

# ECHRC Executive Summary

## Overview

In calendar year 2025, the Commission handled 41 discrimination complaints, including cases opened in prior years that required investigation, resolution, appeal, or continued monitoring during the reporting period. These matters spanned housing, employment, and public accommodations and involved multiple protected classes.

As of the end of 2025, the Commission maintained a manageable active caseload, with the majority of matters resolved.

## Case Status (2025 Activity)

Of the 41 cases handled in 2025, by the close of the year:

- 33 cases were closed (80.5%)
- 8 cases remained active (19.5%)
  - Active investigations: 6 (14.6%)
  - Active appeals: 2 (4.9%)
- Cases on hold: 0

## Case Distribution by Type

Cases carried out in 2025 were evenly distributed across these enforcement areas:

Case Type	Number	% of Total
Housing	15	36.6%
Employment	15	36.6%
Public Accommodations	11	26.8%

This balance demonstrates consistent enforcement demand across all statutory jurisdictions.

## Protected Classes Alleged

Cases handled in 2025 most frequently involved the following protected classes. Cases may include multiple protected classes, so totals exceed 41.

Protected Class	Cases	% of Total Cases
Race	20	48.8%
Color	17	41.5%
Disability	9	22.0%
Age	3	7.3%
Sexual Orientation	3	7.3%
Religion	3	7.3%
Ethnicity	2	4.9%
Retaliation (not specific to our ordinance)	1	2.4%

Race- and color-based discrimination allegations were the most prevalent, appearing in nearly half of all cases handled, followed by disability-related complaints.

## Resolution Methods (Closed Cases Only)

Among the 33 cases closed during 2025, outcomes were as follows:

Method of Resolution	Number	% of Closed Cases
Administrative Closure	17	51.5%
Voluntary Closure	9	27.3%
Settlement	4	12.1%
Appealed & Closed	3	9.1%

Nearly 79% of closed cases were resolved through administrative or voluntary means, minimizing the need for prolonged litigation while achieving compliance.

## Active Case Snapshot (End of 2025)

The **8 active cases** carried into 2026 primarily involve:

- Housing and employment matters
- Allegations centered on disability, often combined with age, race, or color
- Ongoing investigation, mediation, or appellate review

Disability-related allegations account for a disproportionate share of active cases, indicating an area for potential outreach, training, or policy focus.

## Key Takeaways

- The Commission resolved over 80% of cases handled in 2025.
- Enforcement activity was evenly distributed across housing, employment, and public accommodations.
- Disability and race/color discrimination remain the most prevalent bases for complaints.

## Education, Outreach, and Engagement

During the reporting period, the Erie County Human Relations Commission (ECHRC) advanced its mission through targeted education, community outreach, and strategic engagement with residents, partners, and institutions across Erie County. These efforts focused on increasing public understanding of civil rights protections, strengthening relationships with community organizations, and ensuring that historically marginalized communities are informed, represented, and supported.

### Educational Programs and Public Forums

- **Race, Place, and Belonging: Being Black in Erie**  
The Commission hosted a public educational program examining the lived experiences of Black residents in Erie County, with a focus on place, identity, equity, and belonging. The event fostered community dialogue and increased awareness of racial disparities and human relations issues affecting Black communities.
- **Next in Line: Being Black in Erie**  
Building on prior engagement, the Commission convened a follow-up program centered on young leadership, succession, and intergenerational perspectives within Erie's Black community. The event emphasized civic participation, representation, and pathways to equity for young black Erieites.

- **Advancing Access and Inclusion: Disability as a Protected Class**  
The Commission delivered with a panel an educational program highlighting disability as a protected class under human relations and civil rights law. This program increased public understanding of disability rights, reasonable accommodations, and inclusive practices. Educational credits for attorney's were available with this program.
- **Pride, Protection & Practice**  
The Commission provided education and engagement focused on LGBTQ+ protections, civil rights enforcement, and the practical application of nondiscrimination laws, reinforcing the Commission's commitment to equity and inclusion for LGBTQ+ residents. Social Workers continuing educational credits were issued and available with this program.

### **Community Outreach and Public Engagement**

- **2025 Law Day Fair**  
The Commission participated in the 2025 Law Day Fair, engaging with community members through public legal education and outreach. Commission representatives shared information on civil rights protections, the complaint process, and available human relations resources.
- **Erie NW Pride Alliance Festival and Picnic and Pride 365**  
The Commission conducted outreach through tabling and engagement at Pride-related community events, strengthening visibility, fostering trust, and ensuring LGBTQ+ residents had access to information regarding rights and protections.

### **Partner Engagement and Collaboration**

The Commission met with and advised a range of community partners to support coordinated approaches to human relations and civil rights issues, including:

- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
- Catholic Charities- Refugees
- DAWN
- Groundwork Erie
- City of Erie Code Enforcement
- SafeNet
- Erie Arts & Culture

Through these engagements, the Commission provided guidance, shared expertise, and strengthened partnerships to better address discrimination, access, and equity concerns across Erie County.