

**PHILADELPHIA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS/FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION
FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET TESTIMONY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEPARTMENT MISSION AND FUNCTION

As established under the 1951 Home Rule Charter, the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations serves as the agency charged with education and enforcement of civil rights laws and resolving issues of intergroup conflict throughout the city.

As of 1993, staffing duties for the Fair Housing Commission also were delegated to PCHR.

Since 1993, the PCHR has also staffed the Fair Housing Commission which is charged with enforcing the Fair Housing Ordinance, to remedy unfair rental practices.

The PCHR primarily works to enforce a key set of local laws:

- The Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance – Chapter 9-1100 of the Philadelphia Code
 - Covers a series of protected classes of populations historically underserved and, or, targeted for discrimination, such as religious adherents, various ethnicities or LGBT individuals, et. al.
 - Provides a standard for both domestic and work-based tranquility and interactions.
- The Fair Criminal Record Screening Standards Law AKA “Ban the Box” – Chapter 9-3500 of the Philadelphia Code.
- Entitlement to Leave Due to Domestic or Sexual Violence Ordinance – Chapter 9-3200 of the Philadelphia Code.
- The Fair Housing Ordinance – Chapter 9-800 of the Philadelphia Code, enforced by the Fair Housing Commission.

Through three units – the compliance, community relations, and fair housing commission divisions – PCHR seeks to cultivate harmony and respect, as well as an equitable quality of life, for residents of and visitors to the city. While the city has made clear progress since 1951, tallied figures of docketed complaints (opened and closed) reflect an ongoing need for this agency’s work.

PROPOSED BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS/FUNDING REQUEST

PCHR offers direct human services, requiring competent and continuously trained personnel ready and able to meet the needs of a dynamic city. The bulk of this agency’s operating expenses goes to these costs. PCHR seeks the same, baseline funding as it has received for the past three fiscal years.

- PCHR requests a total operating budget of **\$2,013,747**, broken down thusly
 - Class 100 expenditures – employee compensation
 - Represents some 98 percent of total operating budget.
 - **Total: \$1,966,059**
 - Class 200 expenditures – professional services
 - Represents related telecommunications, translations, court reporting, training, et. al.
 - **Total: \$34,657**
 - Class 300 expenditures – materials and supplies
 - Represents related office supplies, books, and publications.
 - **Total: \$12,731**
 - Class 400 expenditures – equipment purchases
 - Represents associated hardware such as recording and image capture devices.
 - **Total: \$300**

**Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations/Fair Housing Commission
BUDGET SUMMARY AND OTHER BUDGET DRIVERS**

Financial Summary by Class - General Fund

	Fiscal 2013 Actual Obligations	Fiscal 2014 Original Appropriations	Fiscal 2014 Estimated Obligations	Fiscal 2015 Proposed Appropriations	Difference FY14 - FY15
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$1,649,350	\$1,966,059	\$1,966,059	\$1,966,059	\$0
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$27,081	\$34,657	\$34,657	\$34,657	\$0
Class 300 - Materials and Supplies	\$11,333	\$12,731	\$12,731	\$12,731	\$0
Class 400 - Equipment	\$335	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$0
Class 500 - Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Class 700 - Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Class 800 - Payment to Other Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Class 900 - Advances/Misc. Payments	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$1,688,099	\$2,013,747	\$2,013,747	\$2,013,747	\$0

Staff Demographics Summary*

	Total	Minority	White	Female
Full-Time Staff	31	71%	29%	81%
Executive Staff	4	75%	25%	75%
Average Salary - Executive Staff	\$80,204	\$75,272	\$95,000	\$80,204
Median Salary - Executive Staff	\$80,409	\$67,817	\$95,000	\$93,000

Employment Levels*

	Budgeted	Approved	Filled
Full-Time Positions	34	34	31
Part-Time Positions	0	0	0
Executive Positions	4	4	4

Contracts Summary*

	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14*
Total amount of contracts	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total amount to M/W/DBE	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Participation Rate	%	%	%	%	%	%

*As of December 2013

**PHILADELPHIA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS/FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION
PERFORMANCE, CHALLENGES AND INITIATIVES**

DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE (OPERATIONS)

PCHR responds to hundreds of complaints related to discrimination and unfairness – whether in the workplace, housing, or places of public accommodation, as well as conflicts between neighbors and quality of life concerns, – Cases are managed and monitored until their closure, and tallied based on calendar year. Below is a performance chart that extrapolates further, based on specific areas of enforcement.

Performance Measure	CY08	CY12	CY13	CY13-FY12 Percent Change
Discrimination Cases Investigated	294	185	250	35.1
Discrimination Cases Closed	251	211	195	-7.6
Ban the Box	N/A	9	12	33.3
Life Partnership Registrations	39	72	80	11.1
Neighbor Disputes Resolved	386	455	437	-4
Intergroup Conflict Cases Resolved	72	21	37	76.2
Prevention/Education Activities	56	48	172	258.3
FHC Intakes	199	385	429	11.4
FHC Cases Heard by Commissioners	203	369	386	4.6

DEPARTMENT CHALLENGES

Despite its small size, PCHR has managed to provide outsized stability in service for this city’s residents and meeting their needs. Yet, it has done so amid ongoing staffing fluctuation exacerbated by ongoing waves of retirements and recruitment efforts that often take longer than anticipated. We also have focused on the need for training to quickly strengthen the expertise of new hires. Combined with antiquated technology that often hampers efficient collection and analysis of critical data and accessible archives, maintaining the level of excellence expected of this agency invites struggle and limits innovation. That being said, PCHR staff pride themselves on helping Philadelphia’s citizens resolve their conflicts and improve quality of life in the city.

STAFFING LEVELS

Due to retirements, staffing levels are not optimal, though PCHR hopes to fill those positions shortly. So far, the long vacant communications post has been filled, with the anticipation of filling the deputy director position shortly. PCHR will end FY14 by filling three additional positions, including a deputy director for our Community Relations Division, a bilingual Spanish speaking receptionist and an attorney to increase legal expertise and support for the PCHR intake unit, to oversee Ban the Box cases, and to provide even more robust case management. In total, PCHR expects to bring staffing levels closer to its previous complement with the hiring of at least five people in FY2015. These hires would help offset the anticipated retirements, the third such wave for this agency in recent years.

To date, three hires have taken place: two females, one male, one white employee, one African American employee, and one Asian American employee, none of which are fully bilingual.

PAST INITIATIVES

Much of the underpinning of PCHR’s work lies in enforcing and helping to refine the Fair Practices Ordinance. Some 15 designated classes of the population – including people of various racial, ethnic, religious, gender, and orientation backgrounds – are covered by this essential law. As such, previously launched projects continue to be pursued by PCHR, as equality is an ongoing, evolving goal, with related cases arising from across the city. Highlights of such include:

- Updating the Fair Practices Ordinance, with strengthened protections for LGBT residents and visitors
 - The 2011 overhaul of this long-standing ordinance calls for the express prohibition of discrimination against new categories of people, such as those of various familial status and victims of domestic violence,.
 - This law strengthened protections for all other categories, including LGBT residents and visitors in employment, housing, real property, and public accommodations.
 - This action further codified Philadelphia’s values of equal treatment and accessibility for all, proving this city to be a leader in the realm of modern civil rights by expanding protections not covered by state or federal law.
- Releasing the Intergroup Conflict in Schools report that focused on bullying and violence against Asian immigrant students at South Philadelphia High School
 - Response came after a year-long series of public hearings where students, parents, educators, and community members shared their experiences with intergroup conflicts in Philadelphia public schools.
 - In 2011, PCHR released a report on its findings, *Widening the Circle of Our Concern: Public Perceptions of the School District of Philadelphia’s Responses to Intergroup Conflicts*, along with a corresponding web site that stands as an ongoing resource.
 - PCHR participation in the School Reform Commission’s safety and engagement subcommittee and ongoing responses to individual schools continue, largely as result of the work that arose from this initiative that further integrates its recommendations for school leaders.
- Enforcing “Ban the Box” aka the Fair Criminal Record Screening Standards Law
 - In 2011, Ban the Box became the law of the city, prohibiting employers from inquiring about criminal convictions on job applications or during the first interview and from making personnel decisions based on arrests or criminal accusations that did not result in conviction.
 - Offenders can be fined up to \$2,000 per violation.
 - PCHR launched collateral materials and trainings on the law for residents and human resources officials and continue such educational outreach.
- Advancing the Domestic or Sexual Violence Unpaid Leave Law
 - As of 2009, PCHR has been the designated enforcement agency of this law.
 - PCHR continues related intra- and inter-agency trainings as well as public education and outreach efforts.
- Continuing community relations and conflict resolution work citywide
 - The community relations division, with its grassroots approach to mediating conflict, routinely responds to requests from residents, policy makers, and law enforcement and helping to quell sometimes volatile situations.
 - The Dispute Resolution Program is one of the most frequently accessed initiatives that PCHR offers, helping to divert other resources, such as police presence or constituent services, to more pressing matters.
- Celebrating daily heroes through the PCHR Awards program.
 - PCHR historically and routinely highlights everyday and corporate citizens who model behavior that contributes to advancing harmonious interactions throughout Philadelphia.
 - This is a traditional, and widely-anticipated event.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

PCHR continues to vigorously advance actions proposed by the mayor and City Council, as well as those based on interactions with a range of stakeholders – from block captains to the Philadelphia Police Department. Highlights include all of those previously mentioned, as well as the following:

- Enforcing the newly updated Fair Practices Ordinance that now bans discrimination against employees who are pregnant or new mothers
 - This amendment was enacted in 2014.
 - PCHR is launching a full-scale public information campaign about this law, which provides protections that allow for reasonable workplace adjustments, such as removing penalties for those in need of bathroom or rest breaks.

- Streamlining case management systems
 - Fair Housing Commission workload has increased by at least 100 percent and steadily ticks upward
 - The addition of needing to track other cases as mandated by enforcement of the Fair Practices Ordinance and other legislation requires modernization of data collection, analysis, and archiving, as well as additional staff training

NEW INITIATIVES

PCHR also expects to vigorously advance other actions proposed by Mayor Nutter and City Council, and other key stakeholders – from block captains to the Philadelphia Police Department. Among the highlights:

- Instituting a conflict resolution certificate program
 - PCHR seeks to create training materials to address basic elements of conflict resolution
 - Trainings would be offered free of charge to civic leaders throughout the city so that they would be equipped to tackle low-level conflicts in their own communities and neighborhoods
 - Separate trainings would be offered to other stakeholders who regularly interact with neighborhoods, be that police officers or faith leaders
- Enhancing enforcement and tracking of Ban the Box offenders
 - Refining enforcement of this law requires stronger data collection and analysis for faster response and remedy for those unduly impacted by offenders
 - This initiative comes in direct response to advocates who fear the law may be rendered toothless without steady and forceful oversight
- Creating an (e)Quality Housing Working Group
 - As a result of Council hearings on housing discrimination, PCHR and FHC will jointly host a working group of landlord and tenant advocates, housing providers and fair housing agencies
 - Focus will be on habitability, accessibility, affordability and equal access to housing that will result in positive recommendations for Philadelphia’s housing stock and its residents

OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS

FEDERAL AND STATE (WHERE APPLICABLE)

While the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission pays \$650 per case investigated and closed by PCHR, revenues in recent years have decreased as a result of a series of events, most recently the federal sequester. These trending realities create a landscape where PCHR is not compensated for its total work hours in a timely fashion, if at all, given various reductions.

CONTRACTING EXPERIENCE

M/W/DBE Participation on Large Contracts

FY14 Contracts

Vendor	Service Provided	Amount of Contract	RFP Issue Date	Contract Start Date	Ranges in RFP	% of M/W/DBE Participation Achieved	\$ Value of M/W/DBE Participation	Total % and \$ Value Participation - All DSBES	Living Wage Compliant?
Strehlow & Associates	Court Reporting Services for hearings	\$14,000	N/A	FY 2014	MBE: % WBE: % DSBE: %	% % %	#VALUE! #VALUE! #VALUE!	0% #VALUE!	y/n y/n y/n
		\$			MBE: % WBE: % DSBE: %	% % %	#VALUE! #VALUE! #VALUE!	0% #VALUE!	y/n y/n y/n
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DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE DATA

Staff Demographics

Full-Time Staff Executive Staff

	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total % of Total	6 19%	25 81%	1 25%	3 75%
Total % of Total	African-American 1 3%	African-American 14 45%	African-American 0 0%	African-American 2 50%
Total % of Total	White 3 10%	White 6 19%	White 0 0%	White 1 25%
Total % of Total	Hispanic 0 0%	Hispanic 5 16%	Hispanic 0 0%	Hispanic 0 0%
Total % of Total	Asian 2 6%	Asian 0 0%	Asian 1 25%	Asian 0 0%
Total % of Total	Other 0 0%	Other 0 0%	Other 0 0%	Other 0 0%
Total % of Total	Bi-lingual 1 3%	Bi-lingual 5 16%	Bi-lingual 0 0%	Bi-lingual 0 0%