



**PRINCE WILLIAM**  
Human Rights



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

Fiscal Year 2019

**2019**



## Human Rights Commission **Annual Report** Fiscal Year 2019

### **Board of County Supervisors**

Corey A. Stewart, Chairman  
Maureen S. Caddigan, Vice Chair  
Ruth M. Anderson  
Victor S. Angry  
Pete K. Candland  
Jeanine M. Lawson  
Martine E. Nohe  
Frank J. Principi

### **Human Rights Commission**

Curtis Porter, Chairman  
Ramunda Young, Vice Chair  
W. James Young, Parliamentarian  
Samuel Korson  
Mohammad Usman  
Eugene Brown  
Susan Holly  
William A. Johnston, III  
Donald Scoggins

### **Human Rights Staff**

Raul Torres, Executive Director  
Shelia Venning, Human Rights Manager  
Denise McPhail, Outreach & Education Coordinator  
Dennis Sumlin, Investigator  
Oliver Demery, Investigator  
Crystal Athan, Administrative Support

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Prince William County Human Rights Commission is to eliminate discrimination through civil and human rights law enforcement and to establish equal opportunity for all persons within the county through education.

# Staff Updates

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**Raul Torres**  
Executive Director

The Board of County Supervisors announced Raul Torres as the new Executive Director of the Human Rights Office. Torres comes to Prince William County after 19 years as the Assistant County Manager for Arlington County overseeing human rights, EEO and ADA. Torres is a Certified Public Manager and earned his master's degree in Labor Law from George Washington University Law School and his Juris Doctorate in Business Law from the University of Puerto Rico Law School.



**Dennis Sumlin**  
Human Rights Investigator

The Executive Director appointed Dennis Sumlin as a Senior Investigator in the Office of Human Rights. Sumlin is an experienced Human Rights investigator with more than twenty years of experience investigating discrimination complaints in the areas of employment, housing, credit, education, and public accommodations.



**Denise McPhail**  
Outreach & Education  
Coordinator

The Executive Director designated Denise McPhail as the new Human Rights Outreach and Education Coordinator. Her duties include coordination of community outreach and education as well as training, development and coordination for staff, commissioners, and other stakeholders. Denise will also coordinate the Student Leadership Council Program.



**Mohammad Usman**  
Human Rights Commissioner

The Board of County Supervisors appointed Mohammad Usman as a Human Rights Commissioner. His term runs from November 2018 through 2021. He adds religious and cultural diversity to the commission. He has vast experience in information technology.

# The Year In Review

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## Fair Housing Testing

The Human Rights Office (HRO) conducted Fair Housing testing on race and national origin in all the magisterial districts in the eastern part of the county. Testing was done through a regional testing contract sponsored by one of our partners, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. The baseline testing consisted of sixty-five tests. The test disclosed only four (4) incidents (6%) of potential discrimination and no significant systemic issues. The Human Rights Office addressed all four (4) potential violations.

The HRO conducted Fair Housing training for its staff and invited area housing stakeholders. The training was conducted by the Fair Housing division of the Commonwealth's Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR).



## Strategic Plan

The Human Rights Office adopted a five-year plan to guide it through the years 2019-2024. The plan received input from staff, the office of the county executive, and the Human Rights Commission. The plan has five (5) goals: 1) provide a high-quality public service; 2) expand internal and external areas of work; 3) engage residents, commissioners, and staff; 4) increase the use of technology for managing and delivering services; and 5) educate staff, residents, commissioners, and the Board of County Supervisors about civil and human rights. The HRO adopts a yearly plan to meet and achieve the five-year plan's goals and objectives.



## Customer Service Policy

The Human Rights Office implemented a customer service policy that guarantees a high-quality public service in the treatment of its customers. Among others, the ten-point policy guarantees customers will be treated with courtesy and respect. Also, their matters will be handled diligently and in confidence. Moreover, the office will be respectful of their time and personal circumstances and will provide them with timely information about their cases and conduct investigations fairly and thoroughly.



## Administration

The Human Rights Office reviewed and mapped all its processes to make investigations faster and more customer-friendly. The office eliminated unnecessary steps and standardized letters and actions. The office is developing a new digitized case management system in collaboration with the Department of Information Technology with input from staff. This system will allow the HRO to manage its cases and monitor their progress more efficiently as well as producing real-time reports that will guide its planning.

The Human Rights investigators will conduct intake as part of their investigative functions. The former intake officer will have new tasks as an Outreach and Education Coordinator and will spend more time in the community. The Executive Director and the Administrative Support staff will conduct outreach in Spanish for non-English speakers. The HRO requires its staff to complete a minimum of ten (10) hours of continuing professional education per calendar year.



# In The Community



## Universal Human Rights Day

On January 19, 2019, the Prince William Human Rights Commission (PWHRC) celebrated Universal Human Rights Day. In addition, the Human Rights Commission recognized the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday and community leaders and organizations that contributed to the advancement of human rights in Prince William County. The PWHRC recognized and awarded the following persons/organizations: Phyllis Aggrey; John Harper; National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Prince William County Chapter, Inc., Potomac Health Foundation, Graham Park Middle School's "Responding And Protecting" (R.A.P) Program; Minnieville Elementary School's Family Engagement Team.



## Human Rights Student Leadership Council

On April 26, 2019, the Prince William Human Rights Commission graduated its third Student Leadership cohort. The Student Leadership Council was created by the PWHRC to grow a young generation of leaders able to recognize and stand up in defense of their civil rights and the civil rights of others.



## Virginia Association for Human Rights

The Human Rights Commission Chair, Curtis Porter, was elected as President of the Virginia Association for Human Rights (VAHR) for the 2019-2020 term. The VAHR membership is comprised of commissioners and staff from all human rights agencies within the Commonwealth of Virginia.



## Community Engagement

There has been one (1) or more commissioners at all of the HROs major outreach activities, including the Student Leadership Council sessions; their trip to the General Assembly in Richmond; meetings with the Hispanic Council of the Prince William Chamber of Commerce; the African American Festival, the Unity in the Community meetings, Muslim Association of Virginia Block Party, Dumfries Fall Festival and other outreach activities.

The following communities made presentations before the commission at one of its monthly meetings: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ), African-American (NAACP), Muslim, Jewish, and the Sikh community. The office participated in *Voice for Justice* with Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE). Also, we conducted outreach to the Hispanic community through Panorama Latino, the only Spanish language community television program serving residents of Prince William County. The HRO partnered with the Salvadorian Consulate to develop a strategic plan for the broader Hispanic community. Additionally, staff from the HRO joined the Telemundo 44 & NBC 4's Census 2020 DMV Stakeholders Session titled *Visibility & Impact In Our Communities*. Finally, staff from the HRO attended the Feria a la Comunidad held at Iglesia Cristiana Puerta del Cielo.

# The Office of Human Rights

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## Alternative Dispute Resolutions: Mediation and Conciliation

The Office of Human Rights uses two (2) types of Alternative Dispute Resolutions (ADR), mediation, and conciliation. The HRO offers mediation to both parties at the filing of any discrimination complaint. Mediation is conducted by In-house certified mediators. Investigators perform conciliation at any stage during the processing of a complaint. Both alternative resolution methods are accessible to all parties throughout the investigation process. Also, Human Rights certified mediators have been available to other county agencies, if requested, to mediate employment-related issues.

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## Engagement, Collaborations and Partnerships

In March 2019, the Prince William Human Rights Commission issued a joint press release with the Board of County Supervisors condemning terrorist acts against two (2) mosques in New Zealand that left 49 people dead. The press release reassured our community that its local government would enhance mosques' security and rejected the violent acts.



The office of Human Rights is working with the Prince William Chamber of Commerce to provide training for small businesses on compliance with civil rights laws.

The Human Rights Office partnered with three (3) Hispanic grassroots organizations HOLA, CASA, and Faith in Public Life's Votante Fiel program to promote Census participation and to do joint outreach to the Hispanic community. Presently, we have established a partnership with the consulate of El Salvador in Woodbridge to outreach the broader Hispanic community.

The office renewed its partnership with both the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for the investigation of dually filed cases and with the Prince William County Department of Housing for Fair Housing testing and training.



## Continuing Education

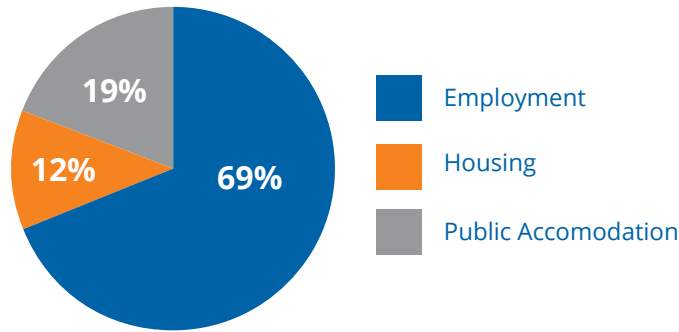
During the 2019 calendar year, staff and commissioners have received an aggregate of 200 hours of training. Among others, Fair Housing, Chapter 10.1 Human Rights Ordinance, Americans with Disabilities Act, Ethics, Freedom of Information Act and Internal Controls.

United States®  
**Census**  
**2020**

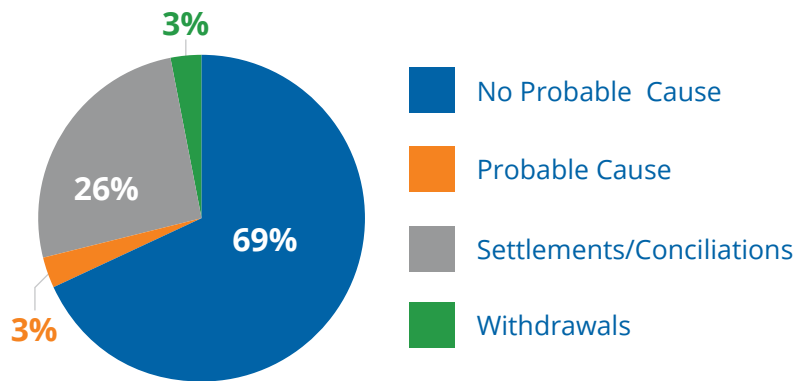
Due to the importance to our democracy and local government funding, the Prince William Human Rights Commission is committed to helping reduce census undercounting within communities of color including the African American and the Hispanic populations. Prince William County stands to lose \$2,000 of federal funding for every person that is not counted in the 2020 census. The Office of Human Rights has prepared a flyer containing census information for the Spanish speaking population who traditionally are undercounted. Also, we provide information on Census 2020 in all our outreach activities.

# Statistics

## Case Closures



## Reasons For Closures



County FY19	
# of Cases Filed	54
Cases Closed	35
% closed w/in 1yr of filing	97%
Resolved through mediation	20%
Resolved through conciliation	6%
No Cause	69%
Cause	3%
Appealed	9%
Withdrawals/Dismissals	3%
Appeals upheld	100%
Settlement amount	\$26,598
Staff/Commission training hours	200/hrs

Our statistics for the County's FY 2019 reveal that 69% of the complaints filed were employment-related, 19% claimed public accommodation issues, and 12% complained about housing-related matters.

During the County's FY 2019, twenty-six percent of the cases were settled. These settlements represented \$26,598 in monetary benefits to complainants.

In FY 2019, 97% of the cases closed were closed within one year of filing.

Only 9% of the cases closed during FY2019 were appealed, and 100% of the initial decisions made by the Executive Director were upheld by the Human Rights Commission after hearing the appeals.

Throughout FY 2019, Staff and Commission received an aggregate of 200 hours of training to update and continue developing additional professional skills.

EQUALITY

DIVERSITY

CULTURE

We should indeed keep calm in the face of difference and live our lives in a state of inclusion and wonder at the diversity of humanity.

- **George Takei**

ADVOCACY

COMMUNITY

EDUCATION

**Prince William County**  
Human Rights Commission  
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PEOPLE