DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

July 28, 2021

Elizabeth Lincoln, Director
Minnesota Legislative Reference Library
645 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1050

Dear Director Lincoln:

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights submits its semi-annual report to the legislature (pursuant to 1997 Minnesota Session Law, Chapter 239, Article 1, Section 15), which summarizes investigation results and the resolution of complaints that were filed with the Department from January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021.

Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights is proud to be Minnesota's civil rights enforcement agency. The Department's mission is to make Minnesota discrimination free, so that residents can lead lives of dignity and joy. The work of the Department is essential in protecting the civil rights of Minnesotans, particularly as the state's communities grow older and the population becomes more racially diverse across the state.

The Minnesota Human Rights Act is the foundation of the Department's work. The Act, passed into law in 1967, protects the civil rights of all Minnesotans. The Act tasks the Department with important enforcement duties in employment, housing, education, credit, public accommodations, and public services based on their protected class, such as: race, religion, disability, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status, public assistance status, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

The Act also tasks the Department with regulating state contractors to ensure men and women are compensated equally for equal work, and to ensure that contractors are making good faith efforts to maintain inclusive and equitable workforces so that the companies' employees reflect Minnesota's vibrant communities.

This report summarizes the Department's investigatory results with respect to the following areas: new cases, case inventory, alternative dispute resolution, case conclusions (which includes determinations, mediations, and dismissals), and case closures. Overall, this report demonstrates that the Department is working diligently to create a Minnesota where residents can lead full lives of dignity and joy, free from discrimination.

New Cases[1]

There were 202 new charges filed by Minnesotans during this reporting period, of which 96% are open, either in mediation or the investigatory process. In this reporting period:

- The most common areas of discrimination overall were:
  - Employment (54% of all charges filed)[2]
  - Public Accommodations (8% of all charges filed)
  - Housing (4% of all charges filed)
  - Public Services (3% of all charges filed)

- For employment claims specifically, the most common types of employment related charges were:
  - Disability (30%)
  - Sex (22%)
  - Age (19%)
  - Race (14%)

- The most common basis of discrimination, regardless of area were:
  - Disability (35%)
  - Sex (21%)
  - Race (19%)
  - Age (11%)

Case Inventory

In this reporting period, 695 cases were pending a determination. This represents an 11% decrease in overall case inventory compared to last year's July report. Of the cases pending determination, 51% of cases are less than a year old. The inventory breaks down as follows:

- 91 cases are less than 90 days old
- 93 cases are between 91-180 days old
- 85 cases are between 181-270 days old
- 85 cases are between 271-365 days old
- 341 cases are over 365 days old. Cases over 365 days old are down 7% from the previous reporting period.
- MDHR currently has 12 investigators, each with an average caseload of 58 cases.

[1] Note that one case can have multiple charges. This is why there are more charges than cases filed.
[2] An additional 26% of charges were related to reprisals in employment.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

By utilizing mediation, the Department helps move all parties forward in both a positive and time efficient way. Following a new emphasis to utilize mediation, the Department had previously seen notable increases in the overall number of cases closed in mediation. This trend continues in this reporting period:

- 78 total cases (39% of total cases) were referred to mediation
- 72 cases were scheduled for mediation for this reporting period[3]
- 31 cases were resolved through mediation[4]
- 92 cases were returned from mediation to investigation[5]
- The average time a case was in mediation was 73 days[6]

Case Closures

The Department closed 312 cases in this reporting period, which is a 17% increase in closed cases from the previous reporting period. Of the 312 closed cases:

- 40 cases (13%) were settled through mediation (some scheduled during a previous reporting period), a favorable resolution for both parties
- 221 cases (71%) resulted in a favorable determination for the respondent:
    - 205 cases were closed with a no probable cause determination
    - 16 cases were dismissed by the department due to lack of merit
- 22 cases (7%) resulted in a favorable determination for the charging party:
    - 8 cases were probable cause determinations
    - 14 cases were resolved prior to a full investigation and formal determination
- 29 cases (9%) were withdrawn by charging party before a determination was reached

Case Conclusions

The average time for a case to reach a conclusion by the Department through dismissal, mediation, or determination was 506 days. In this reporting period:

- Average time to reach a settlement through mediation was 180 days (40 total cases)

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[3] A mediation is only scheduled when both parties agree to participate in the mediation process; some may be scheduled out for the next reporting period.

[4] This includes cases where a mediation was both scheduled and settled within this reporting period.

[5] This includes cases that may have been referred to mediation in a previous reporting period but were subsequently returned to investigation during this reporting period.

[6] For mediations scheduled and closed in this reporting period, this covers from the day a case was referred to mediation up to when a mediation decision was finalized. This includes both when a mediation case was settled and when a case was not settled.

- Average time to dismiss a case was 396 days (16 total cases)
- Average time to reach no probable cause determination was 583 days (167 total cases)
- Average time to reach a probable cause or split determination was 815 days (6 total cases)[7]

Conclusion

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights ensures that the civil rights of Minnesotans are protected, as mandated by law. This report demonstrates that the Department is working diligently to fulfill its mission, as seen by decreases in overall case inventory and increase in case closure rates. However, the Department's case inventory and case conclusion numbers will likely continue to maintain at their consistent levels until the Department has additional resources to help reduce them.

Additionally, it is important to note that investigating cases of discrimination is just one of the Department's critical responsibilities. The Department is also required by law to monitor and enforce equity and inclusion requirements on state-funded projects, as well as conduct education, outreach, and policy work. Combined, these critical responsibilities help ensure that all Minnesotans have opportunities to live their lives with opportunities for joy and dignity.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Lucero
Commissioner

cc:

Senator Warren Limmer
Senator Ron Latz
Representative Jamie Becker-Finn
Representative Peggy Scott
Amber Jones, Office of Governor Tim Walz & Lt Governor Flanagan

Insert Area/Basis Chart

[7] Determinations do not always match with closures for the reporting period because once a determination is made the case needs to be settled through conciliation or litigation. Some cases with determinations from prior periods are closed in this period and some cases with determinations in this period are still in settlement negotiations.

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
BASIS - AREA - FILING
File Date Range: January 1, 2021 - June 30, 2021
Total Charges Filed During Period: 202

	BASIS														
AREA	Age	Color	Creed	Disability	Familial Status	Local Comms'n Membrshp	Marital Status	National Origin	Public Assist Status	Race	Religion	Sex	Sexual Orientation	**TOTAL**	**%**
Aiding, Abetting, or Obstructing (Employment)														**0**	0%
Aiding, Abetting, or Obstructing (Public Accommodations)														**0**	0%
Business/Contract				1				1				1		**3**	1%
Credit														**0**	0%
Education				2				1		2		1		**6**	2%
Employment - Employer	29	2		46	2		4	8		21	2	32	5	**151**	54%
Employment - Employment Agency														**0**	0%
Employment - Union														**0**	0%
Housing/Real Property				5	2				1	3			1	**12**	4%
Public Accommodations		2		7						10	2		2	**23**	8%
Public Services				6						3				**9**	3%
Reprisal (Business/Contract)														**0**	0%
Reprisal (Education)				1								1		**2**	1%
Reprisal (Employment)	3			26	1			1		15		23	3	**72**	26%
Reprisal (Employment - Agency)														**0**	0%
Reprisal (Housing/Real Property)				3										**3**	1%
Reprisal (Public Accommodations)				1										**1**	0%
Reprisal (Public Services)														**0**	0%
Reprisal (Union)														**0**	0%
TOTAL	**32**	**4**	**0**	**98**	**5**	**0**	**4**	**11**	**1**	**54**	**4**	**58**	**11**	**282**	
%	11%	1%	0%	35%	2%	0%	1%	4%	0%	19%	1%	21%	4%		

Note: There can be more than one Area and/or Basis per charge filed, counts of Area and Basis combinations will not reconcile with number of charges filed.