

Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

2020 Annual Report

Volume 1



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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907-274-4692 Anchorage Area

800-478-4692 Toll Free

907-276-3177 TTY/TDD Anchorage Area

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711 TTY / Alaska Relay



From left to right: Commissioner Jamie Allard, Vice-Chairperson Betsy Engle, Chairperson Debbie Fullenwider, Commissioner Cynthia Erickson, Commissioner Evelyn Falzerano, Commissioner Kyle Foster, and Commissioner William Craig.

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COMMISSIONERS

A. Debbie Fullenwider, *Chairperson*

Betsy M. Engle, *Vice-Chairperson*

William P. Craig

Jamie D. Allard

Cynthia M. Erickson

Evelyn R. Falzerano

Kyle N. Foster

COMMISSION STAFF

Administration/Legal

Robert Corbisier

Executive Director

Toyia Del Valle

Administrative Officer

Helen T. Hickmon

Human Rights Advocate

Carolyn Thomas

Paralegal

Sarah Bylsma

Office Assistant

Jennifer Barker

Commission Secretary

Investigations

Nanette Gay

Investigations Director

Antoinette Hamilton

Investigator

Breanne Lee

Investigator

Mark Loper

Investigator

Donna Nass

Investigator

Or'Lanthia Lloyd

Investigator

Jocelyn Thammavongsa

Investigator

Front and rear cover photos courtesy of Ed Boudreau. Mr. Boudreau is a retired Air Force veteran who resides in Eagle River with his wife and son. He is a landscape photographer currently exploring and capturing all the beauty Alaska offers. You can see other works at his gallery on JBER and online at www.edboudreauphotography.com.



The Honorable Michael J. Dunleavy, Governor of Alaska

The Honorable Alaska Senate President

The Honorable Speaker of the Alaska House of Representatives

Please accept this 2020 Annual Report on behalf of the Commissioners and the Commission Staff as a summary of activities regarding our responsibilities concerning the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights. Our Commission is unique from a legislative standpoint (Alaska State Statutes Title 18 Chapter 80), made up of Commissioners who are Volunteers, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Legislature.

Sec.18.80.060 (a) Paragraph 6 requires "an overall assessment, at least once every three years, of the progress made toward equal employment opportunity by every department of State Government; results of the assessment shall be included in the Annual report made under AS 18.80.150". Because the Commission is attempting for the second time to comply with the statutory deadline for the Annual Report, the assessment data and analysis will not be complete until early spring. As soon as this information is available we will send it to you as a supplement to this report.

The Commission processed 1124 inquires in 2020 which resulted in 189 intake files and 159 formal complaints. This calendar year we closed 170 formal complaints, 27 of which were filled in 2020. Currently we have 249 open cases (formal complaints and undisclosed inquires) that our investigators are actively pursuing.

The Commissioners recently passed a motion directing that the complaint resolution process as represented by flow chart in this report be amended to move to an early and mandatory investigator-led resolution process instead of using formal Commission-sponsored mediation. The Commission anticipates that administrative mediation will still be available at no expense to the complainant and respondent through the Office of Administrative Hearing for cases that advance to a public accusation. The intent is to shorten the time frame concerning the Complaint Resolution Process while insuring all participants are provided due process. This will require a regulatory change to 6AAC 30 which is currently in progress.

In 2019 there was pending legislation (HB 82 & SB 82, & HB 119) that could impact the Human Rights commission and it was possible that we would be asked to take a position. The Commissioners recently passed a motion that the Commission will uphold and enforce the law enacted by the legislature and will not take a political position in favor or opposed to any bill offered.

Our Outreach program continued despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission participated in and/or met with the following: Alaska Bar Association 11th Annual MLK Day Free Legal Help Clinic, Challenge Alaska, Midnight Sun Service Dogs, Elizabeth Peratrovich Day Celebration, Meet the World, Rural Alaskan Community Environmental Job Training program (with UAF), Talk of Alaska, testimony to the Anchorage Assembly, Alaska Small Business Development Center, letters to 16 Unions and 14 Alaska Regional organizations inviting a dialogue, Alaska Legal Services corporation, Copper River Native Association, Inland Boatman's Union, Public Rights Project. The Commission also purchased advertising space in the Anchorage Daily News and Must Read Alaska.

A committee was established to review our current lease agreement because of the Commissioners concerns regarding the condition of the current office space occupied by our Commission staff. These concerns were based on health, safety and the overall condition of the structure and grounds which we now believe to be in violation of the lease agreement. A letter which details these deficiencies has been sent to the Administrative Services Director for his review and disposition.

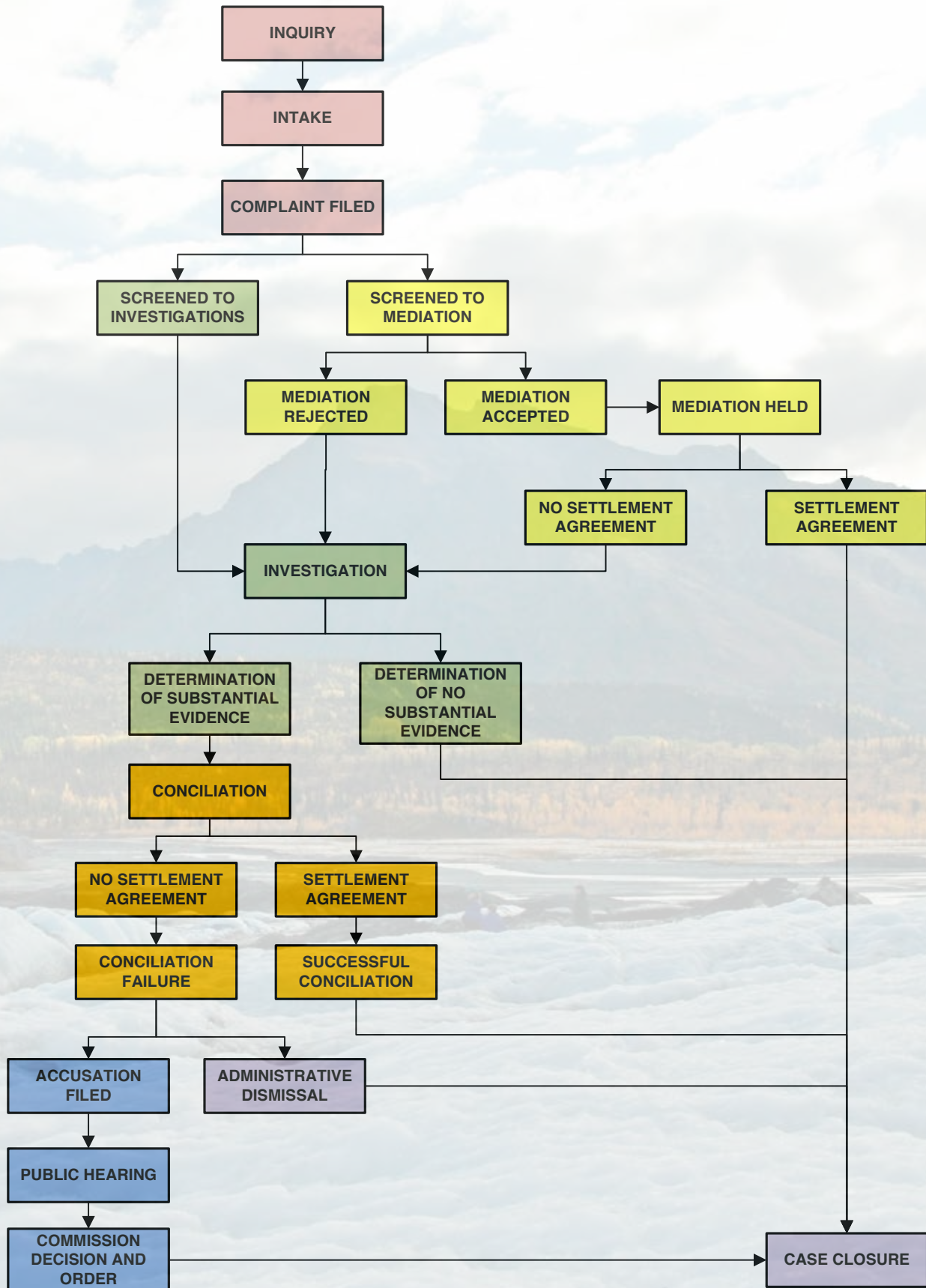
As Chair of the Commission for Human Rights and on behalf of the Commissioners and Commission staff, we our honored to provide this 2020 Annual Report for your review and assessment.

Debbie Fullenwider

Debbie Fullenwider
Chairperson

ALASKA STATE COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Complaint Resolution Process



ALASKA STATE COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

STAFF REPORT OF AGENCY ACTIVITIES

January 1 through December 31, 2020

Public Hearing Cases

In **Dorothy Cole v. ABC Motor Home Rentals, Inc.** (OAH No. 19-0813-HRC), Complainant alleged a male coworker (a registered sex offender) subjected her to inappropriate sexual comments and gestures. Commission staff found that Complainant's allegations of discrimination were supported by substantial evidence and that Respondent retaliated against her for complaining about the harassment. Attempts to conciliate were unsuccessful and an Accusation was filed July 15, 2019. Although mediation also failed, the parties reached a settlement and the agreement was approved April 8, 2020. Complainant received back pay in the amount of \$10,000. Respondent completed training and the other remaining settlement terms. The case was dismissed and the file closed October 20, 2020.



In **Candice Gardner v. North Slope Borough School District, Nuiqsut Trapper School** (OAH No. 20-0744-HRC), Complainant alleged discrimination based on race, as well as constructive discharge when her reports were not taken seriously. One of the reports involved an incident in which another teacher sent Complainant a photo of a rope resembling a noose while the Complainant was on leave; the co-worker informed Complainant that a student wrapped the rope around another student's neck and asserted it was for Complainant; another report involved racist graffiti aimed at Complainant. Commission staff reviewed both claims and found substantial evidence of both discrimination and retaliation. Efforts to conciliate failed. An accusation was filed with the Commission August 24, 2020. At Complainant's request, the Executive Director filed a notice of rescission with the Office of Administrative Hearings. The rescission enabled Complainant to withdraw her complaint with the Commission and pursue damages in federal court beyond what the Commission has authority to pursue.



In **Jetta Haynes v. Lily's Family Restaurant** (OAH No. 16-1507-HRC), Complainant alleged one of Respondent's owners subjected her to unwelcome physical contact, including sexual assault. Commission staff discovered another female employee had also been subjected to sexual harassment. An accusation was filed December 19, 2016. The Commission issued a Final Order on September 28, 2017, awarding

Complainant \$15,179.18. In January 2019, Complainant advised the Commission that she had not received the financial settlement from Respondent. After failed attempts to contact Respondent, the Commission moved for and received a Final Judgment from Alaska Superior Court in the amount of \$16,895.88, plus post-judgment interest at 6%. On both June 18, 2019 and June 10, 2020, the Commission filed writs of execution for garnishment of the owners' Permanent Fund Dividends. Dividends for Respondent's two owners were garnished November 21, 2019 and March 2, 2020, for a total amount paid to Complainant to date of \$4,547.60. The Commission is currently evaluating whether to file for a bank sweep of any funds held by Respondent's owners.

In **Laura Hill v. ABC Motor Home & Car Rental, Inc.** (OAH No. 20-0324-HRC), a supervisor filed a complaint with the Commission alleging she was discriminated against based on her sex, and a retaliation complaint for reporting sexual harassment of another employee by a male supervisor. An investigation found substantial evidence supporting the complaints. Respondent requested mediation but when it was unsuccessful an Accusation was filed with the Commission March 25, 2020. Although settlement discussions are currently ongoing, a hearing has been scheduled to begin May 18, 2021.

OUTREACH

The Commission started off 2020 optimistic about outreach and connecting with workers from vulnerable populations and protected classes. As the entire world experienced, the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed most public in-person gatherings, severely hampering the Commission's outreach opportunities. Nonetheless, the Commission conducted and/or participated in the following events in 2020:

The Commission fulfilled an EEOC grant requirement to print pocket cards for distribution describing a person's workplace rights related to discrimination and providing ASCHR and EEOC contact information. These cards were distributed to several unions, and distribution remains ongoing.

Alaska Bar Association, 11th Annual MLK Day Free Legal Help Clinic—January 20, 2020

Challenge Alaska—January 21, 2020

Midnight Sun Service Dogs—January 24, 2020

Elizabeth Peratrovich Day Celebration (with APU)—February 17, 2020

Bridge Builders "Meet the World" event—February 29, 2020

Rural Alaska Community Environmental Job Training Program (with AERC for UAF program)—April 16, 2020

Talk of Alaska (Alaska Public Radio Network)—June 23, 2020

Anchorage Assembly (invited testimony)—July 28, 2020

Alaska Small Business Development Center (webinar on ADA compliance, with AERC)—August 5, 2020

Letters seeking a brief dialogue and worker education presentation to 16 unions—August 12/13, 2020

Letters seeking a brief dialogue and executive/job-seeker education presentation to 14 Alaska Native regional organizations—August 12/13, 2020

Alaska Legal Services Corporation—August 19, 2020

Copper River Native Association—September 22, 2020

Inland Boatman's Union—October 7, 2020

Public Rights Project—December 9, 2020

Staff also participated in the following staff training opportunities: EEOC new investigator training, EEOC Federal Employment Practices Agency annual conference, First Alaskans Institute racial equity dialogue (with State Ombudsman's Office).

Public Hearing Cases

from page 5

In **Pauline Hoelscher v. 907 Norefund Incorporated d/b/a Cheap Smokes** (OAH No. 18-1313-HRC), an employee filed a complaint alleging sex discrimination and retaliation for engaging in protected activity. The investigation found substantial evidence for both claims. An accusation was filed December 13, 2018. After multiple failed attempts to contact Respondent, the Commission issued a Final Order October 7, 2019. On November 21, 2019, the Commission moved for Entry of Default Judgment in the Alaska Superior Court. That same day the court issued the Final Judgment. On May 1, 2020, the Commission conducted a bank sweep revealing one bank account in Respondent's name. However, the account was closed. Complainant was notified that the Commission is unable to provide any further support at this time and the file was closed July 21, 2020.

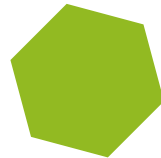
In **Samantha Pushruk v. 907Norefund Inc dba Cheap Smokes** (OAH No. 18-0856-HRC), an employee filed a complaint alleging constructive discharge after the owner of the business gave her a sexually explicit scratch card and made multiple inquiries about her performing the acts listed on the card with him. Shortly thereafter, Complainant took a position at another local business. The owner of Cheap Smokes came into the store, saw Complainant, and spoke very badly of her to her new supervisor. Complainant also filed a second complaint for retaliation. After multiple failed attempts to contact Respondent, the Commission issued a Final Order October 7, 2019. On November 21, 2019, the Commission moved for Entry of Default Judgment in the Alaska Superior Court. That same day the court issued the Final Judgment. On May 1, 2020, the Commission conducted a bank sweep revealing one bank account in Respondent's name. However, the account was closed. Complainant was notified that the Commission is unable to provide any further support at this time and the file was closed July 21, 2020.



Filings by Basis

	Single	Multiple
Race	46	25
Physical Disability	25	18
Age	24	17
Sex	23	23
Mental Disability	21	15
Retaliation	4	22
Pregnancy	4	0
Religion	3	2
Retaliation for Filing	3	2
Other	3	0
Parenthood	2	1
National Origin	1	5
Marital Status	0	1
Total Filings	159	

*Some complaints alleged more than one basis and/or issue



Filings by Type

Employment	144
Public Accommodation	12
Government Practices	0
Housing	2
Other	1



ANALYSIS OF 2020 CLOSURES

REASON FOR CLOSURE	
NOT SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE	144
ADMINISTRATIVE	18
Complaint Withdrawn	12
Lack of Jurisdiction	2
Failure of Complainant to proceed	2
Complainant not available	1
Tribal Sovereign Immunity	1
CONCILIATION AND SETTLEMENT	5
Substantial Evidence - Conciliation Finalized	4
Successful Settlement	1
HEARING	3
Administrative Dismissal by Hearing Unit	2
Prehearing Settlement	1
Total Closures	170

Filings by Issue

	Single	Multiple
Fired	87	45
Terms and Conditions	30	44
Failure to Hire	15	7
Failure to Accommodate	9	12
Failure to Promote	8	16
Harassment	4	19
Other	3	4
Sexual Harassment	2	20
Denied Service	1	4
Demotion	0	5
Equal Pay	0	0
Total Filings	159	

*Some complaints alleged more than one basis and/or issue

Filings by Complainants Race

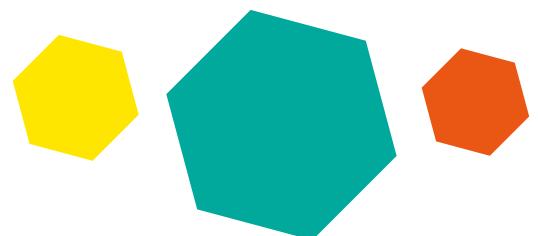
Caucasian	70
Black	21
Native	12
Other	15
Asian	5
Hispanic	11
Unknown	25

Filings by Complainants Age

20 year and under	4
21 - 40 years	52
41 - 60 years	55
61 years and older	19

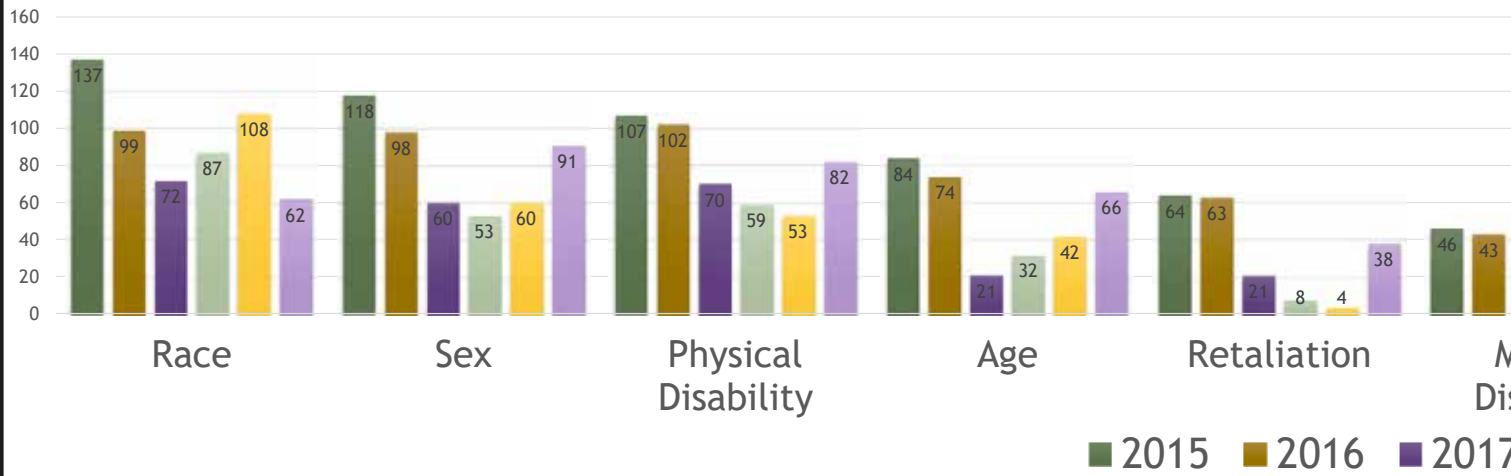
Filings by Complainants Gender

Male	70
Female	88

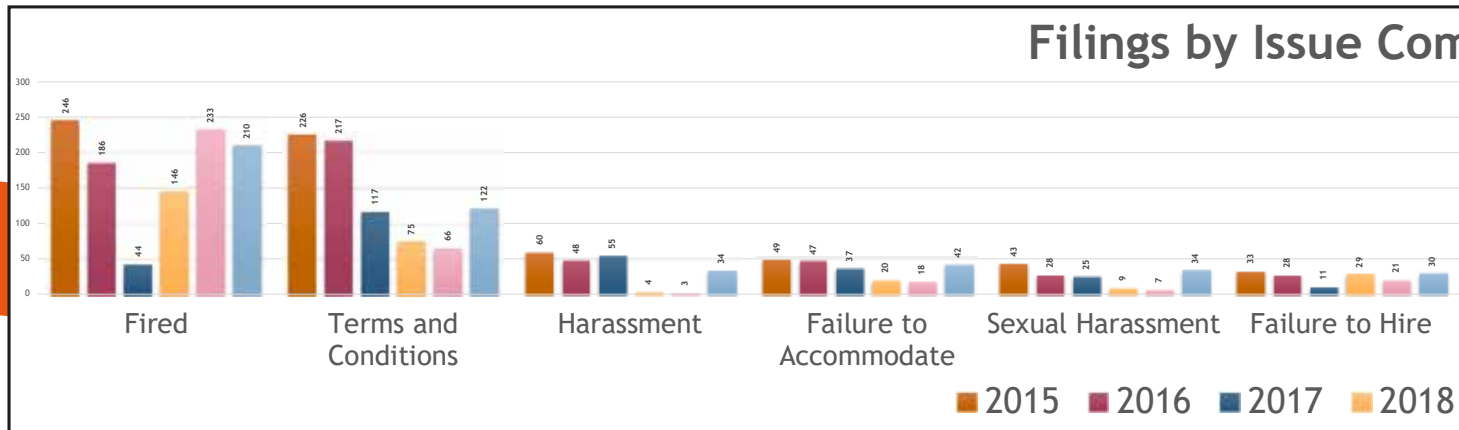


Category of Closure	2015		2016		ASCHR
	ASCHR	EEOC	ASCHR	EEOC	
Mediation	22	1	28	0	19
Administrative	27	5	35	3	27
Not Substantial Evidence	286	18	301	33	233
Conciliation and Settlement	30	3	28	4	39
Hearing	12	1	22	0	20
Subtotal	377	28	414	40	338
TOTAL	420		405		

Filings by Basis



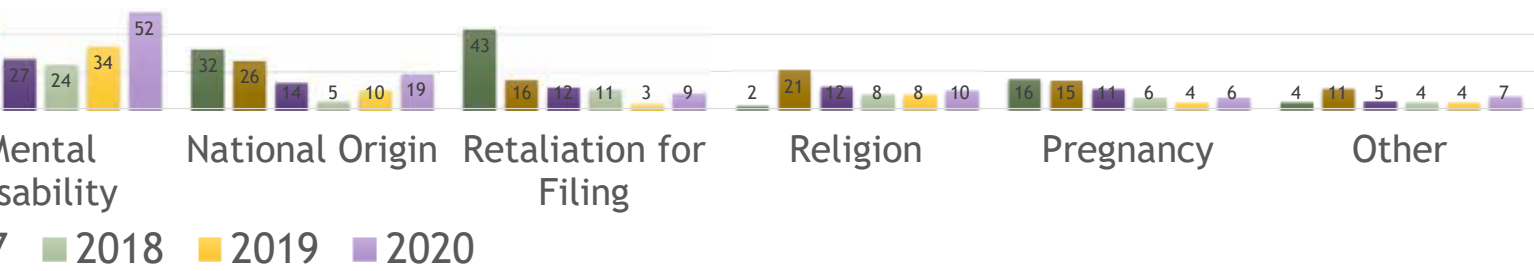
Filings by Issue Com



ures (2015-2020)

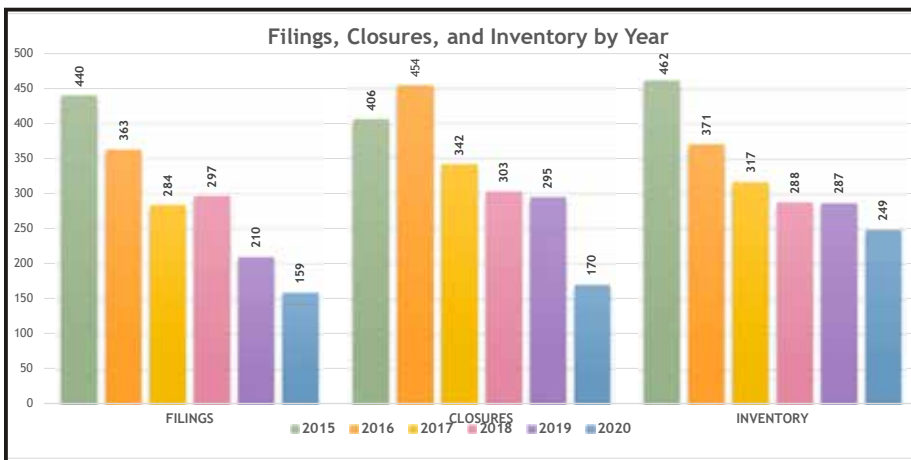
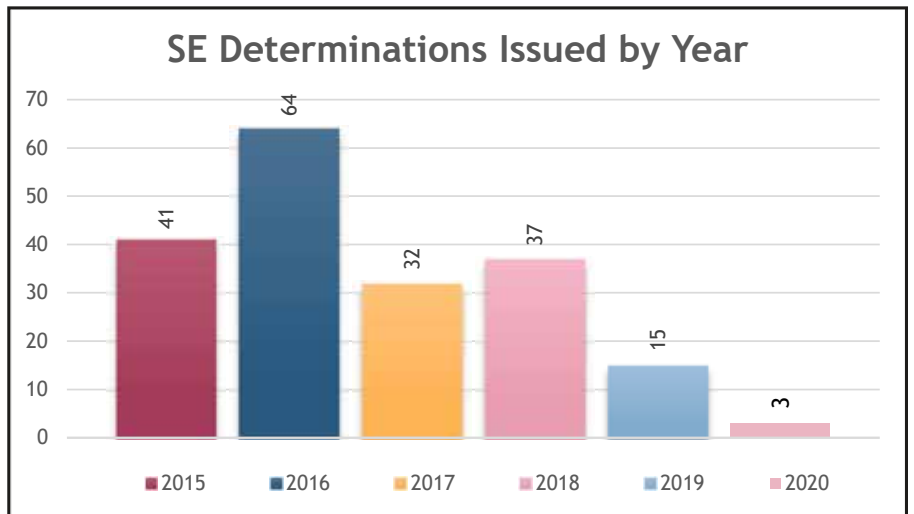
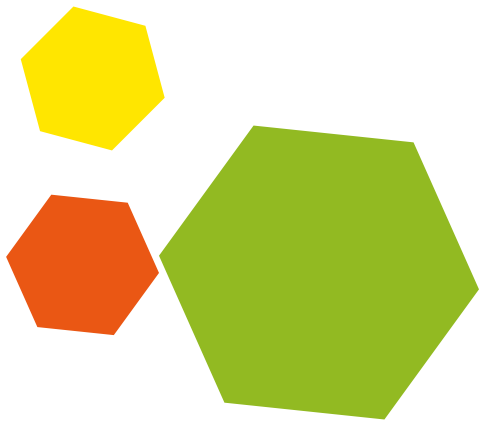
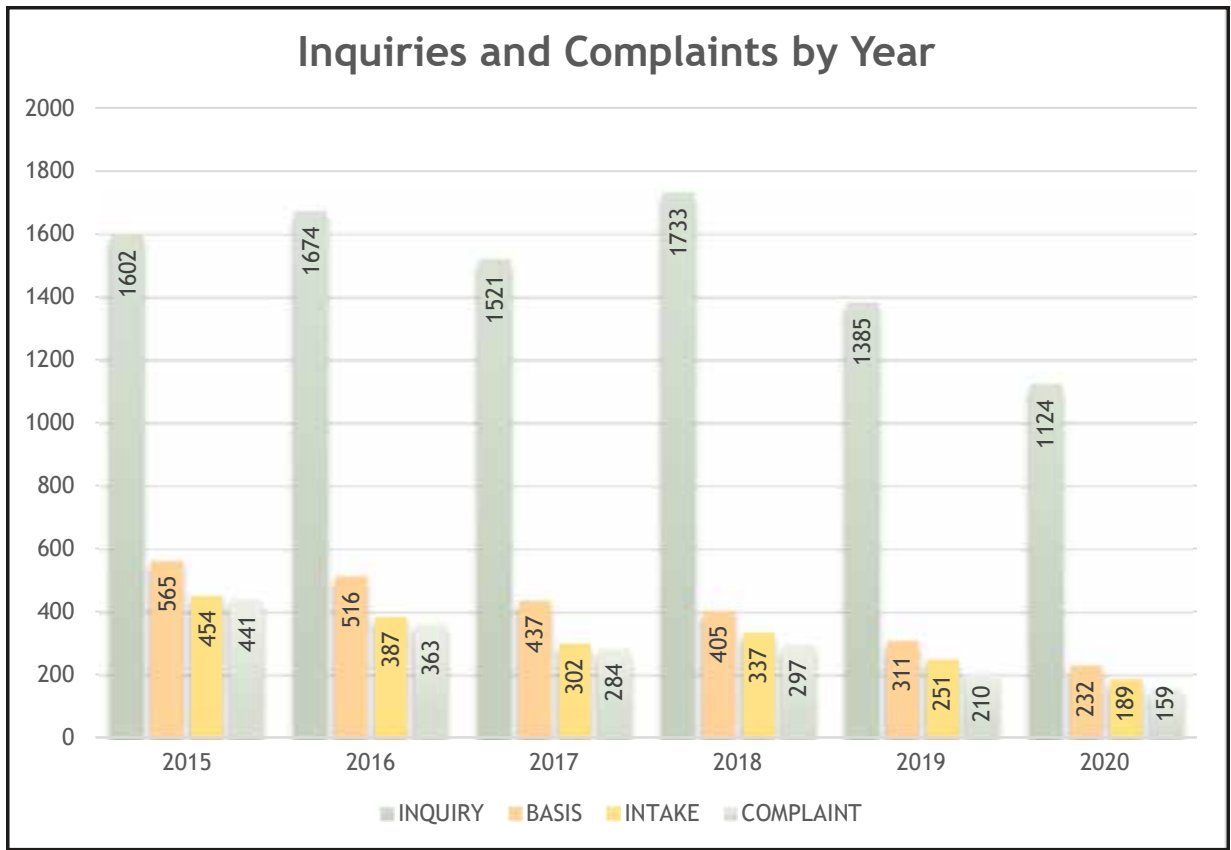
2017		2018		2019		2020	
ASCHR	EEOC	ASCHR	EEOC	ASCHR	EEOC	ASCHR	EEOC
	0	22	1	20	0	0	1
	0	30	1	36	0	18	1
	3	165	48	197	6	144	15
	1	14	1	24	0	5	0
	0	21	0	12	0	3	3
	4	252	51	289	6	170	20
452		342		295		190	

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2020 Appeal Updates

In **Bobby J. Hickman v. Alaska State Commission for Human Rights** (3HO-19-00016CI), Appellant alleged his employer terminated him following an on-the-job injury. Investigation found that Appellant was released to return to work with no restrictions and that the termination was due to a violation of personnel regulations. The Commission found no substantial evidence and the case was closed December 19, 2018. On January 15, 2019, Appellant appealed the determination. On November 25, 2020, the court issued a Decision and Order on Administrative Appeal affirming the Commission's finding of no substantial evidence of discrimination. The Commission will close its file upon notice of the court file closure.

In **Demetrie Alexander v. Alaska State Commission for Human Rights** (4FA-17-02348CI), Appellant alleged that the Alaska Court System discriminated against him based on his race, Alaska Native, when it terminated his employment as a magistrate. The Commission found no substantial evidence of discrimination and closed the case. On August 9, 2017, Appellant appealed to the Alaska Superior Court. The court stayed the administrative appeal after Appellant filed a civil action based on the same facts as those alleged to the Commission. As of December 31, 2020, there has been no further action.

In **Russell Baker v. Alaska State Commission for Human Rights** (S-17379), Appellant alleged that his employer (FedEx) discriminated against him based on his marital status, and that his employment was terminated in retaliation for filing a complaint with the Commission. The Commission determined there was substantial evidence to support Appellant's allegations regarding his marital status. However, it also determined that his allegation of retaliation was not supported by substantial evidence. Appellant appealed the decisions to the Alaska Superior Court on August 18, 2017. FedEx moved to intervene on January 30, 2018. The Superior Court affirmed on January 29, 2019. Appellant appealed to the Alaska Supreme Court on February 27, 2019. Oral argument was held on February 20, 2020, and the Alaska Supreme Court issued its Opinion on September 20, 2020, affirming the lower court's decision, which upheld the Commission's dismissal of the retaliation complaint. The Commission closed its file on September 23, 2020, following which Appellant's petition for rehearing was denied December 21, 2020.

In **Sherman Pitt v. Alaska State Commission for Human Rights** (1JU-20-00456CI), Appellant alleged that the State of Alaska, Department of Corrections, discriminated against him based on his religion, Buddhism,

by refusing to provide him with the same accommodations and privileges as Christian inmates. Commission staff found substantial evidence of discrimination and entered into a conciliation agreement with the Department of Corrections in March of 2011, and closed the file upon completion of all terms of the agreement. On May 23, 2017, Appellant appealed the closure to Superior Court. On March 31, 2020, the Superior Court issued an Order on Appeal vacating the Commission's closing order and remanded the case back to the Commission to determine if the Department of Corrections had, in fact, met all terms of the March 8, 2011, conciliation agreement. Appellant filed a motion for declaratory judgment. On April 15, 2020, the court denied the motion. The Executive Director requested a complete review of all terms of the conciliation agreement by the Department of Corrections. The Commission closed its file on August 10, 2020, after receiving the final report and filing a copy with Superior Court.

In **Sherman Pitt v. State of Alaska, Department of Corrections, et al.** (1JU-17-00674CI), Plaintiff alleged he was discriminated against based on his religion in that he was subjected to different terms and conditions than other inmates practicing their religion. Prior to filing the accusation, a pre-determination agreement was approved on March 12, 2019, describing all religious items that were allowed in and out of his cell. The Commission issued its Closing Order on August 27, 2019. Plaintiff filed a Motion for Stay of Closing Order and Request for Judicial Review and Enforcement in Superior Court on September 5, 2019. Following multiple notices of deficiency, Plaintiff moved for dismissal of the case stating his claims were being pursued in a separate appeal. The court dismissed the case on February 10, 2020 and the Commission closed its file on February 26, 2020.

In **Colleen Roque v. Alaska State Commission for Human Rights** (3AN-20-08540CI), Appellant alleged she was discriminated against based on sex and age; her temporary employment was terminated shortly after inquiring into receiving benefits afforded permanent employees. Investigation found no substantial evidence, and the case was closed September 15, 2020. On October 13, 2020, Appellant appealed the Commission's determination.



2020 Appeal Updates

from page 11

In **Sarah Whicker v. Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, et al.** (3AN-19-08077CI), Appellant alleged that her employer discriminated against her based on sex asserting that she was not receiving equal pay for equal work; that is, that she was paid less than her male co-workers. The investigation did not substantiate her claim that she was unequally compensated. The case was dismissed June 17, 2019, and the determination was appealed June 28, 2019. Briefs were all filed by January 29, 2020, followed by a request for oral argument February 5, 2020. With no further action, an Order on Appeal was issued September 21, 2020, affirming the Commission's finding of no substantial evidence of discrimination and the Commission's file was closed September 23, 2020.



In **Ronald Windeler v. AT&T Alascom**, complainant alleged that he was terminated after 46 years of employment based on his age after a single customer complaint, whereas younger employees are not treated as harshly. Investigation showed complainant's long history of abrasive, abusive conduct toward coworkers and clients, along with an extensive history of coaching, verbal warnings, and reprimand letters, culminating in a customer asking respondent to remove complainant from ever working with the customer again. Complainant appealed the Commission's October 23, 2019, determination of no substantial evidence of discrimination. During a superior court scheduling hearing on January 8, 2020, complainant stated that he entered into a written agreement with respondent that required him to withdraw his appeal, and it was dismissed on the record during that hearing. The Commission subsequently closed the file.

Conciliations

Complainant lodged a disability discrimination and retaliation complaint against her employer. Complainant required surgery. However, her employer would not grant the doctor's recommended time off for recovery or otherwise guarantee her equivalent employment upon her return. Complainant negotiated a shortened recovery release date with her physician and Respondent approved her leave time. Respondent filled her position in her absence and terminated Complainant on her return to work date claiming she was unable to drive even though driving was not a job requirement. On December 4, 2020, the parties signed a conciliation agreement in which Respondent agreed to pay Complainant a financial settlement of \$31,500.

An employee complained of discrimination and was terminated the morning that the Commission served the complaint on the employer. Although the investigation revealed no substantial evidence of underlying discrimination, it showed that the employer terminated the employee in retaliation for filing the complaint, which is itself unlawful. The employer agreed to adopt a non-discrimination policy and conduct training as part of a successful conciliation, and the case was closed.

A place of public accommodation asked a person with a service animal to leave, and ultimately contacted the police to have the person removed. After finding substantial

evidence of discrimination, the organization renting the venue agreed to adopt a non-discrimination policy and conduct training specifically related to service animals. After this was completed, the Commission closed the case.

An employer allowed an employee to be sexually harassed by a supervisor. The employee followed the employer's reporting and non-disclosure policy, but rumors spread. While being trained for a new task that the employee was still learning, the employer terminated her for violating the non-disclosure policy, while barely disciplining the offending supervisor. The Commission found substantial evidence of discrimination, and the case successfully conciliated with the respondent paying the victim \$25,000, adopting a revised non-discrimination policy, and conducting training.

A disabled Complainant filed a complaint against a municipal government for failing to provide voting accommodations allowing him to vote privately and independently. The Commission's investigation found substantial evidence of discrimination when Respondent denied his request for accommodation. A conciliation agreement was approved December 19, 2018. Due to decisions by the governing body and the municipal government's voters, the preferred alternative could not be implemented. The Commission is engaging in negotiations to amend the conciliation agreement.



Mediation

A customer alleged that a tour company discriminated against him based on his physical disability when he visited the company's location, and it denied his request for accessibility services. Under the mediated settlement, the company agreed to pay the customer \$100 and provide an Alaskan non-profit disability advocacy organization with four free passes to be used 2019-2020. Due to the downturn in business as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Respondent requested an extension to March 31, 2021 to complete testing of the proposed listening devices.

Informal Counseling

An inquirer contacted the Commission regarding a place of public accommodation that denied the inquirer access because of a service animal. Rather than filing a complaint, the inquirer asked that the Executive Director counsel the place of public accommodation. After doing so, the inquirer reported successfully conducting business at the place of public accommodation.

An inquirer contacted the Commission after having a poor experience with a potential landlord who asked racially discriminatory questions while showing an apartment. Because the inquirer at that point had no interest in renting from this particular landlord, rather than filing a complaint, the inquirer asked the Executive Director to counsel the landlord. During the counseling call, the landlord agreed to several ideas presented, including a pre-written tenant screening questionnaire that could be reviewed by the landlord's attorney to ensure that all tenants are asked the same set of legally sufficient questions.

A social media post circulated showing a sign in a workplace demanding employees to speak only English. Rather than immediately filing a Director's Charge and initiating an investigation, the Commission sent a letter to the business owner counseling the business that an English-only policy is unlawfully discriminatory, and asking the business owner to investigate, rectify the issue, and report the results. The Commission is continuing to monitor this situation.





Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

2020-2023 Strategic Plan

MISSION

To eliminate and prevent discrimination for all Alaskans

VISION

An Alaska free of discrimination

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Integrity in all we do
- An organization built on mutual respect
- Data-driven and accountable
- Promoters of equality for all Alaskans
- Meaningful application of resources
- Continuous improvement
- Respectful representation of the constituents we serve
- Enforcement as a tool, not a goal
- Integrate education into all aspects of our work

PURPOSE STATEMENT

"Discrimination not only threatens the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of the state, but also menaces the institutions of the state and threatens peace, order, health, safety, and general welfare of the state and its inhabitants. Therefore, it is the policy of the state and the purpose of this chapter to eliminate and prevent discrimination. It is also the policy of the state to encourage and enable physically and mentally disabled persons to participate fully in the social and economic life of the state and to engage in remunerative employment." AS 18.80

GOAL 1

Conduct timely investigations that strengthen the enforcement of Alaska anti-discrimination laws under AS 18.80

- Implement case collaboration procedures that introduce staff lawyers into the case early in the process to aid in identifying the legal theories prior to developing the investigation plan.
- Identify impediments to closing cases at 180 days from assignment and implement solutions.
- Develop reporting structures that access relevant data in the case
- Implement a case management system to measure progress toward the 180 day goal.
- Develop and implement an intranet or wiki for easy access to relevant information by all staff members.
- Identify and apply best practices in both policy and procedures.
- Continue to implement technology to increase productivity

GOAL 2

Continue and expand our role as public advocates for the elimination and prevention of discrimination

- Develop and implement plan for statewide outreach with educational, training and public service components.
- Conduct systemic investigations and prepare white papers with findings to share with leadership and other organizations
- Work with the State Legislature to add non-profits to ASCHR's jurisdiction in an effort to include protections for 44,000 currently unprotected workers
- Create a training resource center
- Prepare communications plan to reach a variety of demographics throughout Alaska

GOAL 3

Recognizing that people are our greatest asset, create an environment where staff feels appreciated and valued.

- Develop an employee succession plan.
- Create opportunities for advancement.
- Provide training & professional development opportunities.
- Increase Staff/Commission Interaction.
- Improve inter-agency and intra-agency communication.
- Enhance teambuilding opportunities.
- Provide continued training to Commissioners on human rights law and relevant court cases.



Report Bifurcation for State Government Assessments

By law, the Commission is required to produce the annual report during the week preceding the convening of the annual legislative session. This requirement is nearly impossible by virtue of the fact that the administrative staff cannot begin to analyze the prior-year data until at least January 1, whereas the Alaska Legislature typically convenes sometime between January 15-21 each year, giving approximately one week to prepare, print, and distribute the report. From the Commission's currently limited institutional knowledge, the report was historically distributed several months into the session coinciding with the Commission's first meeting of the year (held in Juneau), giving the Commissioners the opportunity to meet with the Governor and individual legislators about the Commission's legislative priorities outlined in that year's report.

Further, under AS 18.80.060(a)(6), the Commission is required to make an overall assessment, at least once every three years, of the progress made toward equal employment opportunity by every department of State government and include this assessment in the annual report. This analysis requires meeting with cabinet members and/or designees to discuss each department's data—in the week before a legislative session. Because neither the Commission nor the executive branch departments have this data until January 1, producing

the report at the end of March or early April (during an assessment year in particular) gave the administrative staff time to meet with each department head and/or designee while accommodating legislative requirements for these officials.

Last year, for the first time in recent memory, the administrative staff attempted the nearly impossible task of distributing the report prior to the legislative session. We came close, sending the report to the Legislature on February 3. The Commission held its first meeting of 2020 in May, in Anchorage, which saved significant travel costs.

The Commission is again attempting to comply with AS 18.80.150's date requirement for the 2020 annual report. However, to accommodate the three-year cycle for assessing department progress on equal employment opportunity, the Commission will bifurcate the annual report this year. We are producing Volume 1, containing the Commission's case data, in January in our attempt to comply with AS 18.80.150; and will produce Volume 2 later in the year once department officials have the opportunity to review their respective department equal employment opportunity data, and discuss it with the Commission's administrative staff. We anticipate distributing Volume 2, containing the department assessment, in April.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS

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This publication was released by the Office of the Governor, Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, as required by AS 18.80.150. This publication was printed in Anchorage, Alaska at a cost of \$6.09 each.