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Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Agency Profile 1

<https://mn.gov/mdhr/>

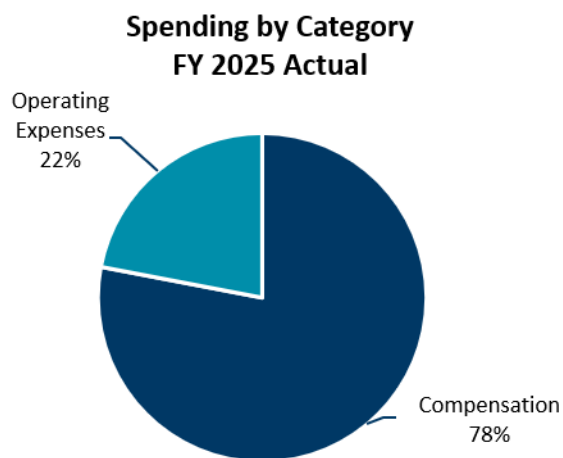
AT A GLANCE

- The Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) is the state's civil rights enforcement agency and envisions a world where everyone can lead lives full of dignity and joy, free from discrimination.
- Since Minnesota's founding, civil rights have shaped the state, supported by generations of bipartisan legislation that has positioned Minnesota as a national leader in civil rights.
- The Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA or the Act) was signed into law in 1967 and protects the civil rights of all Minnesotans in every county in the state.
- The Act tasks MDHR with enforcement duties in employment, housing, education, credit, public accommodations, and public services based on a person's protected class, such as race, religion, disability, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- The Act also tasks MDHR with regulating state contractors to ensure that men and women are compensated equally for equal work and to confirm that contractors are making good faith efforts to implement equal employment opportunities and maintain workplaces free from unlawful discriminatory practices.
- Of the cases investigated by MDHR during this period, disability discrimination was the most common charge, followed by race, then sex discrimination.

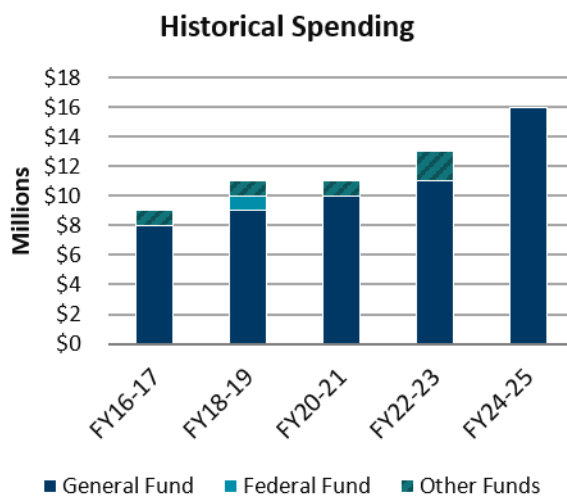
PURPOSE

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights is the state's civil rights enforcement agency and envisions a world where everyone can lead lives full of dignity and joy, free from discrimination.

BUDGET



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

MDHR's budget is funded almost entirely out of the state general fund, with a small amount of additional revenue generated from issuing equal pay and workforce certificates to state contractors and fees from educational trainings. Over 90 percent of MDHR's expenses are payroll, rent, and IT expenses.

For decades, MDHR also received funds through a workshare agreement with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), shown in the historical spending chart above as “federal funds.” In October of 2025, this agreement was rescinded and MDHR no longer receives funding through the EEOC.

STRATEGIES

The work of MDHR falls into two broad areas:

- **Investigate Claims of Discrimination and Disparate Impact:** Since its establishment in 1967, the department investigates complaints submitted by Minnesotans from across the state. MDHR uses a variety of tools available under statute, this includes neutral investigations, quality mediation through the investigation process, negotiating settlements or consent decrees, ongoing monitoring to make sure the required changes to policy, training, and accountability measures occur to prevent discrimination in the future, and education and outreach about key findings, trends, and issues across Minnesota.
- **Ensure Equal Employment Opportunity with State Contractors:** Through the department’s Certificate Team, MDHR issues workforce certificates and equal pay certificates to large businesses contracting with the state. In 1981, and again in 2014, Minnesota legislators codified statutory workforce certification requirements into law to ensure that public funds are invested in businesses certified as adhering to the Minnesota Human Rights Act. The department works with over 3,500 businesses that contract with state agencies to ensure these businesses are in compliance with the Act.

RESULTS

Part A: Performance Data

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Equal Pay Certificates issued to state contractors, ensuring that men and women are compensated equally for equal work.	Quantity	MDHR formally compiles equal pay data biennially as part of the agency’s legislative reporting obligations. This data is included in MDHR’s biennial equal pay certificate of compliance report.	Under the Minnesota Human Rights Act, MDHR oversees compliance for over 3,500 businesses contracted with state entities, including cities, counties, and the University of Minnesota. In 2014, Minnesota legislators set the period of validity for an equal pay certificate as 4 years, which helped establish predictable renewal cycle for both businesses and MDHR.	January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2021: 830 equal pay certificates issued January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023: 1,071 equal pay certificates issued January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025: 877 Equal Pay Certificates issued

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Average time for a case to reach a conclusion, whether by completion of the investigation and issuance of a determination, successful mediation, or dismissal.	Quantity	MDHR 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 on a bi-annual basis.	Overall, the period shows one year of faster closure times followed by two years of consistent performance, with the average holding near 15 months. Given the sharp rise in filings beginning in FY23 (peaking in FY25), the two-year increase in time to close is consistent with capacity pressure—more intake, more investigations, and heavier mediation and conciliation workloads extending queues and case durations. The FY24 improvements reflect additional process efficiencies and resource investment, while FY25 and FY26 reflect the belated impact of the prior surge.	FY23: 464 days FY24: 408 days FY25: 475 days FY26: 476 days
Percentage of case closures resolved through mediation.	Quantity	MDHR 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 on a bi-annual basis.	Despite a dramatic increase in the total number of charges filed with the department beginning in FY23, MDHR continued resolving roughly the same proportion of cases through its alternative dispute resolution process. This indicates that the mediation program scaled effectively with demand and delivered consistent results in spite of higher caseloads.	FY23: 11% of cases closed reached a mediated settlement FY24: 14% of cases closed reached a mediated settlement FY25: 13% of cases closed reached a mediated settlement FY26: 14% of cases closed reached a mediated settlement

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Charges of discrimination Minnesotans filed with MDHR under the MHRA	Quantity	MDHR 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 on a bi-annual basis.	From FY20 through FY22, discrimination filings gradually declined. Beginning in FY23, filings rose sharply. The increase from FY22 to FY23 was more than 40%, followed by another jump of approximately 50% in FY24. Filings reached their highest point in FY25, rising to just over 1,000, which was an increase of approximately 140% compared to the FY22 low. In FY26, filings decreased from the FY25 peak but remained elevated; nearly 70% higher than the numbers seen in prior years. Overall, the data show a clear pattern: a period of steady decline, followed by three years of rapid, high-volume growth beginning in FY23, and then a moderation in FY26 that nonetheless reflects substantially higher use of MDHR's services than was seen before the surge.	FY20: 483 charges FY21: 480 charges FY22: 427 charges FY23: 611 charges FY24: 904 charges FY25: 1018 charges FY26: 808 charges

Part B: Evidence of Effectiveness

No evidence-based practices identified.

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights is authorized under [Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 363A](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/363A) (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/363A). Ban the Box for Private Employers and MDHR's jurisdiction is authorized under Minnesota Statutes, [Chapter 364](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/364) (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/364).

MDHR's publishes [twice annual reports on agency civil rights investigations and resolutions](https://mn.gov/mdhr/news-community/reports/legislative-report.jsp) (https://mn.gov/mdhr/news-community/reports/legislative-report.jsp). MDHR's also publishes a [biennial equal pay certificate compliance report](https://mn.gov/mdhr/news-community/reports/equal-pay-report.jsp) (https://mn.gov/mdhr/news-community/reports/equal-pay-report.jsp).