

THE RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

A SEMI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF THE LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Volume 15 Issue 1

Summer 2015

My Journey Here

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Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission

My journey with Human Rights began in summer 2012. I was 22 years old and living in the small city of Hopkinsville, Kentucky. I began working with a program through the Hopkinsville Community College called Youth Workforce Connections and was placed

as an intern at the Human Relations Commission as an Executive Assistant. I started out just learning the basics and formality of complaints. My job was just to schedule appointments and help with caseloads. Intrigued and astonished by the fact that discrimination still occurred, I found myself asking the Executive Director, Bernard Standard, about the laws that protected people from these types of discrimination. People had complaints of not getting paid the same wages as their counterpart, being treated differently because of their race, and the most interesting case that I had encountered was a woman being fired for her religion. In a short time, I began getting more “hands-on” with the cases.



I started sitting in on intakes, taking notes, and tried processing the complaints with the guidance of Mr. Standard. He allowed me to take the lead on the investigations leading up to the processing and forwarding of complaints to the Kentucky

Commission on Human Rights.

In December 2012, shortly after my internship began, I was hired on directly to the Hopkinsville HRC. I was assisting our board of commissioners with

the planning of our sponsored events to help promote diversity. Not only was I able to hear about the negative, I was able to meet and work with an amazing group of people from all walks of life that wanted to help make our community a better place. I worked with a group of volunteers that wanted to be proactive about stopping discrimination and not just fixing problems after they occur. Working at Human Relations



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Commission unlocked a passion that I wasn't even aware I had. I wanted to make a difference not only to those around me, but to all of those I come in contact with. I began attending diversity and leadership trainings and trainings on human rights. At the end of 2013, I was placed as the interim director of the Hopkinsville HRC while Mr. Standard was out on leave. For almost the next year I, with the help of our Commissioners, direction from Mr. Standard, and help from the City of Hopkinsville's Mayor's office and staff, handled complaints and other duties, assigned to the Director, of such an agency.



In 2015, I decided that it was time for an environment change for my family. Lexington, Kentucky has always been a beautiful and welcoming city, so this was the beginning of my new journey. Lexington, KY is a diverse, budding community with wonderful family friendly programs,. Lexington offered just what I was looking for, for my family. I was still uncertain about my move because I didn't want to leave my job and especially uproot without having one. I loved what I did, the people I worked with, and the people I worked for. When I found out there was an opening at the Human Rights Commission in Lexington for an investigator, I was so ecstatic. A job opening in the exact same field I worked in, with the exact same type of organization was NOT what I was expecting. I applied and when I got the letter in the mail, offering me the position, I felt so relieved and blessed.

It's been two months since I have begun working at the Human Rights Commission in Lexington. Although, I still handle discrimination complaints, the biggest difference between the two agencies is that Lexington is an enforcement agency and Hopkinsville is a referral agency. Because the HRC of Hopkinsville is not an enforcement agency, I was unable to see the complaints all the way through. After they were sent to KCHR, the complainant dealt directly with the KCHR from that point. I feel as if I am now able to make a greater impact and able to see my cases through from start to finish. I can thoroughly investigate cases; help both the complainant and the respondent. I've learned that some people unknowingly discriminate and just need trainings or more information about our ever-changing laws.

Overall, this has been an amazing and enlightening experience. I have gotten to work with some amazing people so far and am now embarking on my new journey as Investigator for the Lexington Fayette County Human Rights Commission and cannot be any more excited to see what the future awaits me. I am here to ensure that everyone is treated with fairness, dignity, and respect and will do everything in my power to ensure that my job is done. This is just the beginning and I am expecting great things.

ADA: 25 Years and Counting

On July 30, 2015, the Human Rights Commission celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The celebration was made possible by funding from the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

At first the room filled slowly, but as the event drew closer, people joined crowded tables alongside members of our community. The event wasn't just attended by members of government and community organizations, we also had people from the University of Kentucky, Lexington Legends, Commerce Lex, and LexTran attend. There were over 60 attendees.



The event was held at Arts Place, downtown. Representatives from The Commission on Citizens with Disabilities (Co-Sponsor) had a table set up promoting their 'Where to Park' campaign, which is raising awareness of handicap parking spots. Heidi McKenzie, Alter UR Ego, was also invited to set up a booth. Ms. McKenzie creates fashionable and functional jeans for people in wheelchairs and has recently launched a Kickstarter for her company. During downtime in between presentations, McKenzie spoke about her experiences and her project.

The Indianapolis EEOC office came out in force and provided support and presentations. Phyllis Tucker-Wells presented a historical perspective of the ADA, drawing parallels to the events that got the ADA originally passed, to current events happening in the country, especially the civil rights movement.

The event featured a panel of knowledgeable community members who discussed their experiences with the ADA. Most members of the panel talked about their success stories and how to continue to help members of disabled community. One audience member brought up the subject of the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act and how the change in laws lost him his job. The panelists discussed the issue and talked through different ways to solve the problem.



In the Know!

What You Should Know About EEOC and the Enforcement Protections for LGBT Workers

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued an Enforcement Guidance on Pregnancy Discrimination and Related Issues, along with a question and answer document about the guidance and a Fact Sheet for Small Businesses. [The Enforcement Guidance, Q&A document](#), and [Fact Sheet](#) will be available on the [EEOC's website](#).

Recent activities by EEOC, including the filing of lawsuits on behalf of transgender employees, the filing of amicus briefs related to coverage of sexual orientation and transgender status, and the issuance of federal sector decisions in these areas, have triggered increased interest about protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals under federal employment-discrimination laws. The information below highlights what you should know about the EEOC's enforcement efforts on behalf of LGBT individuals.



Overview

[E]mployers and employees often have questions about whether discrimination related to LGBT status is prohibited under the laws the EEOC enforces. While Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not explicitly include sexual orientation or gender identity in its list of protected bases, the Commission, consistent with case law from the Supreme Court and other courts, interprets the statute's sex discrimination provision as prohibiting discrimination against employees on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Commission's [Strategic Enforcement Plan \(SEP\)](#), adopted by a bipartisan vote in December of 2012, lists "coverage of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals under Title VII's sex discrimination provisions, as they may apply" as an enforcement priority for FY2013-2016. This enforcement priority is consistent with positions the Commission has taken in recent years regarding the intersection of LGBT-related discrimination and Title VII's prohibition on sex discrimination.

In 2012, the EEOC held that discrimination against an individual because that person is transgender (also known as gender identity discrimination) is discrimination because of sex and therefore is prohibited under Title VII. See [Macy v. Department of Justice, EEOC Appeal No. 0120120821 \(April 20, 2012\)](#). (see EEOC.com)

In the Know

Coffee With The Chief: A Casual Conversation

The Lexington Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission (LFUC-HRC) and the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Police Department have teamed up for 2015-2016 to offer a series called Coffee with the Chief. This series, although informative, is a bit different than what we have seen in the past. Instead of hosting large town hall meetings, we are hosting just a few at a time. The setting of Coffee with the Chief is an intimate coffee house setting to encourage genuine conversation, so questions can be asked and addressed within the hour. The first Coffee with the Chief was held at Third Street Stuff and Coffee on August 14th at 11:00 a.m. and hosted 8-10 guests. It was a great session and everyone left feeling heard and like they were one step closer to getting their personal issues resolved on some level. “It was a great day, I really enjoyed this setting.” Stated Chief Barnard, as he left the first event. “I am really looking forward to the next few meetings.”



Additional Partnerships

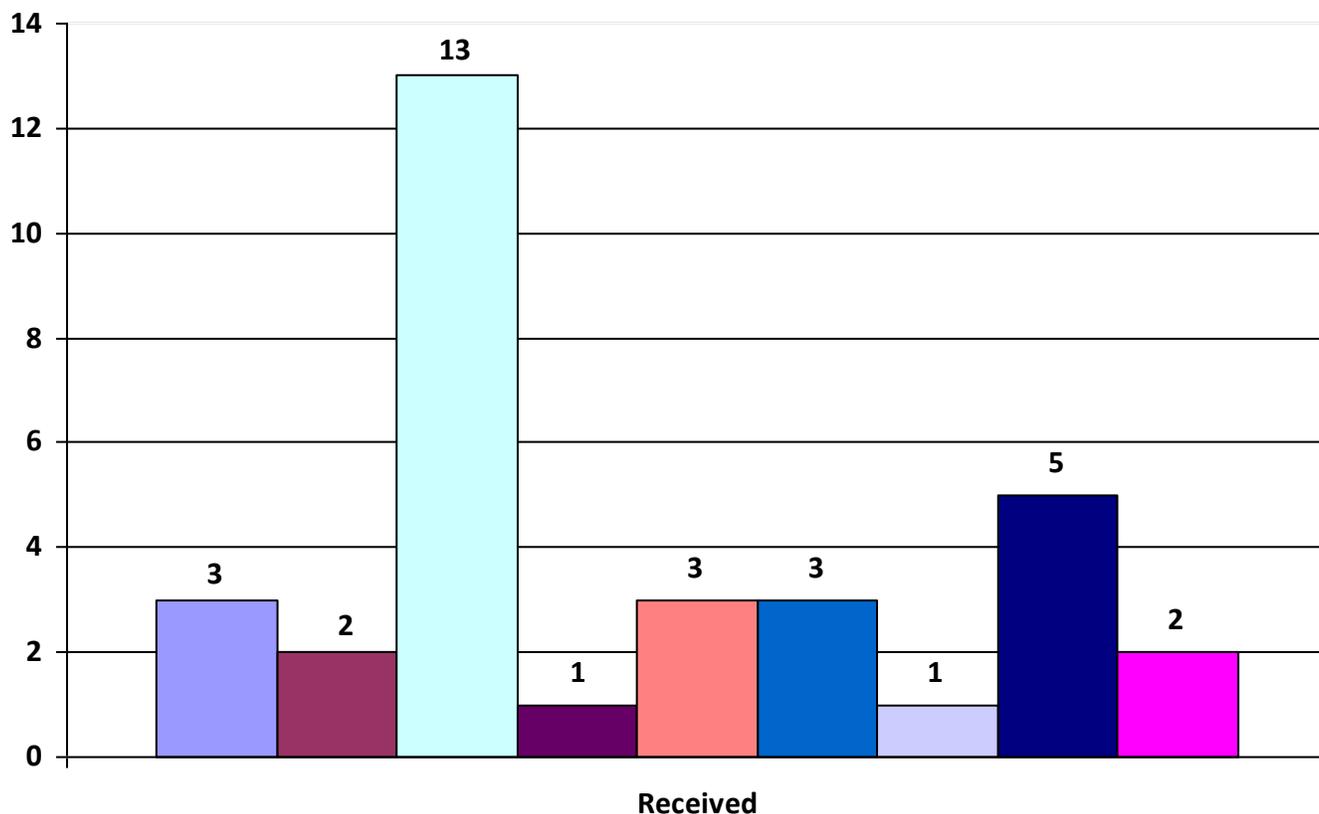
The Lexington Human Rights Commission has been fortunate to partner with several organizations here in Lexington–Fayette County, to increase human rights awareness. This year the Human Rights Commission was able to donate funding to several agencies to assist with conferences and events that support our entire community. The Commission, with a HUD grant, was able to donate almost \$6,000 to these local agencies to increase housing rights awareness. These sponsored projects include, the Impact 10 Conference, the World Refugee Day conference, The Lexington Legends Latino Night event and several other smaller programs. Most recently the Lexington Human Rights Commission has partnered up with the Lexington Police Department to offer a program, in which, community members can file complaints about the Lexington Police Department directly to us! During the town hall meetings, transparency of police department issues seemed to be a major topic. This collaboration will allow the community to file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission and we can assist you in the formal process. We do not conduct the investigations here. The investigation is still conducted through the police department, however we are your transparency. We are your extra set of eyes. To file a complaint go to www.lfuchrc.org, go to **File a Complaint**, and choose the **public accommodation** form.

In the Know

The Lexington Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission has had a very busy summer. During the May 1, 2015-July 31, 2015 term, we have had 25 closures, 9 settlements, and recovered \$34,200 in monetary new complaints (16 employment and 9 housing). If you feel as though you have been discriminated against in Fayette County please do not hesitate to contact the Commission. We are here to investigate claims and to create a mutually beneficial environment for charging parties and respondents. There are three ways to file a complaint with the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission,

1) website: www.lfuchrc.org, 2) contact the office (859) 252-4931 or 3) come to the office and file a complaint on site. We want to know what is going on in our community. If you feel as though discrimination has occurred please do not hesitate to contact us today.

May - July 2015 Cases Received By Basis



Disability	Familial Status	Race
Sex	National Origin	Retaliation
Age	Disability	Sexual Orientation

In the Know

Edward E. Dove, a Lexington attorney with more than 30 years of experience protecting clients' rights and provides superior service, returns to the Lexington Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission, for his second term. When Edward E. Dove is not working with the Human Rights Commission, he represents clients in Education Law, Civil Litigation, and Criminal Law. Dove owns his own private practice which is located in Lexington, and serves Central and Eastern Kentucky, including but not limited to Fayette, Scott, Bourbon, Clark, Madison, Jessamine and Woodford counties. The Commission is excited to have Dove back working on our clients' behalves and is looking forward to working with Dove for years to come. Mr. Dove began his second term on June 1, 2015.



A Bid Farewell and Good Luck

The Commission would like to publicly thank intern, Sarah Brookbank for her invaluable service during the Spring semester. Sarah is a Journalism senior at the University of Kentucky and also is a minor in philosophy. Sarah came to the Commission with an interest in community/public relations. During her tenure with the Commission, Sarah assisted the Commission in its community relations endeavors such as the EEOC TAPS Conference, World Refugee Summit and other miscellaneous community meetings and events. Sarah was also instrumental in assisting the Commission with planning and implementing the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration. When not in class or interning at the Commission, Sarah is a reporter for the Kentucky Kernel, Midway Messenger and serves as a resident advisor on campus. The Commissioners and staff would like to thank Sarah for her service and wish her the best of luck in all her future endeavors.



Impact 10: A Campus Collaborative to Uproot Sexual Violence

Georgetown College Conference Center

November 5-6

\$150 faculty/staff registration

\$75 student registration

Sponsored by:

Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center

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