



## COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS



Let's pull together before we're torn apart.

# 2014

# ANNUAL REPORT

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# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Mayor

February 2015

Dear Lincoln Residents:

Ever since local voters approved Title 11 in 1966, the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) has continued its mission of promoting equal opportunity and combating discrimination. This 2014 Annual Report highlights some of the recent activities and accomplishments of the Commission.

This past year, LCHR welcomed three new Commissioners --Amanda Baron, Jonathan Rehm and Melanie Ways. I appreciate their willingness to volunteer their valuable time and talents as well as their commitment to equality and fairness in employment and housing. I also want to thank the remaining Commissioners and our two LCHR investigators as well. They closed 29 housing cases, 38 employment cases and three public accommodation cases during 2014. The LCHR also reached more than 6,240 residents with nearly 108 educational sessions covering civil rights and responsibilities.

The annual Civil Rights Conference in April 2014 focused on both employment and housing. Presenters included local, regional and national experts in their fields. We appreciate our Conference sponsors, including the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the Omaha Human Rights and Relations Department, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Nebraska Housing Developers Association. Our success depends upon their continued support.

I am excited about the work of the LCHR, and I look forward to continued success from the Commission and its dedicated staff. Our community has made great progress in fighting prejudice and promoting tolerance, and LCHR is making sure that we continue to move forward. We can all be proud to live in a community that values diversity and stands against discrimination of any kind.

Sincerely,



Chris Beutler  
Mayor, City of Lincoln

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Executive Director

Dear Friends of the Commission:

Another year has passed and much has transpired, resulting in losses and gains! We bid farewell from the Commission to A. Eugene Crump and Hazel Rodriguez after each had served two full terms on the Commission. We could not effectively enforce the discrimination laws without their spirit of commitment and dedication. We welcomed Amanda Baron, Jon Rehm, and Melanie Ways to the Commission. The new commissioners have quickly taken on their roles and are propelling the Commission forward.

The investigators at the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights continued to work diligently investigating housing, public accommodation, and employment discrimination cases. Angie, our Senior Civil Rights Investigator, resigned her position to pursue other interests and we certainly felt the loss in our small office. The Commission wishes Angie well in her latest endeavor and thanks her for her 17 years of dedicated service. We are in the process of hiring her successor.

Loren has continued community outreach efforts through her association with the Lincoln Housing Authority, RentWise, CenterPointe and Community Action Partnership. Loren has also maintained our tradition of advising Lincoln Public High School students about their rights related to housing and employment as they prepare to move into the workforce and out of the parental home. Additionally, Loren has begun a larger outreach effort involving distribution of Commission pamphlets at various locations, such as the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Clinics, the Center for People in Need, the Asian Center and the Malone Center to spread the word about the existence of the Commission and its role in the community.

As always, our annual Civil Rights Conference was the highlight of the year. We had nearly 200 professionals present and our speakers came to us from the U. S. Housing and Urban Development Office in Kansas City, MO and the Omaha Field Office as well, the District Office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in St. Louis, MO, and the Great Plains Americans with Disabilities Action Center. In addition to the legal updates that are provided every year, sessions were conducted on the following subjects, Accessibility and Employment, Housing Needs of Economically Depressed Areas and Disenfranchised Groups, Eliminating Barriers in Recruiting and Hiring.

As we brace ourselves for the coming year, the LCHR continues its legacy of law enforcement and education while encouraging a welcoming atmosphere of acceptance in the City of Lincoln.

Best,



Kimberley Taylor-Riley  
Executive Director

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Commission Chair

Dear Citizens and Friends of the Commission,

With this letter the Commissioners and I would like to give you a status report on the Commission's work through 2014. The Executive Director and staff of the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) continue to work in a professional manner to investigate complaints, discuss the cases brought before the Commission, and issue findings in a timely and just manner. We hope to educate the employers, employees, landlords, and tenants about acceptable practices and discriminatory ones that arise in the daily lives of the residents of the City of Lincoln, Nebraska.

At the end of the 2013 term, we said goodbye to commissioners Gene Crump and Hazel Rodriguez. The LCHR will miss their experienced and judicious counsel. The Commissioners who served with Gene and Hazel thank them for their service to the City of Lincoln and wish them well in their future endeavors.

This year, the Commission welcomed three new commissioners. The addition of Amanda Baron, John Rehm and Melanie Ways allowed the Commission to operate as an experienced set of fact finders, thoughtful problem solvers, and committed dispute resolution specialists. I am proud to serve with our new Commissioners along with: Elizabeth Kennedy-King, Susan Oldfield, Takako Olson, Mary Reece, and Micheal Q. Thompson. Their civic service on the Commission shows that Lincoln is a place where people count.

The annual Civil Rights Conference was hosted by the LCHR staff in April 2014 and was a resounding success. The Annual Conference is an educational and instructive how-to seminar to comply with the housing and employment rights and responsibilities that affect all of us.

It goes without saying, but I acknowledge the support, attention to detail, work ethic, and pure joy the Commissioners and I received from working with Peg Dillon, Angela Lemke, Margie Nichols, Loren Roberts and Kimberley Taylor-Riley—the dedicated staff of the Lincoln Human Rights Commission. It saddens me to say goodbye to Ms. Lemke. She left the commission in the fall of 2014 to spend more time with family. I have enjoyed working with all of you. I have appreciated your guidance, temperament, and skills as the Commission go about our task. Thank you.

Our work continues to strive for fairness and equality in a city that provides a local Civil Rights Agency to combat housing and employment discrimination. How fortunate we are to live in Lincoln, Nebraska, a city committed to equity and fairness for all its residents.

Sincerely,



Bennie Shobe  
Chair, 2014

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Commissioners

### 2014 Commissioners



2014 Lincoln Commission on Human Rights Commissioners: Front row, left to right: Amanda Baron, Melanie Ways, Chair-Bennie Shobe, Jr. and Vice Chair-Mary Reece.

Back row, left to right: Susan Oldfield, Jonathan Rehm, Micheal Q. Thompson, and Elizabeth Kennedy-King. Not pictured, Takako Olson.

The LCHR Commission is a nine member board of diverse people who hear and decide the cases presented to them. They are volunteers who are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. An additional goal of the Commission is to continue educating the public on discrimination laws in the hope of preventing and eventually eliminating unlawful discrimination. They meet on the last Thursday of each month at 4 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of the County/City Building.

## Mission Statement

### Mission

The administration of the Human Rights Division supports the enforcement of all provisions of Title 11 of the Lincoln Municipal Code. To receive, settle, conciliate, investigate, issue findings, and hold public hearings on complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, familial status, age, ancestry, marital status, and retaliation.

To perform functions and activities with community groups, businesses, schools, and governmental entities for the purpose of promoting understanding between races, cultures, and sexes, and to work to eliminate inequalities and sources of inter-racial friction.

Review all City of Lincoln procurement bids and awards in excess of \$10,000.00.

Review DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprises) program of minority and women-owned businesses and maintain directory.

### Goals

To eliminate and prevent all forms of illegal discrimination, to assure and foster equal opportunity for all citizens of the City, and to act in all matters within its jurisdiction.

## The Commission's Role

The Commission is a NEUTRAL agency. We do not serve as either side's lawyer, advocate, or advisor. We are not prosecutors. We do not take the side of either the complainant (the person who filed the complaint) or the respondent (the alleged discriminator).

The job of the Commission is:

- to *investigate* complaints of discrimination;
- to *settle* complaints, if possible;
- to *determine*, after investigation, whether there was discrimination in violation of the City of Lincoln Equal Opportunity Ordinance; and
- to *order remedies* if the complainant proves at a hearing that discrimination has occurred.

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Agency Staff

KIMBERLEY TAYLOR-RILEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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ANGELA LEMKE  
SENIOR CIVIL RIGHTS  
INVESTIGATOR



Tel 402-441-3870  
[alemke@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:alemke@lincoln.ne.gov)  
(Retired 10/14)

MARGIE NICHOLS  
CIVIL RIGHTS INVESTIGATOR



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[mnichols@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:mnichols@lincoln.ne.gov)

Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) is the primary City Agency that has the responsibility for the remedy of discrimination complaints brought by individuals. Any remedy pursued by the LCHR will be based on the enforcement authority of the Equal Opportunities Ordinance which provides a fair and impartial process for resolving charges of discrimination. The LCHR also provides community education and technical assistance in order for people to know and understand their rights and responsibilities under the law.

LOREN MESTRE'-ROBERTS  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
COORDINATOR



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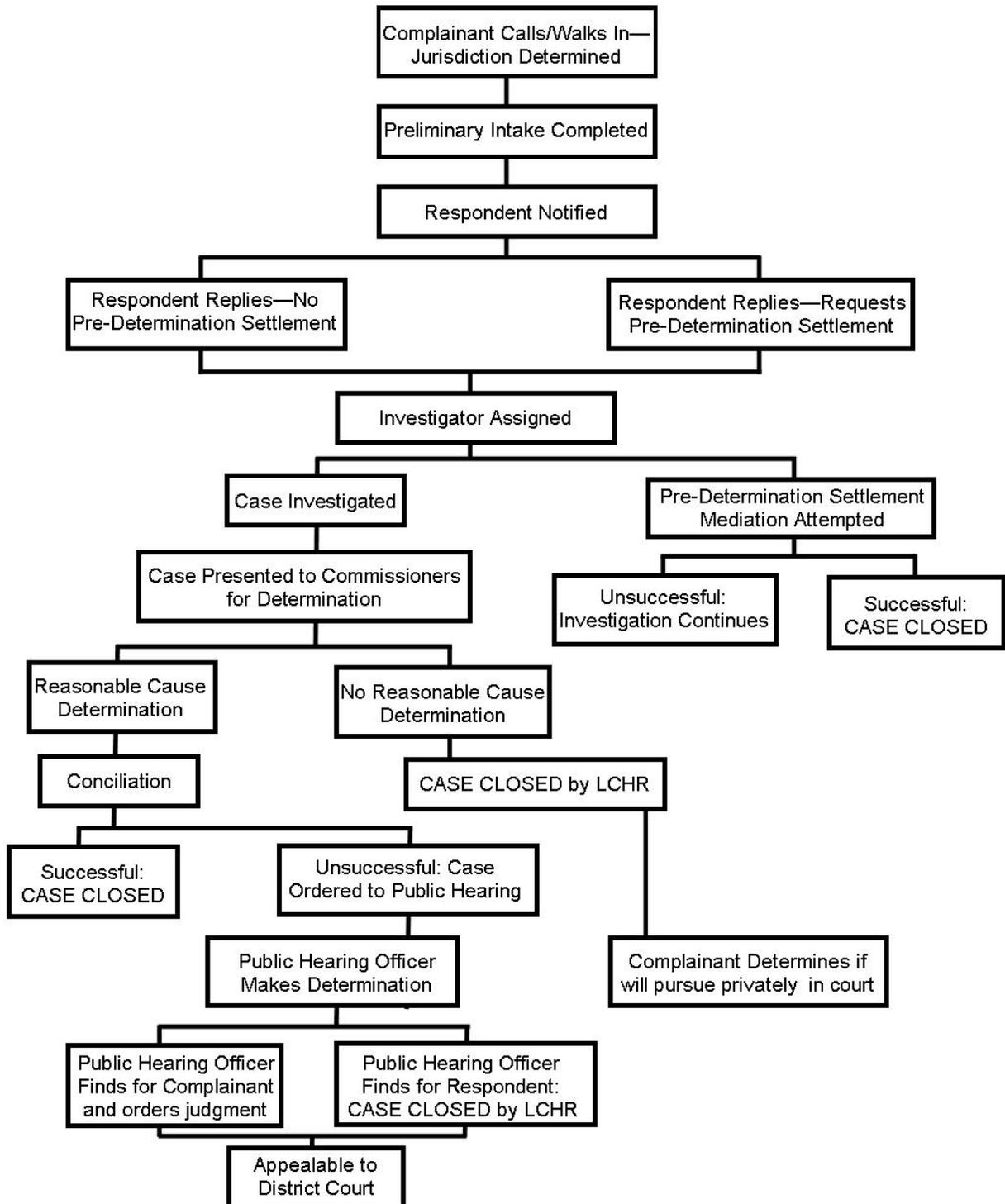
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# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Complaint Process\*

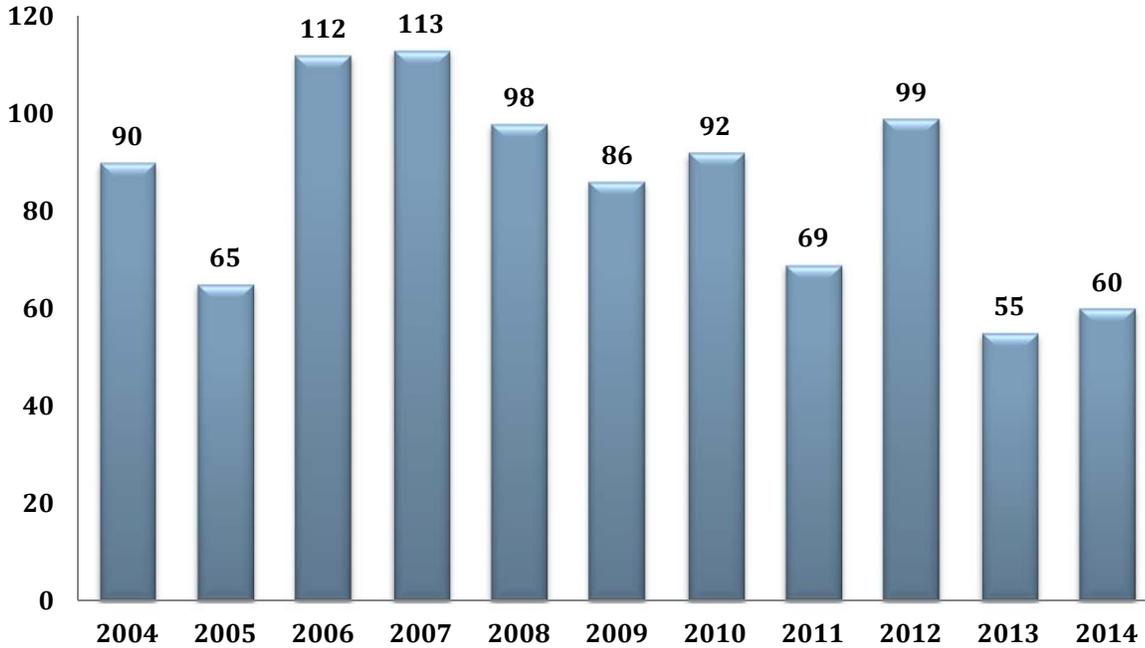


\*Complainant always has the option throughout the process of pursuing his or her case privately in court.

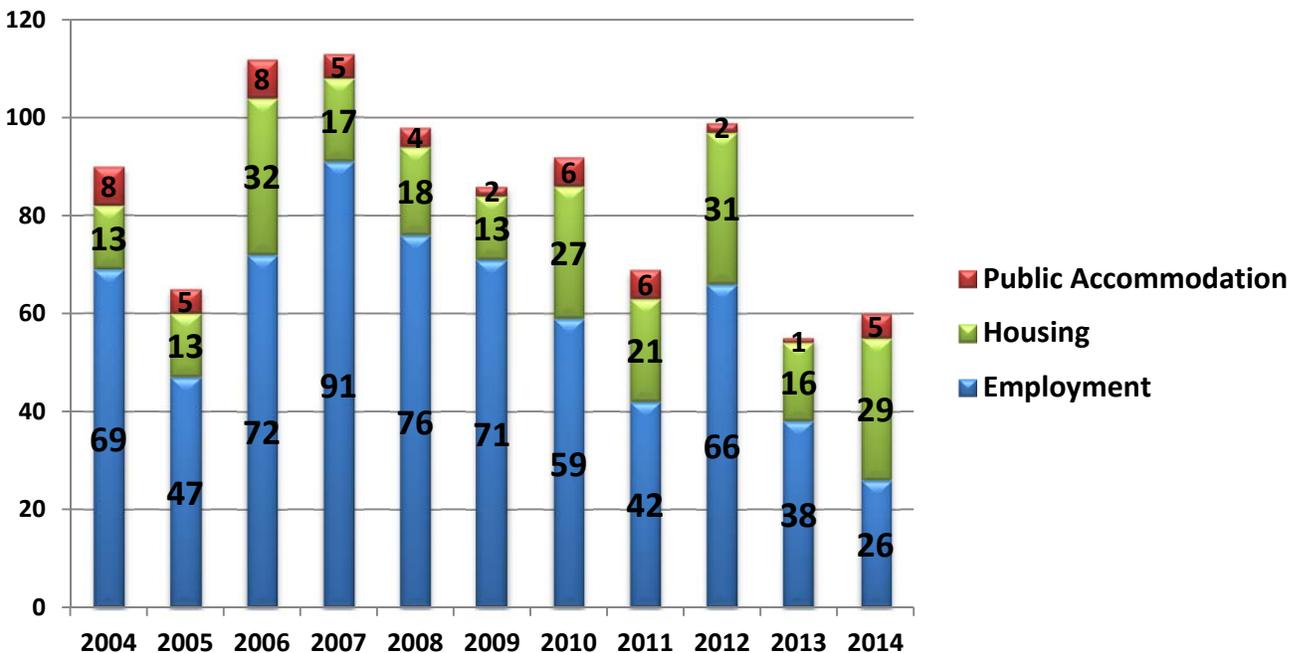
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## Case Statistics

### Cases Filed 2004-2014



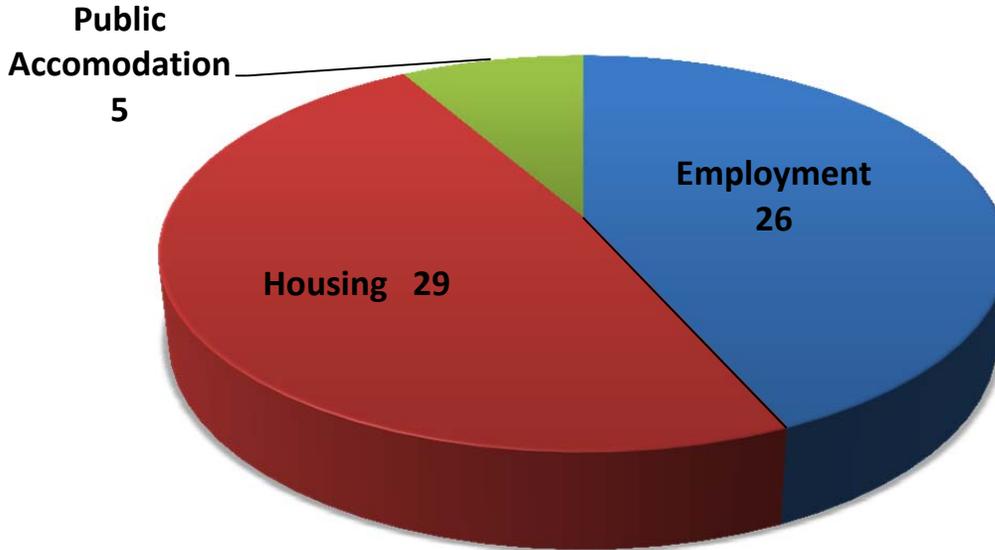
### Cases Filed by Type 2004-2014



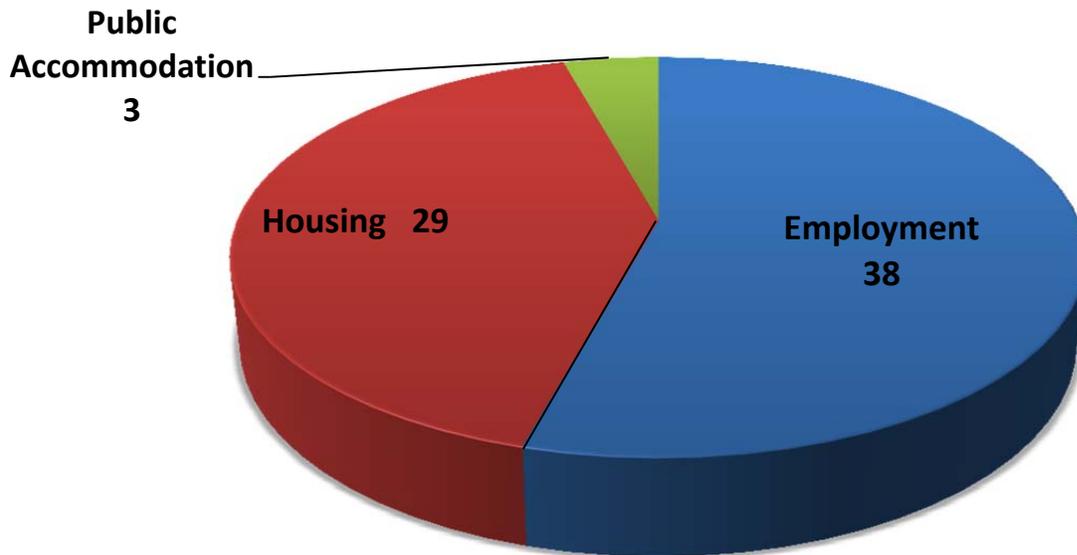
# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Case Statistics Continued

### Cases Filed – 60 by Type



### Cases Closed\* - 70 by Type

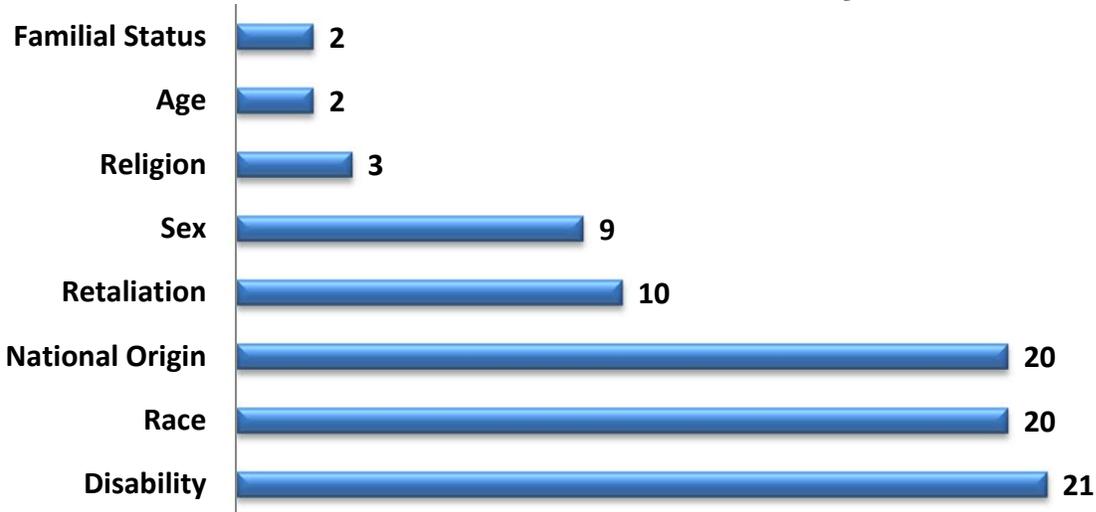


\*Cases closed include cases filed from 2013-2014 but closed in 2014.

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Case Statistics Continued

### Breakdown of Cases Filed by Basis\*



\*Cases are often filed under more than one basis, which could include a case filed, for example, on the basis of both sex and disability, or race and retaliation.

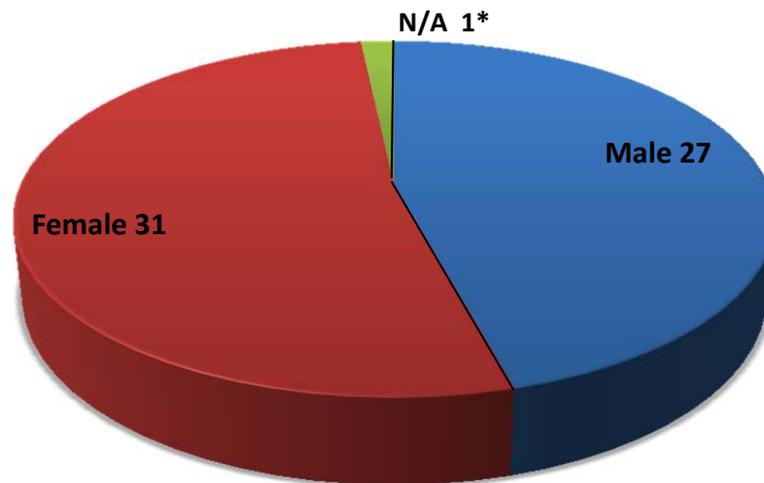
### Breakdown of Cases Filed by Basis and Type\*



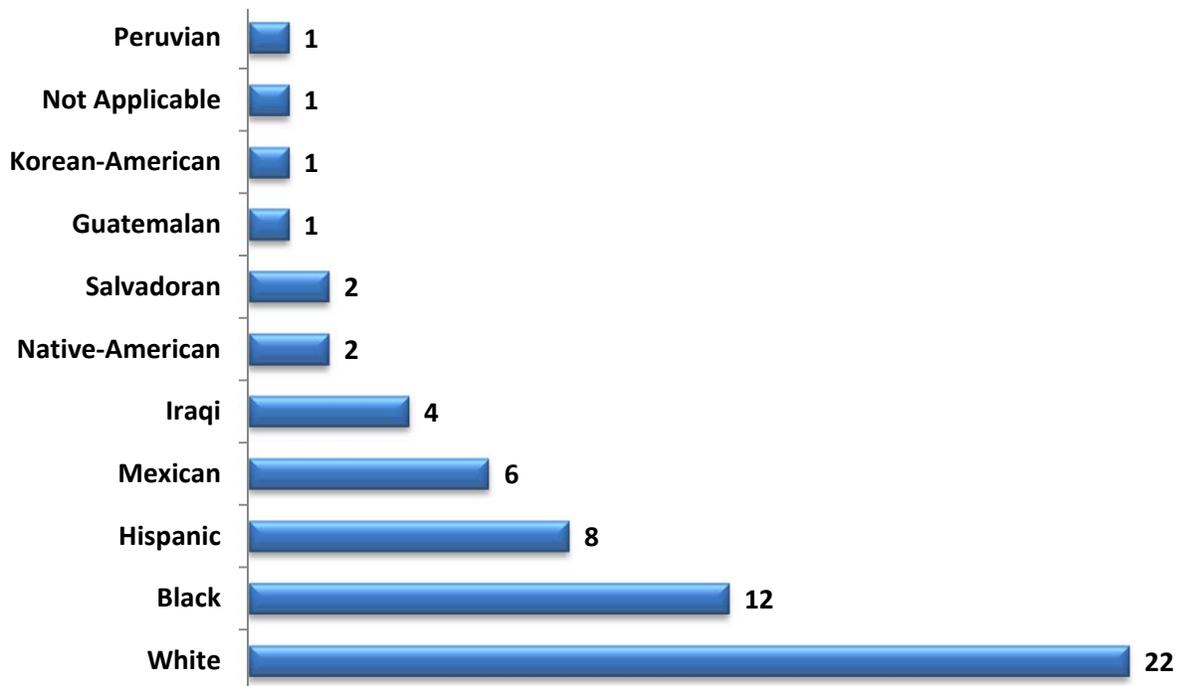
\*Marital Status and ancestry are not listed because there were no complaints filed under these bases in 2014. The basis of age is only covered in employment, while familial status is only covered in housing.

## Case Statistics Continued

### Breakdown of Cases Filed by Gender



### Breakdown of Cases Filed by Race / National Origin / Ethnicity\*\* of Complainant

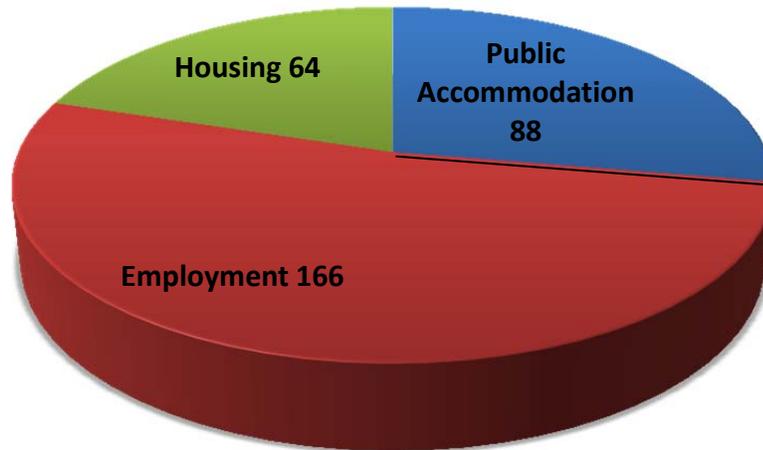


\*N A / case filed with the City of Lincoln as the Complainant.

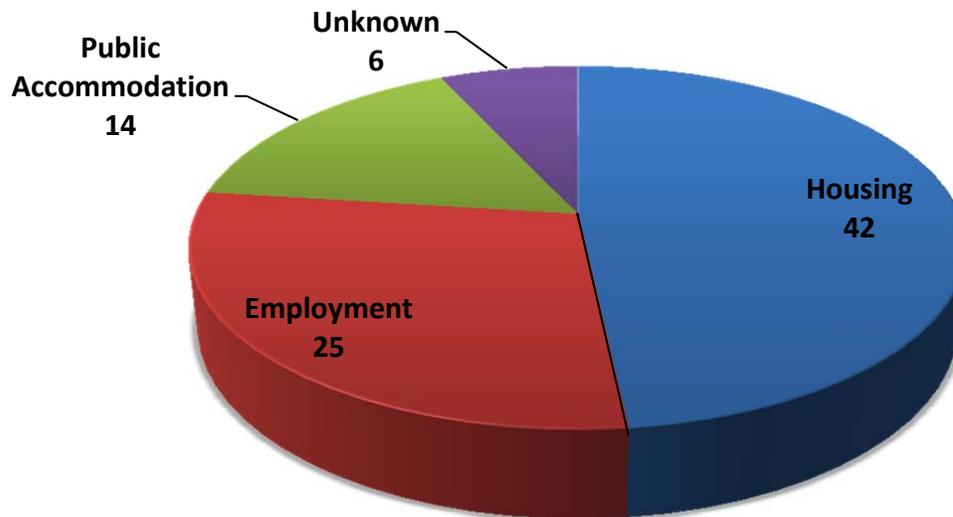
\*\*This provides an approximate demographic report based on the racial, national origin, or ethnic designation provided by the Complainant.

## Case Statistics Continued

### Average Number of Days from Filing to Closure



### Inquiries Not Resulting in a Complaint\*

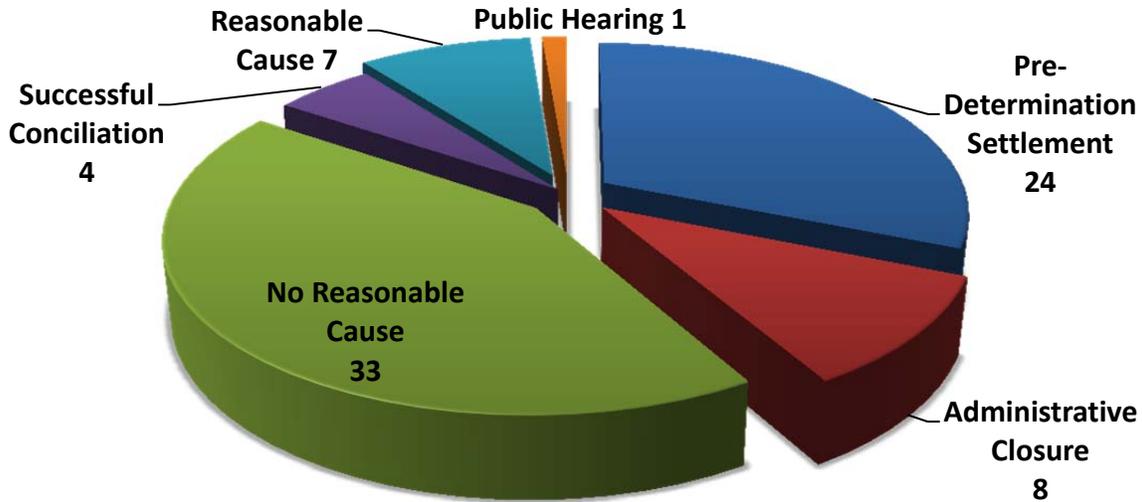


\*There are various reasons why inquiries do not result in the filing of a complaint. They include, but are not limited to, the Commission not having subject matter jurisdiction, the individual not wanting to file a complaint or the individual failing to follow-through with the filing of a complaint.

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Case Statistics Continued

### Breakdown of Commission Decisions



What do the numbers mean? No Reasonable Cause cases are when the Commissioners determine there is insufficient evidence to believe discrimination occurred. In Reasonable Cause determinations, Commissioners believe there is evidence showing discrimination. Administrative Closures are cases closed for a variety of reasons (see chart below). Pre-Determination Settlements are cases closed due to a settlement agreement prior to a Commission decision.

Sometimes the Commissioners make more than one decision in a single case. Commissioners may determine that Reasonable Cause exists and those cases may later be closed in the same year by the Commission due to successful conciliation, public hearing determination, or issuance of a notice of right to sue. Because of this, the total number of Commission decisions may be greater than the number of cases closed.

### Administrative Closures



## Settlement Summaries

### Pre-Determination\* & Conciliation Settlement Summaries and Withdrawals with Settlements

#### Employment

Withdrawal with benefit of \$722  
\$3,300  
\$330 Lost wages, neutral reference  
\$190, Provide records, agreements and tax documents; equal opportunity training  
\$1,000  
\$130, Equal Opportunity Training, provide records, agreements & tax documents  
\$600  
Conciliation, \$6,500  
Conciliation, \$20,000, neutral reference  
Hiring practices updated  
Hiring practices updated, \$7,596.12

#### Housing

Designated Handicap Parking Space, Fair Housing Training  
\$2,870 - Award and Deposit  
Six month lease, Attorney letter, \$11 deduction, Fair Housing posters  
\$374.51, Fair Housing Training  
\$5,040.84, Fair Housing Training  
Rescind 30 day notice, remain in the property, display Fair Housing poster for 1 year  
Fair Housing Training  
\$395, Forgive past due amount  
\$720, Fair Housing Training  
Rescind 30-day notice, more time to vacate, neutral reference,  
\$50 security deposit returned and Fair Housing Training  
Return \$200 security deposit; vacate judgment, neutral reference, Fair Housing posters  
\$450, Fair Housing Training  
Refund rent and deposit \$2,115, Fair Housing poster, and neutral reference  
Documentation and Accommodation for Companion Animal, Fair Housing Training  
Fair Housing Training for all current and future employees  
Complainant pays \$986(reduced from \$1574.24), Fair Housing posters  
\$329 forgiven, Fair Housing posters  
Rent lowered, Complainant payment plan on past due rent  
Statements to be provided, Fair Housing Training

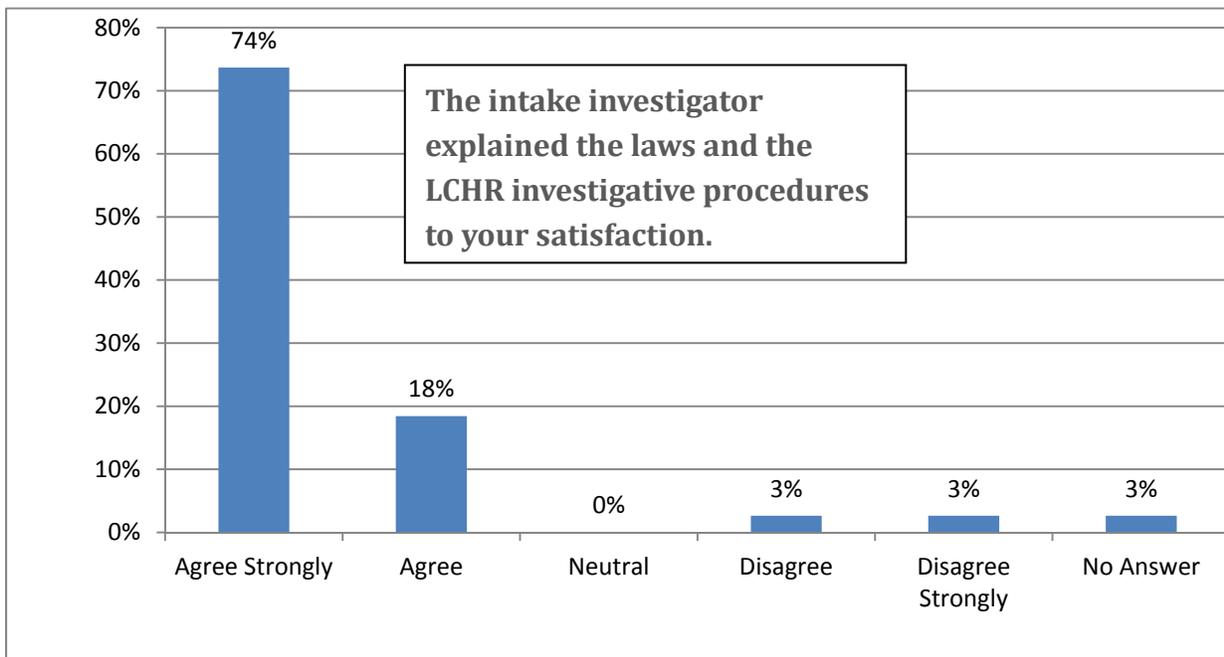
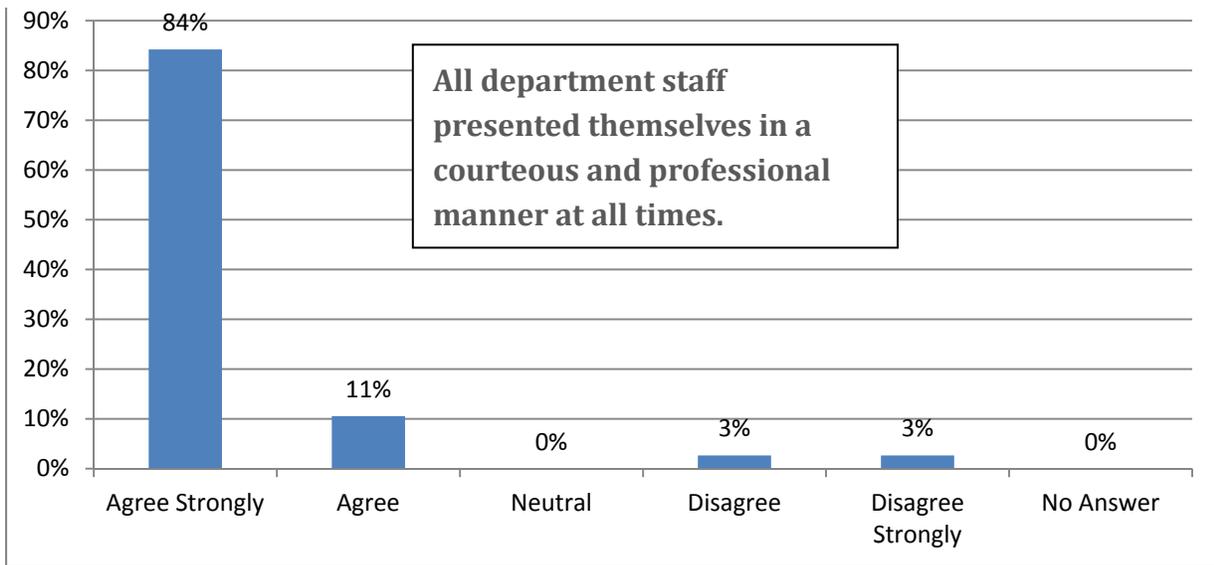
\*A Pre-Determination Settlement (PDS) is a no-fault settlement agreement voluntarily entered into by both parties prior to the Commission making a determination in the case. Conciliation is a settlement agreement after a reasonable cause finding.

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Service Satisfaction Survey

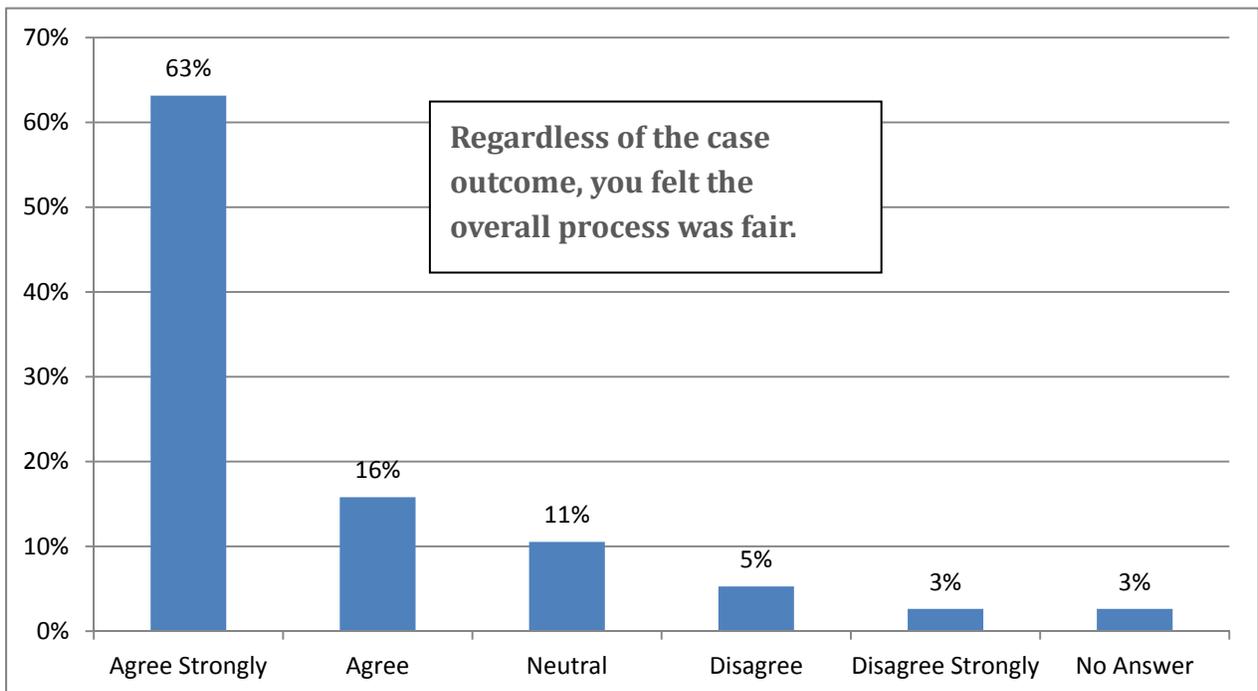
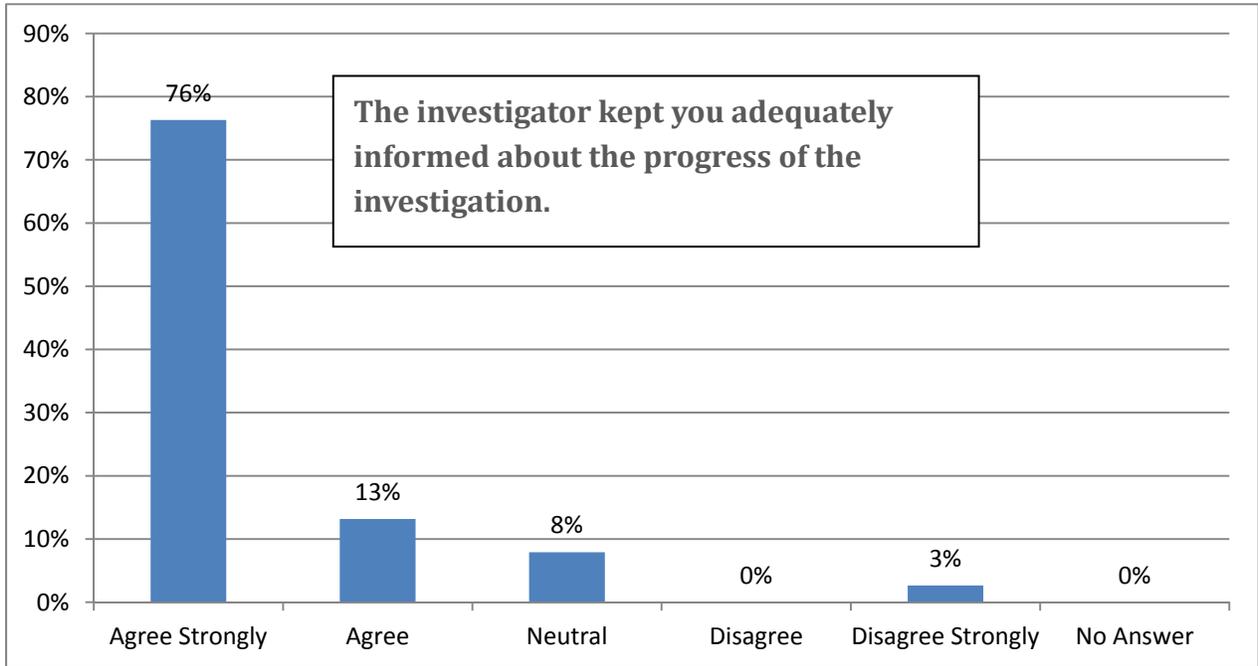
The Commission strives to achieve high satisfaction rates among Complainants and Respondents involved in investigations. In an effort to gauge how the staff and overall process is perceived, every Complainant and Respondent is asked to participate in a survey following case closure. Survey takers are asked to provide feedback on their comprehension of the process, overall satisfaction, and suggestions on how we could provide better service.

Both Complainants and Respondents were asked to rank our office on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being “Disagree Strongly” and 5 being “Agree strongly”.



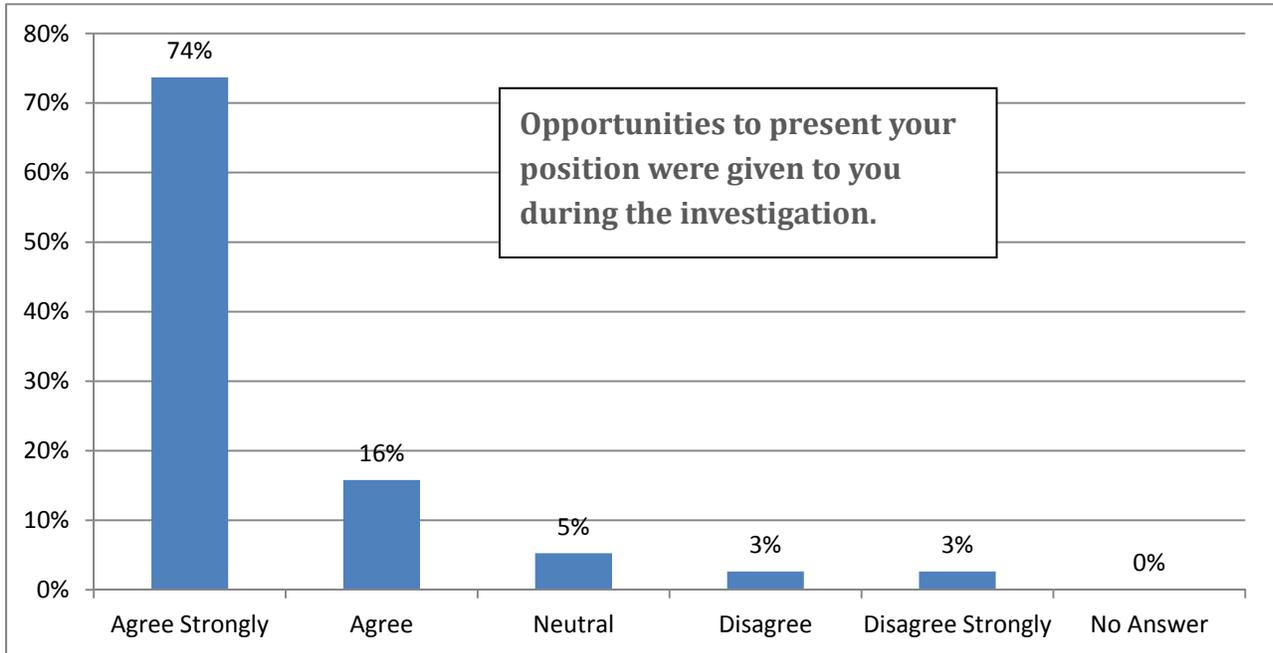
# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Service Satisfaction Survey Continued

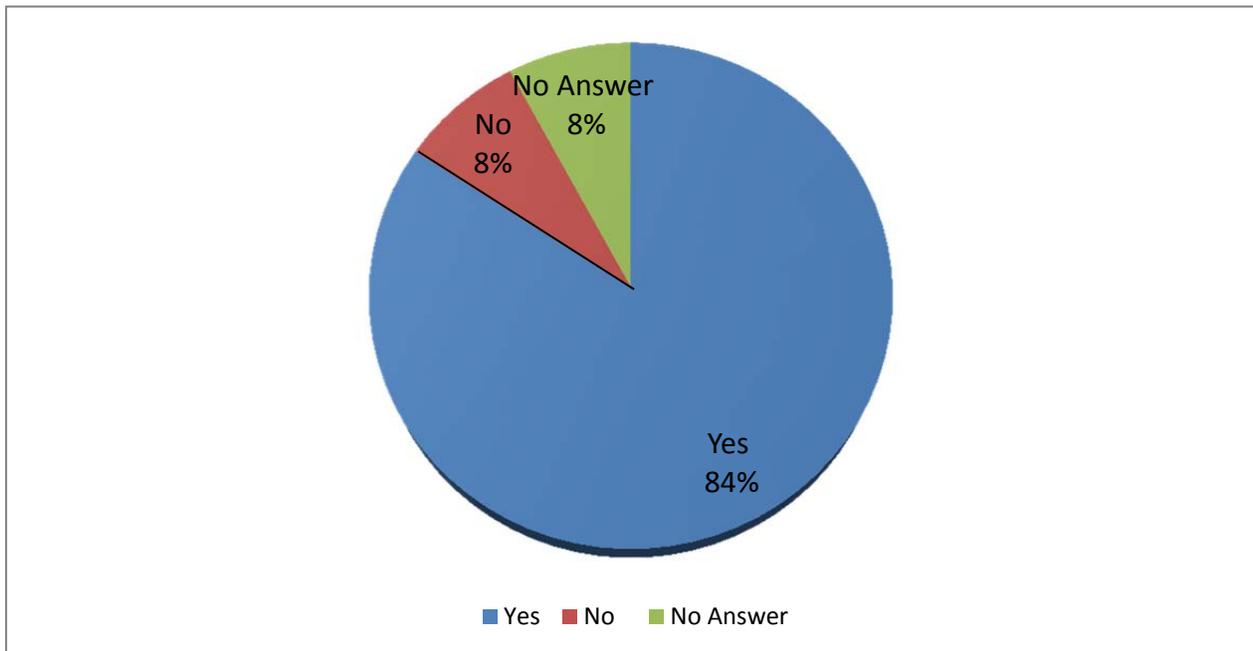


# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Service Satisfaction Survey Continued



### Would you refer someone experiencing discrimination to the LCHR?



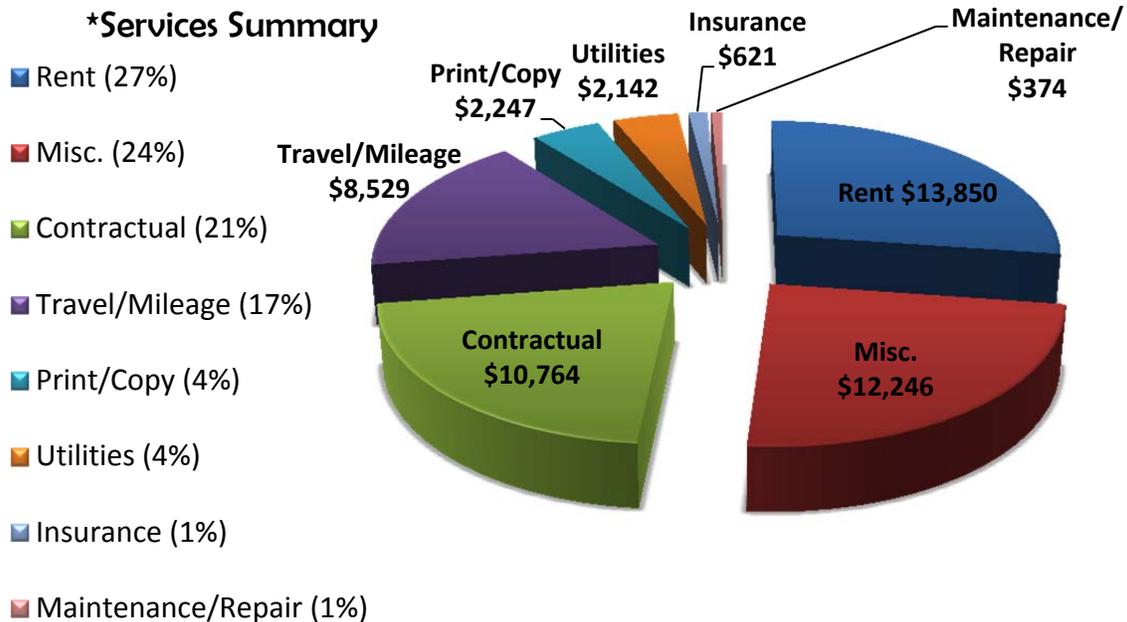
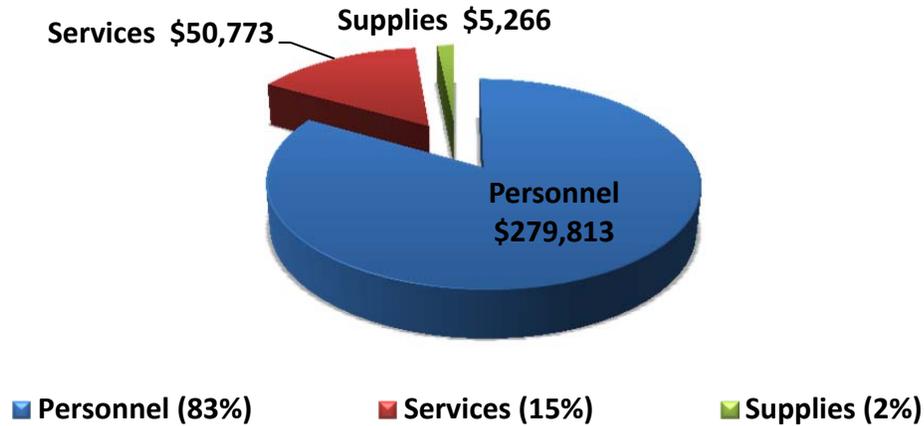
# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Budget Fiscal Year - 2013-2014

The Lincoln Commission on Human Rights' budget is comprised of funding from the City of Lincoln General Fund as well as two Federal funding sources—the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. For FY 2013-2014, the budget expenditures were supported by \$201,983 from the General Fund and \$134,493 from federal funding sources for total expenditures of \$336,476.

### Where Did the Money Go?

Of the total, \$336,476, the largest percentage went to personnel for salaries and benefits, for a total of \$279,813 or 83%. Services\*, which expenditures cover our insurance, travel, mileage interpretation/translation costs, office rental, copying, printing and utilities account for \$50,773 or 15% of our budget, while office supplies account for \$5,266 or 2% of our total budget.



# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Education and Outreach

The Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) provides services to the community to ensure that individuals are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Equal Opportunity and Fair Housing Laws. The LCHR works to reach as many agencies, groups, community-based organizations, employers, property owners, civic groups and individuals as possible. These efforts include training programs which can be customized to meet the needs of the target audience. Topics include: racial and sexual harassment; fair employment practices; fair housing laws; public accommodation laws; the Americans with Disabilities Act; and diversity training.

In 2014, the staff conducted training at a number of organizations for a total of 108 sessions reaching over 6,240 people. These organizations include LPS Career Education Classes; the Lincoln Housing Authority; Rentwise; and various fairs and festivals, such as: Juneteenth; Streets Alive; Project Homeless Connect; and Community Cultural Conversations. There were also training sessions held with several Respondents. The Civil Rights Conference was attended by over 184 individuals and continues to provide the attendees with information on a wide range of civil rights topics.



Participants listen as housing and employment legal updates are presented during the 2014 LCHR Civil Rights Conference.



Panelists discuss current housing issues at the 2014 LCHR Civil Rights Conference.



2014 Juneteenth Celebration

## Award Winners

### Gerald Henderson Human Rights Award Recipient Amir A. Azimi



The **Gerald Henderson Human Rights Award** recognizes outstanding achievements in furthering human relations in Lincoln, including a demonstrated commitment to improving cooperation and understanding among people of different racial, ethnic, religious and varied backgrounds.

Bennie Shobe, Jr., Chair of the Commission on Human Rights presents the award to Amir A. Azimi.

Amir Azimi is the Administrator of Support Services for the Department of Health & Human Services, where he has hired and retained a very diverse and inclusive team. Presently, he is Chair of the Mayor's Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee in addition to involvement with other community groups and has been recognized for his efforts through numerous awards: Governor's Affirmative Action Award (2002), YWCA Mentors and Allies Award (2003), Scholarship for Leadership Lincoln, Executive Series (2004), County/City Volunteer Award (2007), Key to the City of Lincoln (2007), and Chief Standing Bear Medallion (2011).

Mr. Azimi holds a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture and a Masters' Degree in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, with an emphasis in Educational Psychology/Cross-Cultural Communication. Mr. Azimi served as President of State Employees Achievement Racial & Cultural Harmony (S.E.A.R.C.H.) and has provided countless cultural competency training sessions to a wide array of groups & organizations since 1982.

Amir Azimi is the winner of the 2014 Gerald Henderson Human Rights Award presented by the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights based on his philosophy of fostering positive intergroup relations by promoting mutual respect, understanding, cultural inclusion and acceptance.

## Award Winners Continued

### Fair Housing Award Recipient Seanna Collins



The **Fair Housing Award** recognizes outstanding achievements in improving housing opportunities including a demonstrated commitment to fair housing activities and the use of new and creative measures to fight housing discrimination, prejudice and the effects of past housing discrimination.

Bennie Shobe, Jr., Chair of the Commission on Human Rights presents the award to Seanna Collins.

Seanna Collins has been dedicated throughout her entire career to helping people who are less fortunate. She came to the Lincoln Housing Authority in February 2002. Since then, she has consistently demonstrated her commitment to the mission of the Lincoln Housing Authority. She diligently works to obtain decent, safe and affordable housing for consumers.

She has implemented various projects including Rentwise; a program designed to assist renters to obtain and keep housing and be successful renters. In addition, she led the development of the Limited English Proficiency Plan for the Lincoln Housing Authority. The intent of the plan is to provide language services to persons with limited English abilities and facilitate access to programs and services.

Ms. Collins promotes communication between landlords and tenants by leading a landlord advisory group. Her approach to projects is always positive and enthusiastic despite the challenges. Ms. Collins provides leadership to the Lincoln Housing Authority and encourages others to do their very best to assist renters.

Seanna Collins is the winner of the 2014 Fair Housing Award presented by the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights based on her commitment and dedication to meeting housing needs in Lincoln.

# LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## Contact Information

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