget, previous tracked in the non-departmental budgets, was absorbed into the Management Services, Human Resources Division budget. Consequently, there is no budget report for this year's revenues and expenditures by the Commission, as opposed to prior years' annual reports.

The Commission held two motion hearings on Complaints, encompassing a total of four separate charges, filed during the fiscal year. Hearings on the merits of both of those complaints are being carried over into May, 2013 to accommodate the schedules of the parties. In each instance, Human Relations Commissioners are serving as the hearing officers presiding over the proceedings.

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HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER ACTIVITY REPORT

The Human Rights Officer's position was filled the entire fiscal year by Mark Barthelemy. During the course of FY 2012-2013, Mr. Barthelemy was involved in the following:

- Two motion hearings, pertaining to pending Complaints on file, were held during the fiscal year and both public hearings have been carried over into the 2013-2014 fiscal period. HRO Barthelemy served as clerk for the hearings with two separate pairs of hearing officers presiding over the evidence and testimony at different stages of the hearing.
- Seven cases filed with the Commission were successfully resolved in mediation sessions conducted by HRO Barthelemy during the fiscal year, thus potentially avoiding that many additional public hearings.
- HRO Barthelemy conducted 35 intake interviews during the fiscal year which resulted in 70 charges being filed by the Commission. Of those charges, 33 (47%) were dismissed for lack of probable cause; seven (7) or 10% were settled in mediation; no charges were referred to the Illinois Department of Human Rights; four (0.5%) resulted in public hearings; in three (3) cases or (0.4%) no charges were filed; six (6) charges or (0.8%) were dismissed for lack of jurisdiction; and currently ten (10) charges or (14%) are still pending with the investigations in progress.
- Three one-day-long sessions were held indoctrinating five new commissioners to the laws regarding their responsibilities and unlawful discrimination as well as Commission procedures.
- Three vacancies occurred on the Commission during the fiscal year and one vacancy was continued over from last fiscal year, with all of the vacancies being filled by the City Council to date.
- HRO Barthelemy gave seven presentations to the community and reached 265 people during the past fiscal year. The topics of those presentations covered the work of the Commission, and how victims should handle situations presented to them and his career with the Decatur Police Department prior to retirement, and or the history of the Decatur Police Department.
- HRO Barthelemy conducted one (1) internal investigation at the direction of the City Manager during the fiscal year.
- HRO Barthelemy provided 45 Fire Department supervisors with narrative report writing training during the fiscal year.
- HRO Barthelemy attended 10 different meetings of the Commission's committees during the fiscal year.
- HRO Barthelemy was an organizer and keynote speaker at a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" celebration held on March 30, 2013 at the Decatur Conference Center and Hotel. Seven separate planning sessions were required as well as fundraising efforts in order to organize the event.

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COMMITTEES

The Commission has two standing committees and two special committees. The two standing committees are the Public Relations and Education Committee and the Complaints and Compliance Committee. The two special committees are The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Steering Committee and the Task Force 2012 Committee.

The Public Relations and Education Committee develops and presents information and programs about the work and purpose of the Human Relations Commission to the general public. By networking with the media, civic clubs and service organizations, the Committee promotes the mission of the Commission and advertises the availability of assistance to Decatur residents who believe they have been discriminated against.

The Complaints and Compliance Committee reviews current code and legislation for recommended revision, as well as providing oversight of the Human Rights Officer's investigation, mediation and processing of discrimination complaints. It meets on an every-other-month basis throughout the year, formulating and recommending action to the Commission as a whole when necessary. In addition, the Committee considers all requests filed by complainants for review of the Human Rights Officer's decision to dismiss their charges. The Committee held two such meetings during the fiscal year.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Steering Committee is a special committee that is self-funded with major support from community businesses, the Commission, and the City of Decatur. The Committee promotes the MLK Holiday by providing a yearly march, program, and banquet over the holiday weekend.

The Decatur Fair Housing Committee, although deactivated at this time, is a special committee of the Human Relations Commission, entrusted to ensure equal and fair housing opportunities for every citizen in Decatur regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, family status, sexual orientation or disability through the bridging of federal, state, and local government, business, nonprofit, and community efforts. This year, the committee sponsored the Money Smart Week 2013 events in Decatur and hosted one video-recorded presentation during the week spotlighting human rights in the areas of employment, credit and lending practices, real estate transactions, and place of public accommodation. That recording will be played periodically throughout the remaining year on cable Channel 18.

**City of Decatur Human Relations Commission
Annual Report of Fiscal Year May 2012 – April 2013**

Letter from the Human Relations Commission Chair

Decatur City Council Members:

The Human Relations Commission continues with its duty to uphold the provisions set forth in Chapter 28 of the Decatur City Code.

During the FY13 fiscal year, the Commission has experienced a turnover in several of its members. Appointments were made by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council, thus the Commission has a full roster of 13 dedicated members from the Decatur community.

Two standing committees and two special committees make up the current committee structure giving Commissioner's the opportunity to work to promote and regulate the Commission's activities. They are the Public Relations and Education and the Complaints and Compliant committees. The special committees include the Martin Luther King and the Fair Housing special committees.

The Martin Luther King Special Committee sponsored the 26th Annual Martin Luther King Banquet which was held on January 19, 2013. Long-time civil rights activist and organizer, Bernard Lafayette, Jr., was the keynote speaker.

Although the Fair Housing Special Committee was disbanded at the end the FY12 fiscal year, a special sub-committee was formed to investigate the possibility of reproducing the John Marshall Law School's original study of discriminatory practices in lending and real estate transactions in Decatur. A proposal has been submitted to the Commission and the special sub-committee is researching funding options.

Commissioners also have the opportunity to serve as hearing officers on all public hearings. Special training and support from the City's Assistant Corporation Counsel allow Commissioners to preside over the hearings and write recommendations of judgment to assist in the deliberation of the entire Commission. In FY13, Commissioners lead three public hearings.

It has been a year of change for the Decatur Human Relations Commission. We welcome visitors to our monthly meeting held on the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, 3rd Floor of the Decatur Civic Center.

Respectfully,



Jody L. Hunt, Chair