

# ANNUAL REPORT FY 2015-2016



TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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September 20, 2016

**Governor Bill Haslam**  
State of Tennessee  
1st Floor, State Capitol  
Nashville, TN 37243

**Members of the General Assembly**  
State of Tennessee  
Legislative Plaza  
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Haslam & Members of the General Assembly:

Let me provide the Annual Report for 2015-16 for the Tennessee Human Rights Commission. This report details the Commission's activities from the period beginning July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2016.

This report highlights the Commission's core functions of processing complaints of discrimination in an efficient and timely manner, providing education and outreach to the public, employers, housing providers, providers of public accommodations and state agencies to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

I continue to be honored by this opportunity to serve. Thank you.



*Sincerely,*

**Beverly L. Watts,**  
**Executive Director**



## MESSAGE FROM THRC CHAIR ANNAZETTE HOUSTON

I am proud to serve as Chair of the Tennessee Human Rights Board of Commissioners. With the addition of new members, the Board continues its process of transition this year. The Commission continues to develop progressive communication and effective enforcement strategies to educate the public and conduct thorough investigations to safe guard individuals from discrimination in our state.

Let me thank the Commissioners for their service and support. Let me commend the staff for their service, timely response to the public, thorough investigation of complaints and effectively educating the public. This report reflects our commitment to providing quality service in a timely and efficient manner utilizing recognized best practices.

I encourage each of you to read more about our work and accomplishments which help promote equality and opportunity within this state. Let me thank Governor Haslam, the Lt. Governor Ramsey, the Speaker of the House Harwell and the Legislature for their continued support.

We look forward to continuing our important work.

*Sincerely,*

**Annazette Houston**  
Chair



# BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS JULY 1, 2015 - JUNE 30, 2016

## EAST TENNESSEE



Robin Derryberry  
Term Expires 06/30/17



Chrystal Cross Horne  
Term Expires 06/30/19



Chair Annazette Houston  
Term Expires 06/30/19

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE



Eric Crafton  
Term Expires 06/30/17



Bill Martin  
Term Expires 06/30/21

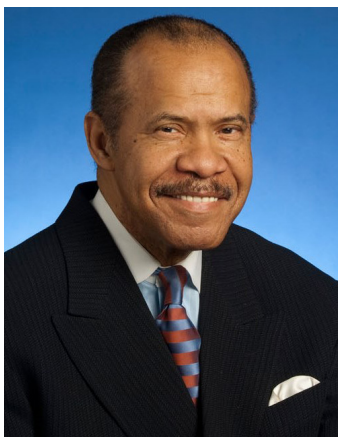


Julius Sloss  
Term Expires 06/30/21

## WEST TENNESSEE



Rieta Selberg  
Term Expires 06/30/17



Ralph White  
Term Expires 06/30/19



Chris Crider  
Term Expires 06/30/21  
**THRC ANNUAL REPORT FY 2015-2016**

# HISTORY OF THRC

On September 30, 1963, Governor Frank G. Clement signed Executive Order 18 creating the Tennessee Human Relations Commission. The Commission's original purpose was to advise the public on their rights, researching and making reports on human relations and reporting these findings to the Governor. The Commission accomplished this by working closely with other governmental agencies with similar responsibilities. In 1967, legislation was passed creating the Tennessee Commission on Human Development, which absorbed the duties of the previous Commission, adopted rules and regulations to govern its proceedings and added a prohibition against sex discrimination.

In 1978, the Tennessee Human Rights Act (THRA) became law transforming the

Commission from an advisory agency to an enforcement agency. Former Commissioner Jocelyn Wurzburg of Memphis, Tennessee was the author of this legislation; her leadership was critical to its passage. In 1979 and 1980, the law was amended to include disability and age as protected classes. In 1983, the Commission officially became the Tennessee Human Rights Commission (THRC). In 1984, the law was amended to prohibit discrimination in housing. In 1990, the expansion was extended to include familial status and disability as protected classes. Today, the THRA prohibits discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age (employment only), disability and familial status (housing only). In 2009, the THRA was expanded and THRC was given the authority to verify that state governmental

**1963** Tennessee Human Relations Commission created

**1967** Human Relations Commission becomes Commission on Human Development

**1978** Tennessee Human Rights Act passed

**1979** Commission partners with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

**1979** THRA expands to include disability as a protected class

**1980** Age becomes a protected class under THRA

entities comply with requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI). Title VI prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin. In the 2014 legislation was passed that amended the Tennessee Human Rights Act (T.C.A. §4-21-201) by reducing the Commission's board from 15 members to 9 members, with 2 members being appointed by leadership from the senate and house, and 5 appointed by the governor. The Commission's new board structure became effective on January 1, 2015.

THRC has maintained collaborative partnerships with the federal government for more than 30 years. In 1979, the Commission partnered with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) through an employer monitoring grant, now expanded into a work-share agreement. In 1985, the THRC began its partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a substantially equivalent agency. These relationships allow the Commission to investigate complaints involving alleged violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with

Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act).

The mission of the THRC is to safeguard individuals from discrimination through enforcement and education. The Commission executes its mission through a nine-member Board of Commissioners and staff of 29 in four offices (Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga and Knoxville). Through 'Rule 31' trained mediators, the Commission has operated a successful Mediation Program since its reactivation in 2008. The THRA and Tennessee Disability Act (TDA) are enforced through receiving, mediating, investigating, conciliating and, when necessary, litigating allegations of discrimination. The Commission also coordinates the state of Tennessee's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Commission uses a variety of public meetings, outreach events and resources to educate about rights and responsibilities under the THRA and the TDA.

**1984** THRA amended to prohibit discrimination in housing

**1985** THRC partners with U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

**1990** Familial status and disability protected from discrimination in housing

**2008** THRC reactivates Mediation Program with Rule 31 mediators

**2009** THRC given authority to monitor state agencies' Title VI compliance

**2015** New board structure of nine commissioners takes effect

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Annual Employment Law Seminar experienced another record breaking year for attendance of 177, featuring outstanding speakers including U.S. District Judge Waverly Crenshaw.
- In collaboration with the EEOC, the Commission held two education and outreach events educating the public about our respective laws.
- The Customer Service Division is the initial point of contact for the THRC. The Division processed 9,238 calls from the public.
- A total of 40 mediations were conducted, of which 23 were successful, resulting in \$84,270 awarded as monetary benefits to complainants. The mediation program experienced a resolution rate of 58% in all mediation attempts.
- The Employment Division received 623 inquiries, of which 368 complaints were accepted. The division closed 286 complaints. More than \$178,632 was awarded as monetary benefits to Complainants through 17 settlements.
- The Housing Division accepted 148 complaints and closed 78. The Division held 33 conciliations, resulting in more than \$40,377 in monetary benefits to complainants.
- The Legal Division reviewed and recommended for closure 325 complaints, and conducted 11 Reconsiderations for Housing and Employment cases combined. The Division found reasonable cause in 1 complaint, and conciliated 4 complaints.
- More than \$300,000 in monetary benefits was awarded to Complainants for all conciliations, mediations, and settlements. Non-monetary benefits, including not contesting unemployment benefits, reinstatement, training, neutral reference letters, reasonable accommodations, structural modifications, removal of eviction records, fair housing training, third party monitoring, policy revision, and housing opportunities were also awarded.
- The Title VI Compliance Program reviewed 42 state agencies' implementation plans.
- The Education and Outreach program successfully connected with more than 35,000 individuals through participation in more than 121 outreach events and activities. Through both traditional and social media, the Commission is expected to have reached more than 2.2 million individuals.

# CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INTAKE

Through the Commission's Customer Service & Intake Divisions, individuals can obtain assistance with filing a discrimination complaint. The **CUSTOMER SERVICE DIVISION** serves as the initial point of contact for the Tennessee Human Rights Commission. Staff provides information on how to file a complaint, sends out complaint forms to interested parties, and makes referrals to other agencies, if necessary. Complaint forms are available at any of the Commission's four regional offices or on the website. The Commission must receive a complaint form with an original signature in order to process the complaint.

## IN 2016 CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INTAKE...



Received **9,238**  
phone calls

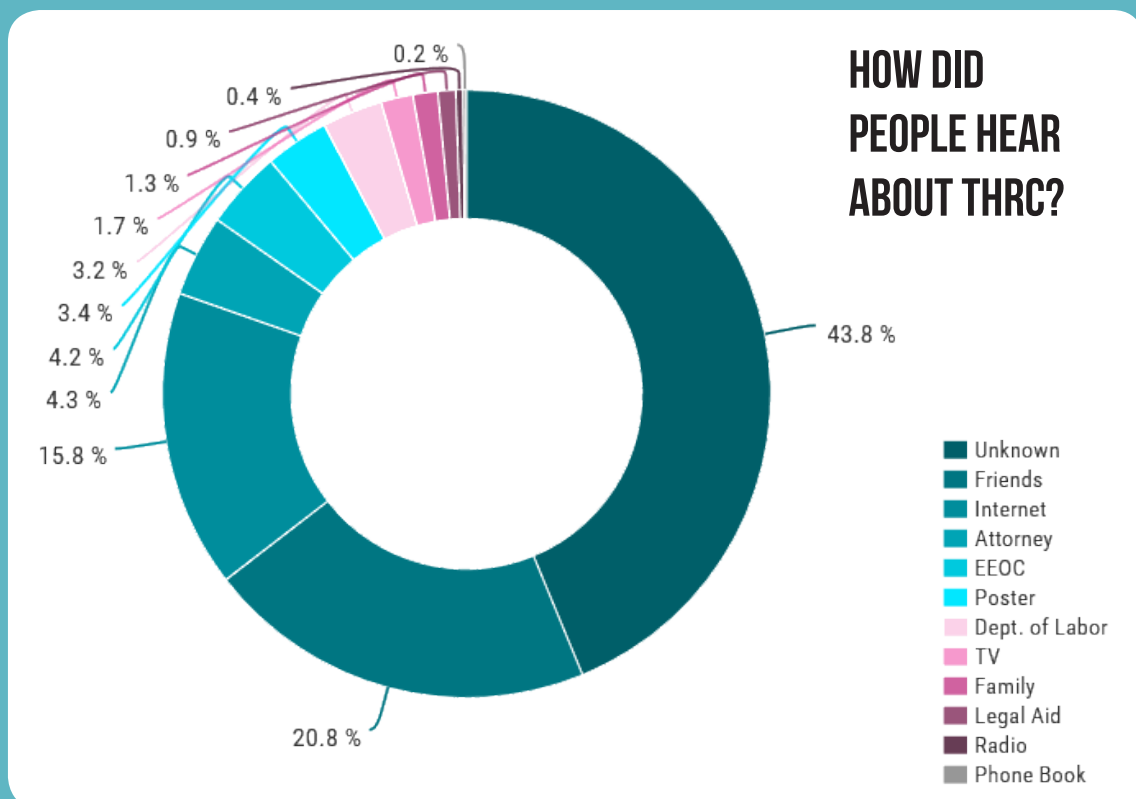


Sent **1,174**  
complaint forms



Processed **31**  
copy requests

The **INTAKE DIVISION** receives complaint forms in Employment and Public Accommodations. Staff assess the complaints to determine whether the allegations are within the Tennessee Human Rights Act or the Tennessee Disability Act.



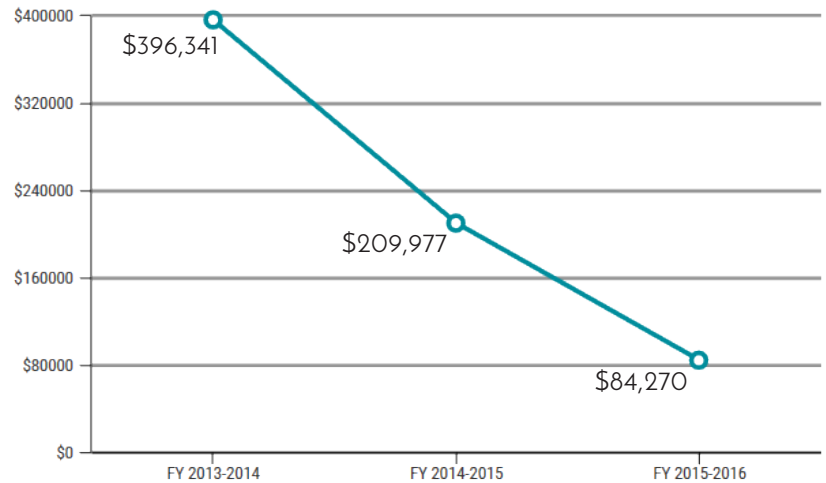
# MEDIATION

The purpose of mediation is to facilitate an atmosphere for both parties to discuss their perspectives on the dispute and work towards a possible resolution. Mediation is an alternative to undergoing a full investigation or litigation and is provided at no cost to either party. Complainants and Respondents must agree to attempt mediation. The mediation is conducted in a secure and controlled environment. If the parties agree to a resolution, the case is closed. However, if an agreement is not reached, the case is then sent to investigation.

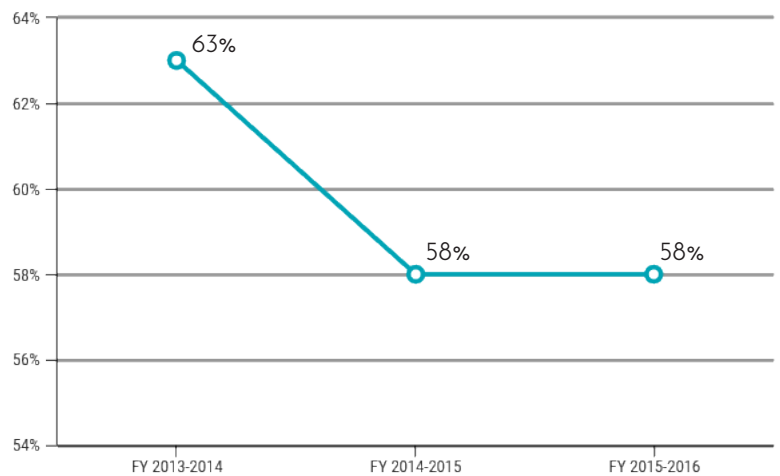
Mediation Success Rate



## MEDIATION DOLLARS



## SUCCESS RATE



## MEDIATION BY THE NUMBERS

- **40** mediations held
- **23** successful mediations
- **\$84,270** awarded as monetary benefits to complainants.
- Individual benefits ranged from **\$400 - \$20,000**
- Non-monetary benefits awarded included: not contesting unemployment benefits, policy changes, reinstatement, and training.
- **7** Rule 31 trained mediators on staff and a contract with the Nashville Conflict Resolution Center (for Spanish speaking parties)

# EMPLOYMENT

The Employment Division is responsible for investigating Employment and Public Accommodation discrimination complaints on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and age (40 and over). The Commission has a work-share agreement with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to investigate complaints of employment discrimination when businesses have 15 or more employees. This partnership allows the federal and state agencies to coordinate their investigations and avoid duplication of efforts in seeking to end discrimination.

## COMPLAINT NUMBERS

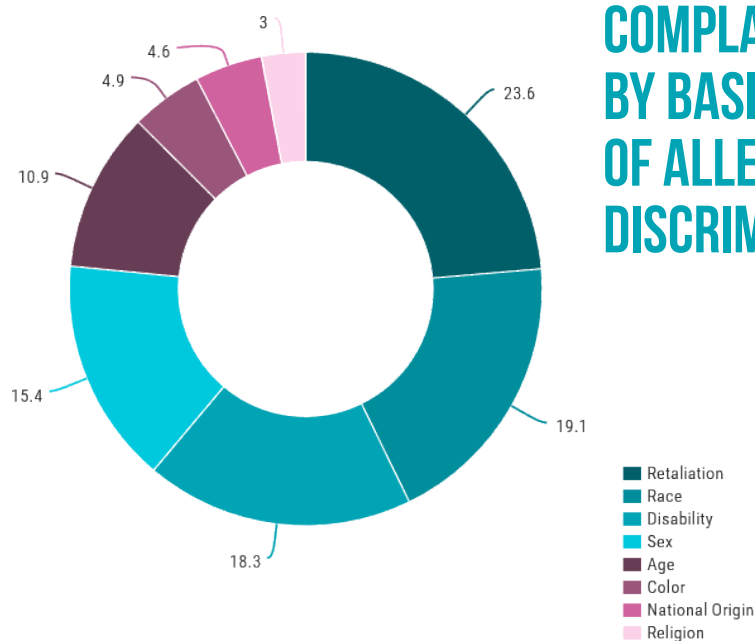


**623** inquiries



**368** complaints  
accepted

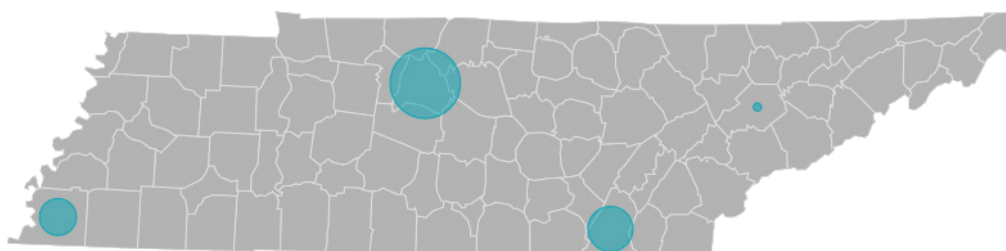
**283** complaints  
closed



## COMPLAINTS BY BASIS OF ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION

## CASES BY ORIGINATING COUNTY

A review of complaint inquiries by county showed that Davidson (96), Hamilton (66), Shelby (60), and Knox (50) counties continue to lead in receipt of complaints, accounting for more than **49%** of all complaint inquiries.



## SETTLEMENT BENEFITS



**17** cases resolved through settlements

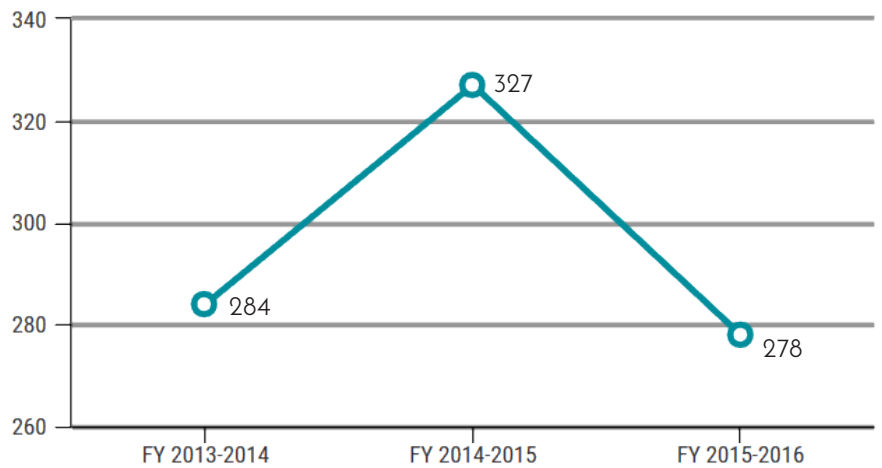
**\$178,632** benefits to complainants

Non-monetary benefits include neutral reference letters, unopposed unemployment benefits, and reinstatement.

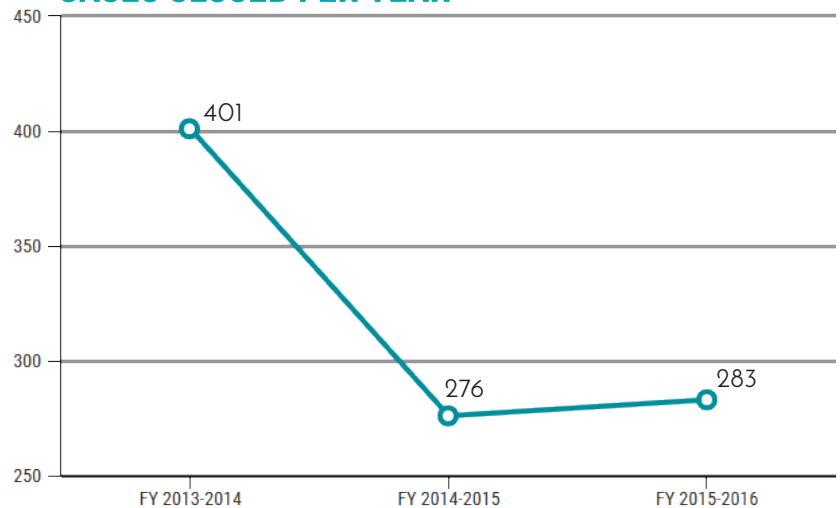
## CASE CLOSURE DATA OVER TIME

The Employment Division has a goal to complete investigations with the average complaint closure of 270 days or less.

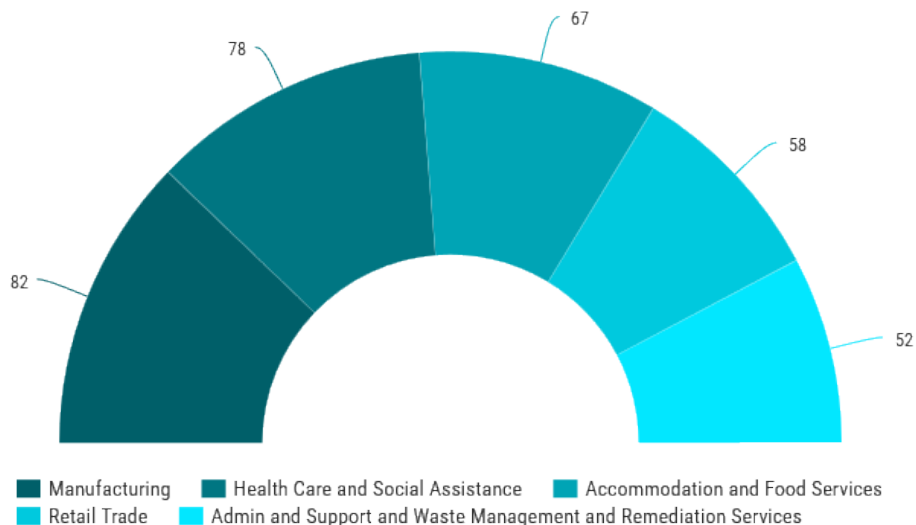
### AVERAGE CASE AGE AT CLOSURE



### CASES CLOSED PER YEAR



## NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FOR TOP 5 INDUSTRIES



# HOUSING

The Housing Division is responsible for resolving complaints of discrimination in housing based on the areas of sale, rental, advertisement, and financing of housing and commercial property on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status.

The Commission has a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to process complaints of housing discrimination when landlords have four or more properties. This partnership allows the federal and state agencies to coordinate their investigations and avoid duplication of efforts in seeking to end discrimination.

## COMPLAINT NUMBERS



**382** inquiries



**148** complaints accepted

**80** complaints closed

## CONCILIATION BENEFITS



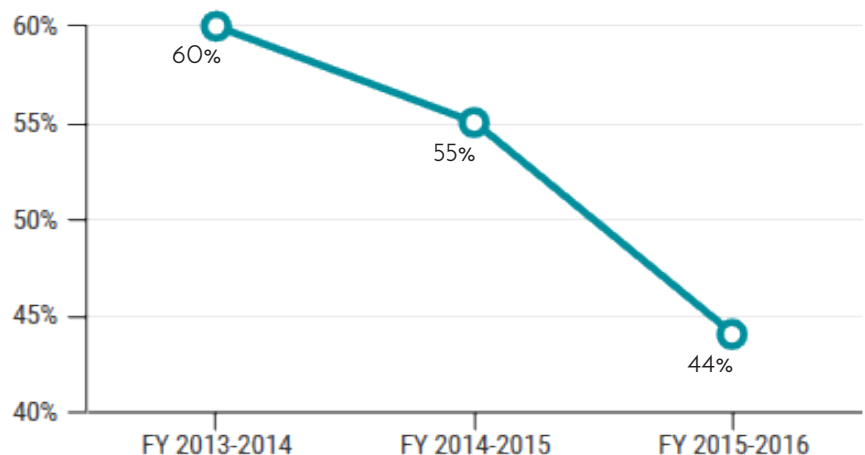
**33** complaints resolved through conciliation

**\$40,377** in monetary benefits to complainants

Non-monetary benefits include reasonable accommodations, modifications, structural modifications, removal of eviction records, fair housing training, third party monitoring, policy revision, and housing opportunities.

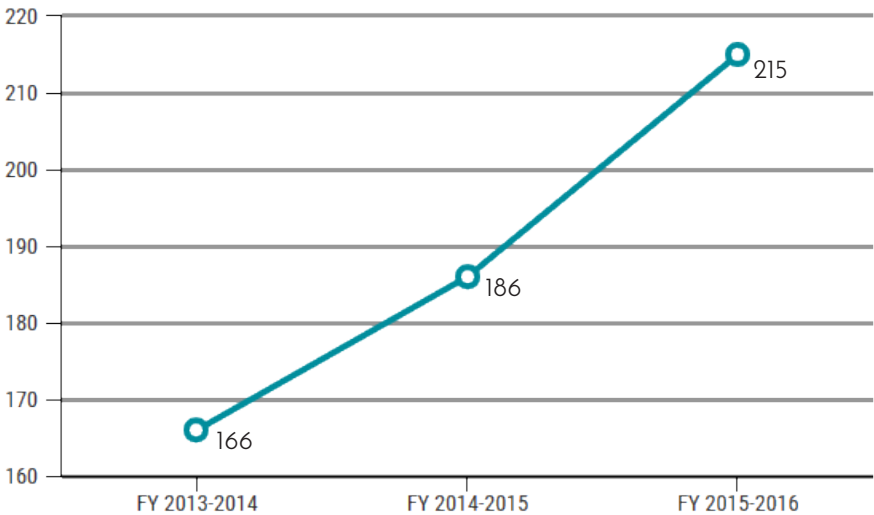
## CASE AGE

The Housing Division's primary focus is to conduct thorough investigations while meeting HUD's efficiency goal of closing 50% of fair housing complaints within 100 days or less, excluding recommended cause and systemic complaints. For the past five (5) years, staff has met or exceeded the agreement standard. This year, with limited resources, staff closed 80 complaints with 35 or 44% being closed within 100 days or less. The chart below reflects the Division's efficiency in closing complaints within 100 days (as percentage of total complaints).



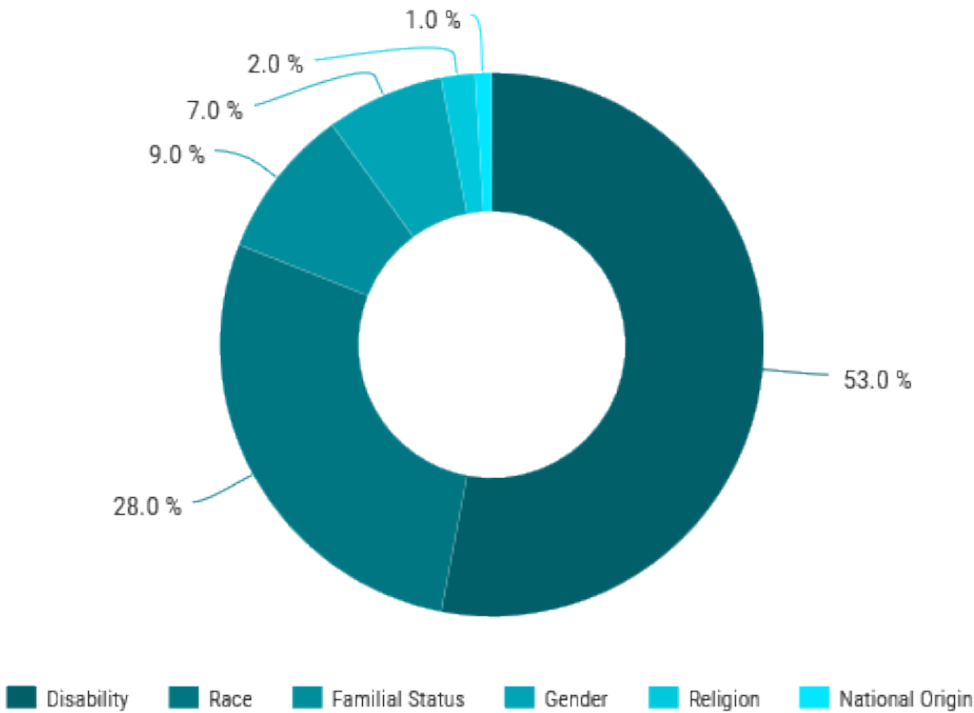
DAYS OF INVESTIGATION

The following is a representation of the average complaint closure (in days) for the past three fiscal years.



HOUSING COMPLAINTS BY BASIS OF ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION

The 148 accepted and filed complaints included 160 bases due to multiple alleged bases for discrimination. The chart below reflects the percentage by each basis of alleged discrimination. The top basis is disability at 53%.



# TITLE VI COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

The Title VI Compliance Program is responsible for verifying that state governmental entities that are recipients of federal financial assistance comply with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Commission serves as the central coordinating agency for executive branch departments and agencies for technical assistance, consultation and resources to encourage and assist with compliance.

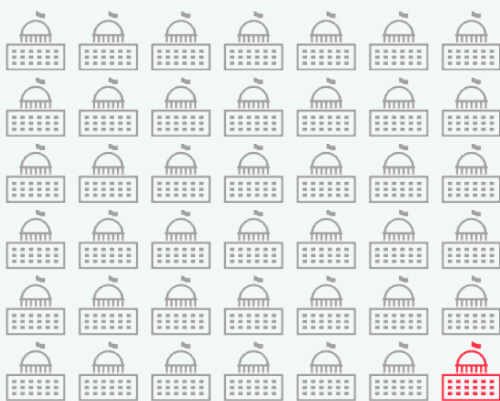
For a full report on the activities, findings and accomplishments of the Title VI Compliance Program please see the Report to Governor and General Assembly.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

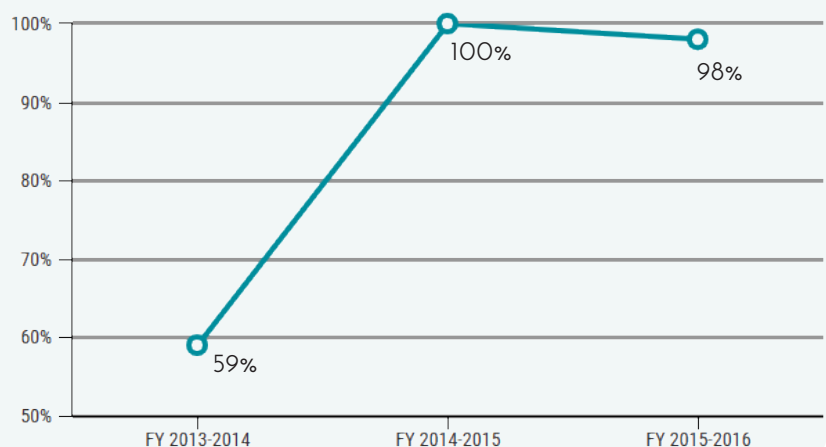
Agencies that receive federal financial assistance are required to submit an annual implementation plan, a report of measures taken to meet Title VI requirements, to the Commission. This year 42 state agencies submitted a plan. Review of these plans, which are due October first of each year, is a significant role of the program. In the review, agencies are evaluated on compliance items such as training departments on Title VI requirements, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policies, data collection and the monitoring of subrecipients' use of federal funds.

Compliance rates have improved steadily since the program's inception, and in fiscal year 2014-2015 the program achieved 100% compliance. This fiscal year 41 of 42 departments met the implementation plan requirements and did not receive any findings. The Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security had one finding of timeliness, as the Implementation Plan was delivered one day past the deadline. For fiscal year 2015-2016 the program has achieved 98% compliance.

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN COMPLIANCE FY 2016



### IP COMPLIANCE OVER TIME



## TITLE VI COMPLIANCE REVIEWS

The Commission's Title VI Compliance Division periodically reviews all state agencies to ensure compliance with Title V. During FY 2015-2016 the division reviewed the following three agencies.

### HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Compliance Division reviewed THRC for Title VI Compliance and issued two findings:

1. Some staff members believed that the Title VI Compliance Division would be involved in resolving Title VI Complaints made against the Commission itself.

The THRC corrected the finding by creating additional training content that clarified for all employees the division of responsibilities with regard to Title VI Complaints made against the Commission itself.

2. One staff member was unsure of some aspects of the Commission's LEP policy.

The THRC corrected the finding by issuing refresher training. The Title VI Compliance Division has determined that the THRC is now in full compliance.

### FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Department of Finance and Administration was reviewed in April and May of 2015. The Compliance program identified findings in three program areas; Limited English Proficiency, Complaint Procedures, and Title VI Training. Per a corrective action plan issued by the THRC Compliance Program the department made adjustments to its training program to correct the deficiencies.

### ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION

The Alcoholic Beverage Commission was reviewed in June of 2014. The Compliance Program identified findings in four program areas, Limited English Proficiency, Complaint Procedures, Title VI Training, and Data Collection. Per a corrective action plan issued by the THRC Compliance Program the commission made adjustments to its training program and data collection practices.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Title VI Division responded to thirty-nine requests for technical assistance from state departments and agencies on Title VI compliance. Topics of concern included complaint investigation, providing appropriate signage, and capturing racial data in services.

## TITLE VI COMPLAINTS

The division is responsible for the receipt, review, and referral of complaints alleging discrimination by a state agency under Title VI. Inquiries deemed jurisdictional under Title VI are filed as complaints and referred for investigation to the department that administers the program or activity referenced in the complaint. Complaints are not closed with the Commission until written notification of the resolution is received from the referring department.

### 2016 COMPLAINT NUMBERS



**326** inquiries



**126** complaints accepted

**62** closures

## TRAINING

The annual training for state Title VI Coordinators was held on July 29, 2015. Information presented during this session included an overview of the fundamentals of Title VI compliance for new coordinators, an explanation of the Implementation Plan guidelines for FY2015-2016, and guidance on the process of investigating Title VI Complaints. At a briefing prior to the training THRC issued forty-two "Report Cards" to all state agency department heads. Each report card included observations and suggestions regarding the subject agency's Title VI compliance efforts.

On November 30, 2015 the Title VI Division conducted training on Title VI investigation in cooperation with the Department of Human Resources. Twenty investigators from various agencies were represented, and taught the fundamental techniques and appropriate procedures for the investigation of Title VI Complaints.

The Title VI Compliance division attended a regular training session of civil rights officers of the Tennessee Board of Regents institutions, at which the Title VI Compliance Director, Matthew Stephenson, gave a presentation and answered questions on addressing Limited English Proficiency, addressing violations of Title VI at the institutional level, and data collection.

# LEGAL

The Legal Division serves as in-house counsel to the Commission. The division reviews and reconsiders complaints investigated and prosecutes cases where the Commission has found reasonable cause to believe that an act of discrimination has occurred. The Legal Division's primary role is to work with the other divisions of the agency at the various stages of the investigative process to ensure that the case investigations are legally sufficient. Additionally, Legal staff provides guidance and training to staff and Commissioners, conducts internal policy reviews, monitors legislation and court cases that impact the Commission, drafts rules to comply with legislative changes, ensures compliance of conciliation agreements, and conducts educational presentations for stakeholders.

## 2016 STATS

### HOUSING



**79** cases  
closed



**1** reconsideration  
processed



**0** cause  
findings



**2** cause  
conciliations

### EMPLOYMENT



**246** cases  
closed



**10** reconsiderations  
processed



**1** cause  
finding



**2** cause  
conciliations

## CAUSE CASES

When the Commission issues a finding of reasonable cause to believe discrimination occurred in a case, our statute requires us to make attempts at conciliation. If these attempts fail, the case proceeds to an administrative hearing. Not all cases are resolved (whether by conciliation or by hearing) within the same fiscal year as a reasonable cause finding is issued. For this fiscal year, we resolved the four cause cases below.

### 01 EMPLOYMENT: RETALIATION

Complainant was being considered for a position with an employer; however, his hiring process ended when an employee was told by an employee for Respondent that the Complainant had filed a "civil lawsuit" against them. The Commission determined that based on the evidence, the Complainant was no longer considered for the position because the employer learned that he filed a discrimination complaint against the Respondent. The case mediated with \$11,333.34 to Complainant, a character letter from Respondent, a letter confirming Complainant's employment and duties with Respondent, and removal of Complainant's "not eligible for re-hire" status. Respondent also had to send at least 6 upper-level supervisors to employment discrimination training and also provide individualized training for the supervisor involved in the call to the prospective employer.

### 02 EMPLOYMENT: RETALIATION

Complainant was assigned to Respondent's place of business. She had some issues with a co-worker and claimed harassment. She complained a second time soon thereafter. The next day Respondent decided not to continue her employment. The case settled with \$4000 to Complainant; \$400 to THRC's Education and Outreach fund; Training to include retaliation issues, and the Complainant will not apply for employment or accept temporary placement with Respondent.

### 03 HOUSING: DISCRIMINATION

Complainant requested an accommodation to transfer to a first floor apartment. Respondent did not grant her request and failed to enter into an interactive discussion with the Complainant to clear up any confusion. It also appears Respondent requires such requests to be in writing which is not compliant with the law. The case successfully conciliated with \$7,500 to Complainant; \$1,500 to THRC's Education and Outreach fund; Training to all employees who make housing decisions, and reasonable accommodation policy review.

### 04 HOUSING: DISCRIMINATION

Complainant is a person with a disability. Complainant was issued a notice to vacate soon after informing the Respondent that she would not dismiss her discrimination case. Complainant also made a reasonable accommodation request with regard to changing the due date of her rental payments to occur when she received her Social Security check. The case mediated with \$5,000 for Complainant and \$2,000 to THRC's Education & Outreach fund. The Respondent will attend a fair housing training to include reasonable accommodation issues, revise the lease to include fair housing information and develop and implement a policy on reasonable accommodations in compliance with fair housing guidelines.

## COMMISSION-INITIATED COMPLAINT

On June 16, 2015, the Commission filed a complaint against an employer alleging disability discrimination based on advertisements posted on the company's Facebook page. The advertisement for hire informed people not to apply if they fell into certain categories, some of which would apply to people with disabilities. The case settled with \$1,000 to THRC's education and outreach fund, and the employer removed the advertisements in question. The employer also agreed not to repost or reprint such types of ads; held a mandatory training with an emphasis on preventing disability discrimination for employees making employment decisions; developed and implemented an anti-discrimination policy for hiring and employment, added "Equal Opportunity Employer" to its applications and any future hiring advertisements; and placed an advertisement on its Facebook page informing readers about their rights as they relate to workplace discrimination.

## MONITORING

The Legal Division monitors state and federal legislation and court decisions involving discrimination law.

### LEGISLATION

The 109th General Assembly of the State of Tennessee convened on January 12, 2016, and adjourned on April 22, 2016. The Commission monitored numerous bills that were introduced which could potentially affect the statutes that we enforce: the Tennessee Human Rights Act (THRA) and the Tennessee Disability Act (TDA). Below is a summary of two bills that have particular relevance to the Commission.

#### HOUSE BILL 2335 / SENATE BILL 1884 (PASSED)

This bill became Public Chapter No. 863 on May 2, 2016, after being signed by Governor Haslam on April 19, 2016. This was a procedural bill for housing cases which eliminated the requirement that a party remove a case to state court within 90 days after the THRC complaint was filed if THRC issued a reasonable cause finding.

#### HOUSE BILL 2372 / SENATE BILL 2358 (DEFERRED TO SUMMER STUDY)

This bill was proposed to add reasonable accommodations to employment under the Tennessee Disability Act.

### U.S. SUPREME COURT CASES

#### GREEN V. BRENNAN, MAY 23, 2016

7-1 decision. This case involved a federal employee who alleged employment discrimination in the form of constructive discharge in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Court clarified that in constructive discharge cases, the limitations period to file a lawsuit begins to run on the date of the employer's resignation (when the employee gives notice of his resignation), and not on the effective date of the resignation or the date of when the alleged discrimination occurred upon which the employee's constructive discharge claim is based.

#### FISHER V. UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, JUNE 23, 2016

4-3 decision. The Court upheld the lower court's ruling that the race-conscious admissions program used by the University of Texas at Austin in 2008 is lawful under the Equal Protection Clause.

# EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Education and Outreach initiatives are Communications Division programs established in order to educate the public on the Commission's duties and responsibilities. The division is charged with developing and implementing strategies that aid the commission's goal to safeguard individuals from discrimination through enforcement and education.

Each year, the Tennessee Human Rights Commission participates in a variety of programs across the state to provide citizens with an understanding of discrimination laws, what constitutes discrimination, as well as the Commission's complaint process. During fiscal year 2016, the Commission participated in 127 outreach activities. The Commission partnered with 112 state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, private and faith-based organizations to promote an understanding of the Commission's work. Through these initiatives, the Commission reached more than 35,000 individuals.

## FY 2016 STATS



Placed ads in **11**  
event program  
booklets



Participated in **121**  
outreach activities



Connected with more than  
**35,000** individuals

Gave **31** educational  
presentations



Conducted **18**  
outreach exhibits



## MEDIA REACH

The Commission continues to modernize the ways it reaches the public. Through the coordinated use of social media, a web presence, numerous radio and television broadcasts as well as the print media, the THRC regularly gains exposure to the general public.



### ONLINE MEDIA



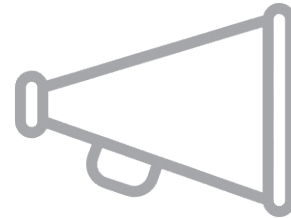
**4,693** views of facebook.  
com/TNHumanRights



over **5,000** views on  
youtube.com/Tennessee-  
HumanRights



over **53,000** visits to  
tn.gov/humanrights



### TRADITIONAL MEDIA



reached **1.1 MILLION**  
people through the  
Tennessean and Pride



reached **200,000**  
people through Human  
Rights Day coverage on  
Metro Channel 3



reached **1.1 MILLION**  
people through Clear  
Channel and Women's  
Radio

# ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT LAW SEMINAR

Each year, the THRC, in partnership with the Department of Human Resources, hosts an Annual Employment Law Seminar. This program is meant to educate business professionals, organizations, and employers of their responsibilities under the Tennessee Human Rights Act. This year's seminar, held on June 26 in Nashville, was attended by 177 professionals.



ELS was attended by 177 professionals working in fields related to employment law

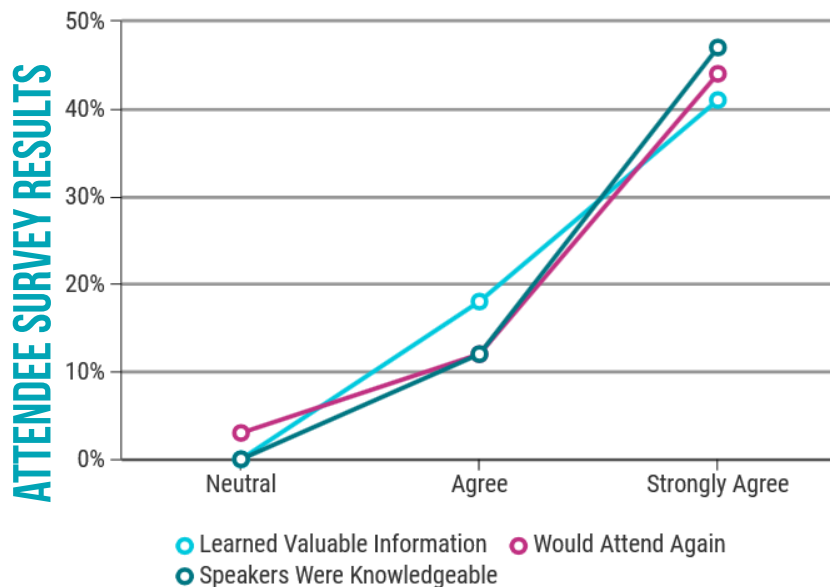


Judge Crenshaw and Director Watts speak with an attendee

## ELS 2016 SPEAKERS

- Danielle Barnes, TN Department of Human Resources
- Lesley Farmer, TN Department of Human Resources
- Kim Vance, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC
- Judge Waverly D. Crenshaw, U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee
- Joshua Sudbury, Ford Harrison LLP
- Bahar Azhdari, Brookdale Senior Living
- Fred Bissinger, Wimberly Lawson Wright Daves & Jones PLLC

## ELS 2016 BY THE NUMBERS



## CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY FOR FAIR HOUSING

The Division held and participated in fair housing events throughout the state in 2016. In Nashville, Director Watts was a featured speaker at the Fair Housing Matters Conference, where she gave a "State of the State" address, discussing housing discrimination in Tennessee. In Knoxville, THRC participated in the ECHO Fair Housing Conference. THRC Housing Investigator Saadia Williams participated in a panel discussing landlord-tenant laws and fair housing. The Commission also hosted the West Tennessee Fair Housing Celebration in Memphis. Through these events, the Commission reached hundreds of residents.



Director Watts at the West Tennessee Fair Housing Celebration



Director Watts presenting the Rising Advocate Award to Aisha Lbhalla

## TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

THRC played a significant role in the 7th annual Tennessee Human Rights Day, a celebration of International Human Rights Day that honors human rights champions. Director Watts served as Master of Ceremonies, and Commission Chair Annazette Houston delivered the Gubernatorial Proclamation to the gathering. THRC staff member Francisco Guzman was a member of the planning committee along with Director Watts.

# STAFF AND OFFICES

## Central Office - Nashville

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## STAFF

### Beverly Watts, Executive Director

Alexander, Monica \*

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Bah, Thierno

Bass, Candice

Bates, Cynthia \*

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Burch, Laura

Cartier, Bridget

Cartwright, Brigette

Chambers, LaShondia \*

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Davidson, Tracy

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Gardner, Barbara

Guzman, Frank

Haddock, Billie Jean

Hooper, Sabrina

Howell, T \*

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Lancaster, Lisa

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Riddle, Jennell

Rose, Shay

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Smiddy, Bradley

Smith, Renee

Speer, Lauren

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Taylor, Corey \*

Thompson, Teresa

Ursery, Rodney

Williams, Saadia

\* indicates former staff member who served THRC during fiscal year 2016

## Connect with THRC



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# ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Tennessee Human Rights Commission

