



State of Illinois  
Human Rights Commission

# Illinois Human Rights COMMISSION

**ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2024**  
(July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)

# table of contents

- 2** dedication
- 3** a message from the Illinois Human Rights Commission
- 4** roles and functions of the Illinois Human Rights Commission
- 5** serving and supporting litigants - the year in review
- 9** outreach, education and engagements - the year in review
- 12** by the numbers - the year in review
- 15** what's next? a preview of FY 2025
- 17** commissioners and commission staff
- 18** Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission (TIRC)

## dedication

This report is dedicated to Michael R. Robinson, who served 31 years with distinction as an Administrative Law Judge at the Illinois Human Rights Commission. He passed away on April 12, 2024.



**The Hon. Michael R. Robinson**

Administrative Law Judge (1993-2024)

## a message from the Illinois Human Rights Commission

As required by the Illinois State Finance Act (30 ILCS 105/3), we are honored to submit this report on behalf of the Illinois Human Rights Commission ("Commission") for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

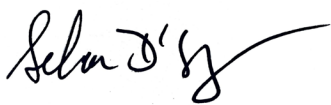
Also included within this report is a section on and by the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission ("TIRC"), which is an independent commission tasked with separate duties and responsibilities not assigned by the Illinois Human Rights Act.

This reporting period saw the Commission continue to execute its core responsibility to timely and appropriately adjudicate those matters which arise under the Illinois Human Rights Act ("Act"). Our further goal is to share information about the protections afforded under the Act with the residents of the State of Illinois.

During the reporting period, the Commission accelerated its multi-year efforts to refine our processes, policies, and operations with the singular goal of making the Commission the litigation forum of choice for those with discrimination complaints arising under the Act.

We thank all those—both past and present—who have engaged in this work for their dedication to the people of this state.

Sincerely,



The Hon. Selma C. D'Souza  
Chair



Tracey B. Fleming  
Executive Director

## roles and functions of the Illinois Human Rights Commission

Almost all discrimination complaints which come to the Commission must first go through the Illinois Department of Human Rights ("Department"), which is tasked with investigating alleged civil rights violations under the Act.

Depending on the outcome of the Department's investigation, some (but not all) complaints may be filed with the Commission.

The Commission is led by an Executive Director who oversees the administration and management of the agency. The Commission is organized into three primary areas: (1) the Administrative Law Section ("ALS"); (2) the Office of the General Counsel ("OGC"); and (3) the Chair and Commissioners.

- The ALS is staffed by Administrative Law Judges ("ALJs") who preside over cases, conduct hearings, take testimony, rule on questions of evidence, make factual and legal determinations, and award monetary and non-monetary relief as warranted. The ALS also runs a judicial settlement program that allows parties to request an ALJ to serve as a mediator and assist them in attempting to reach a settlement agreement.
- The OGC manages the docket of cases pending before the Commissioners and provides legal opinions, advice, and recommendations to the Commissioners on the laws, judicial opinions, and procedural rules affecting these cases. The OGC also advises the Executive Director and performs legal services for all programmatic and administrative functions of the Commission.
- The Chair and Commissioners provide broad oversight of the Commission's functions and have final authority to review, accept, reject, or modify both the decisions of the ALJs and the dismissal of discrimination charges by the Department. Beyond their quasi-judicial review work, the Chair and Commissioners conduct extensive outreach and educational activities to inform the members of the public about their rights and responsibilities under the Act.

## serving and supporting litigants – the year in review

FY 2024 was a year of continued progress against our core responsibility to efficiently—and without favor or bias—adjudicate matters brought before us in accordance with the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Our OGC has successfully navigated several staff transitions during the fiscal year. The OGC focused significant time and energy on developing new staff members while simultaneously continuing to provide excellent legal counsel and support to our Commissioners.

The Commission substantially increased the number and quality of legal resources available to litigants appearing before the Commission. The OGC took the lead in preparing a new Filing Procedures Guide on the methods and best practices for filing documents with the Commission. This new guide complements other recent updates to our website and to public documents available to litigants, including updates to our website to reflect revised and clarified FAQs about our Request for Review process and an updated list of links and resources for self-represented litigants.

During the reporting period, the ALS completed the first full year of its reinstated and revitalized Judicial Settlement Conference Program. As part of this program, the parties can jointly request that an ALJ (other than the one primarily assigned to the case) attempt to mediate settlement of the complaint without the time and cost of a trial. During the fiscal year, ALJs conducted 43 settlement conferences, with a success rate of 67%. We estimate that had these cases proceeded to trial, conservatively the cost to the Commission—and the taxpayers of Illinois—would have been more than \$115,000. Beyond the financial benefits of settlement for all parties, these judicial settlement conferences provide an opportunity for emotional closure that might not be present during a full trial.

In FY 2024, the Commission conducted what is believed to be our first judicial settlement conference in which we enlisted the aid of American Sign Language (“ASL”) interpreters to ensure meaningful participation by a fully deaf complainant. The case was unique in that the complainant (who has been deaf since birth) could not read or write, so the use of ASL interpreters was truly the only means by which the complainant was able to communicate with the assigned ALJ and with their attorney. While the case did not settle during the Judicial Settlement Conference, it helped us flag several

*One method for determining the overall health of an administrative hearing system is looking at the nature of the docket of cases before it.*

important logistical concerns that will be of ongoing benefit to future litigants at the Commission who have similar needs.

This is but one example of how the Commission has continued to build upon its work to provide interpretive services to litigants in its proceedings. The Illinois Human Rights Act has long provided the Commission with the authority to appoint at the expense of the Commission a qualified sign language interpreter whenever a hearing-impaired individual was a party or witness at a trial. At the Commission's initiative, the General Assembly approved—and the Governor signed into law—Public Act 103-0326, which took effect on January 1, 2024. This law expands the Commission's authority to also appoint a qualified interpreter whenever an individual who lacks proficiency in the English language is a party or witness before the Commission. These supports are also now available as part of our Judicial Settlement Conference Program and in other proceedings up to and including trial. During the reporting period, we had two individuals request and receive interpretation services.

In January 2024, our Springfield office was impacted by an unexpected water incursion, submerging it in more than eight inches of water for several hours. The required remediation and restoration compelled our Springfield staff to operate remotely for more than a month. However, with the lessons learned from remote work during the COVID-19 emergency, we were able to maintain our functions without any long-term negative impacts and without any delays to cases underway. We are thankful to our partners at the Illinois Department of Central Management Services ("CMS") for their diligence in facilitating the successful completion of all needed repairs.

We note with great appreciation the completion of service by two members of the Commission: former Chair Mona Noriega and former Vice Chair Barbara Barreno-Paschall. While falling outside of the official reporting period, the Commission has also welcomed a new chair, Selma C. D'Souza and a new Commissioner, Howard A. Rosenblum. Chair D'Souza, an attorney, joins us after a distinguished career in the nonprofit sector and having served in numerous state agencies, most recently the Illinois Department on Aging where she served as Chief of Staff. Commissioner Rosenblum, joins the Commission after a more than 32-year career as a disability rights attorney, serving as a founder and senior leader in numerous non-profit organizations.

In terms of the Commission's staff, we worked diligently to maintain and expand a diverse and dedicated team committed to the business of the residents of the State of Illinois. Today, the Commission remains more than 50% racially diverse overall from both the staff and Commissioner perspectives.

We have built upon our already experienced senior management team, promoting two outstanding members of the staff to leadership positions of Deputy General Counsel and Deputy Chief Administrative Law Judge (two roles which had previously been established at the Commission, but which had both laid fallow for more than five years). Our ALJ ranks have also been strategically replenished with the assignment of two new ALJs to our Springfield office for the first time since at least the early 2000's. This investment ensures that the Commission is well-positioned to maintain its recent momentum and high operational tempo in moving cases to their ultimate disposition. Today, our ALJ "bench" is 100% more racially diverse than it was in FY 2021, and majority female.

Beginning in Spring 2024, the Commission initiated contact with two key constituencies: the legal aid community and law firms in the Chicago area whose focus includes significant employment and civil rights practice. With the dual goals of providing broad information about the Commission's mandate and encouraging—as applicable—these groups to take advantage of practicing at the Commission, we successfully engaged the bar and numerous law firms with a continuing legal education opportunity for their attorneys, conservatively educating more than 500 legal practitioners about our work and the advantages of practicing before the Commission. These advantages include the expediency of Commission proceedings and reduced litigation expenses.

Simultaneously, the Commission conducted an outreach campaign to legal aid and legal aid-adjacent groups including the Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois and the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights. These conversations were an entry point to a broader effort to engage public interest groups in utilizing the Commission, but with the added goal of encouraging the direct legal representation of some number of self-represented litigants with matters before the Commission.

This effort culminated with the establishment of strategic partnerships with Chicago Volunteer Legal Services, Legal Aid Chicago, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, and Prairie State Legal Services. These groups have shown a willingness to accept referrals of matters from the Commission, and we have embarked on a process of information sharing and collaboration to determine how we might build more resources to support self-represented litigants. Ultimate decisions on taking any specific case (and the total number of cases each group will support) are dependent on their independent assessments of



## servicing and supporting litigants – the year in review continued

the strengths of particular cases and their capacity at any given time. However, this marks the first time in the Commission's history that we have a formal referral process to support some number of self-represented litigants participating in Commission proceedings.

While the Commission is excited about these partnerships, the core duties of the ALS have proceeded at an impressive pace. As of the end of FY 2024, our docket has been fundamentally transformed and the average age of our cases has declined to the point at which the "oldest" matter before us was filed in the year 2021, although we only have five cases remaining from that year. Our average pre-trial case age is just 12 months. This reflects the unwavering focus of the entire Commission, but particularly the ALJs and support staff within the ALS.



*Top left: Commissioners and staff work at the Illinois State Fair in August 2023.*

*Top right: David R. Larson, General Counsel and Claudia P. Ortega, Chief Fiscal and Human Resources Officer prepare to testify to the Illinois General Assembly in March 2024.*

*Bottom Left: Commissioners (from L to R) Glenn, Barreno-Paschall and Collins.*

*Bottom Right: Betsy Buttell, Executive Assistant to the Director, Illinois Department of Human Rights and ALJ Mike Robinson participate in COFGA District Office Staff training event July 2023.*

*Center: Image of "Lady Justice"*

## outreach education and engagement – the year in review

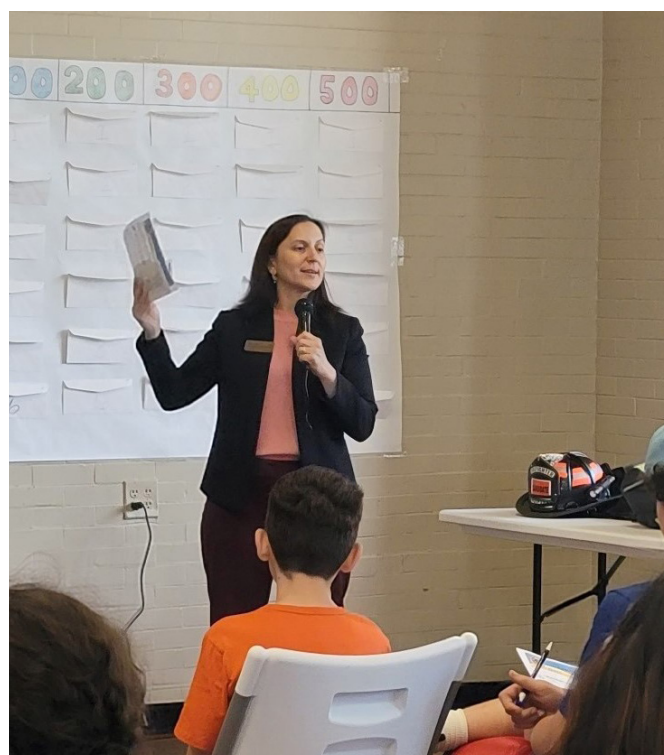
*While the continuing evolution of the Illinois Human Rights Act reflects the growing understanding and value of protecting individual civil rights, it is incumbent for government agencies to do more to ensure that the public both understands their rights and has access to the best information possible on how to exercise those rights.*

Our Commissioners and staff actively engaged with the legal community, colleges, universities, other agencies of state and local government, and the general public to provide information about the Illinois Human Rights Act and the Commission during the reporting period, participating in more than fifty events and outreach activities across Illinois during FY 2024. A partial listing is included on page 11.

During the reporting period, the Commission also expanded its social media presence by joining LinkedIn in January 2024. The Commission sees this as an additional tool to share information with the public about the Commission and an additional

resource to share details about events and employment opportunities with the Commission. In just six months, the Commission went from zero to more than 500 followers, while maintaining regular engagement on Facebook, where the Commission has had a presence since 2020, with more than 250 followers.

During the reporting period, the Commission also continued its signature “Lunch and Learn” series of continuing legal education (“CLE”) presentations. The Commission hosted eight CLE presentations, including three that received Diversity & Inclusion CLE credit from the MCLE Board. More than 700 people attended these presentations during the fiscal year. We also took the opportunity at our Lunch and Learns to build partnership with many leading bar associations, including the Muslim Bar Association of Chicago, the Puerto Rican Bar Association, the Black Women Lawyers’ Association of Greater Chicago, Inc., LAGBAC (the LGBTQIA+ Bar Association), and the South Asian Bar Association of Chicago, among others. We are grateful to all our presenters and attendees in these educational opportunities.



*Left: Commissioner Glenn presents to a class at North Park University in March 2024.*

*Right: Vice Chair Barreno-Paschall presents to community members at Eckhart Park in Chicago in July 2023.*

While not comprehensive, the word cloud below highlights some of the outreach and public engagement events that the Human Rights Commission participated in during the fiscal year in addition to our Lunch and Learn CLE presentations.

Human Rights in Illinois at Governor's State University

2024 Chicago Pride Parade

2023 State Fair

**IHRC as the Litigation Forum of Choice at the Chicago Bar Association**

**IHRC Process and Procedure with the ISBA Human & Civil Rights Section Council**

Overview of the Illinois Human Rights Act and IHRC at the College of Lake County

Women in Law Panel at the University of Chicago

Disability Law Society: Practitioners Panel at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law

Pro Bono Opportunities at the IHRC hosted by Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

**IHRC Process and Procedure at the Kane County Bar Association**

Overview of the Illinois Human Rights Act and Job Responsibilities of IHRC Commissioners at Bradley University

**IHRC as the Litigation Forum of Choice hosted by the Illinois State Bar Association**

Overview of the Illinois Human Rights Act and IHRC at Aurora University

**Seminar for Legislative District Office Staff Training with COGFA**

Equity, Peace, and Justice Employment & Volunteer Fair at Harold Washington College

Diversity + Inclusion Summit, Law & Policy Panel at the University of Chicago

Human Rights Day Virtual Fireside Chat with IDHR

Disability Law Panel: ADA Title I - Employment hosted by the SIU Simmons Law School



# by the numbers – the year in review

While they do not tell the entire story, the numbers below provide some framing for the activity of the Commission in FY 2024.

| Description                                                                                                                                                                        | FY 2024 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Complaints filed through the Department                                                                                                                                            | 77      |
| Complaints filed by Complainants                                                                                                                                                   | 30      |
| Total cases received inclusive of: (1) Requests for Review; (2) Defaults directly from the Department; (3) Settlements directly from the Department; and (4) all complaints filed. | 381     |
| Total Cases Closed/Disposed*                                                                                                                                                       | 447     |
| In-Person Office Visits**                                                                                                                                                          | 247     |
| Phone Inquiries                                                                                                                                                                    | 1601    |
| Lunch and Learn Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Presentations                                                                                                                     | 8       |
| Lunch and Learn Participants                                                                                                                                                       | 738     |
| En Banc and Panel Meetings                                                                                                                                                         | 30      |
| Appellate Court Decisions Affirming Commission Actions***                                                                                                                          | 16      |

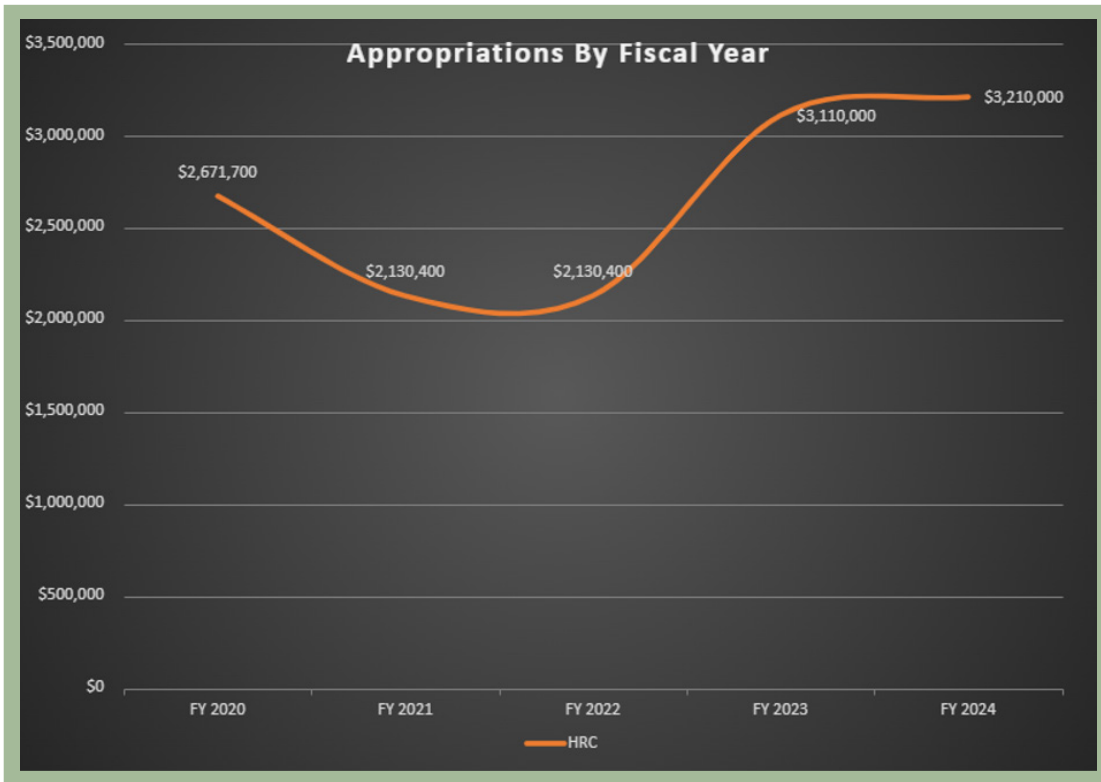
## NOTES

\*Total Cases Closed/Disposed includes: 9 administrative closures, 76 Final Orders and Decisions, 8 Department of Human Rights settlements, 235 requests for review, 6 Administrative Law Section settlements, 27 full Commission En Banc matters, and 86 notices of no exceptions.

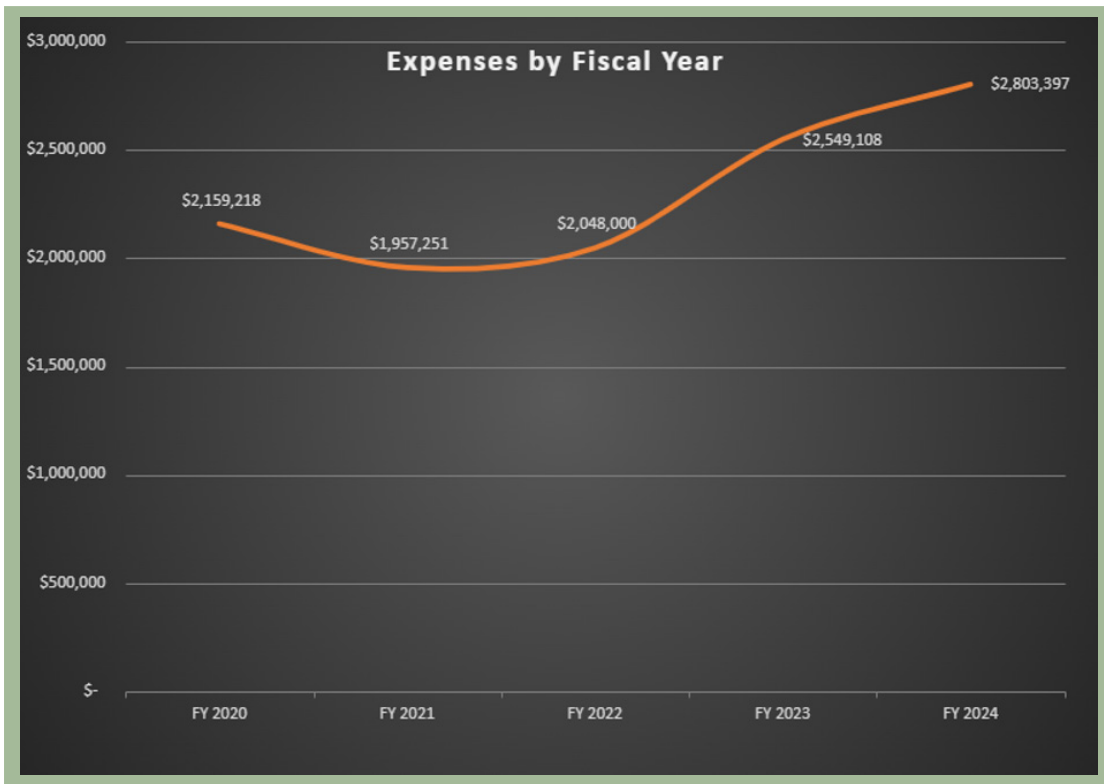
\*\*Office visits reflect instances where individuals visited the Commission offices in Chicago or Springfield on business relating to a specific matter pending or potentially to be filed with the Commission. Multiple visits may be associated with a single matter before the Commission.

\*\*\*The Appellate Court remanded two cases to the Commission for further proceedings.

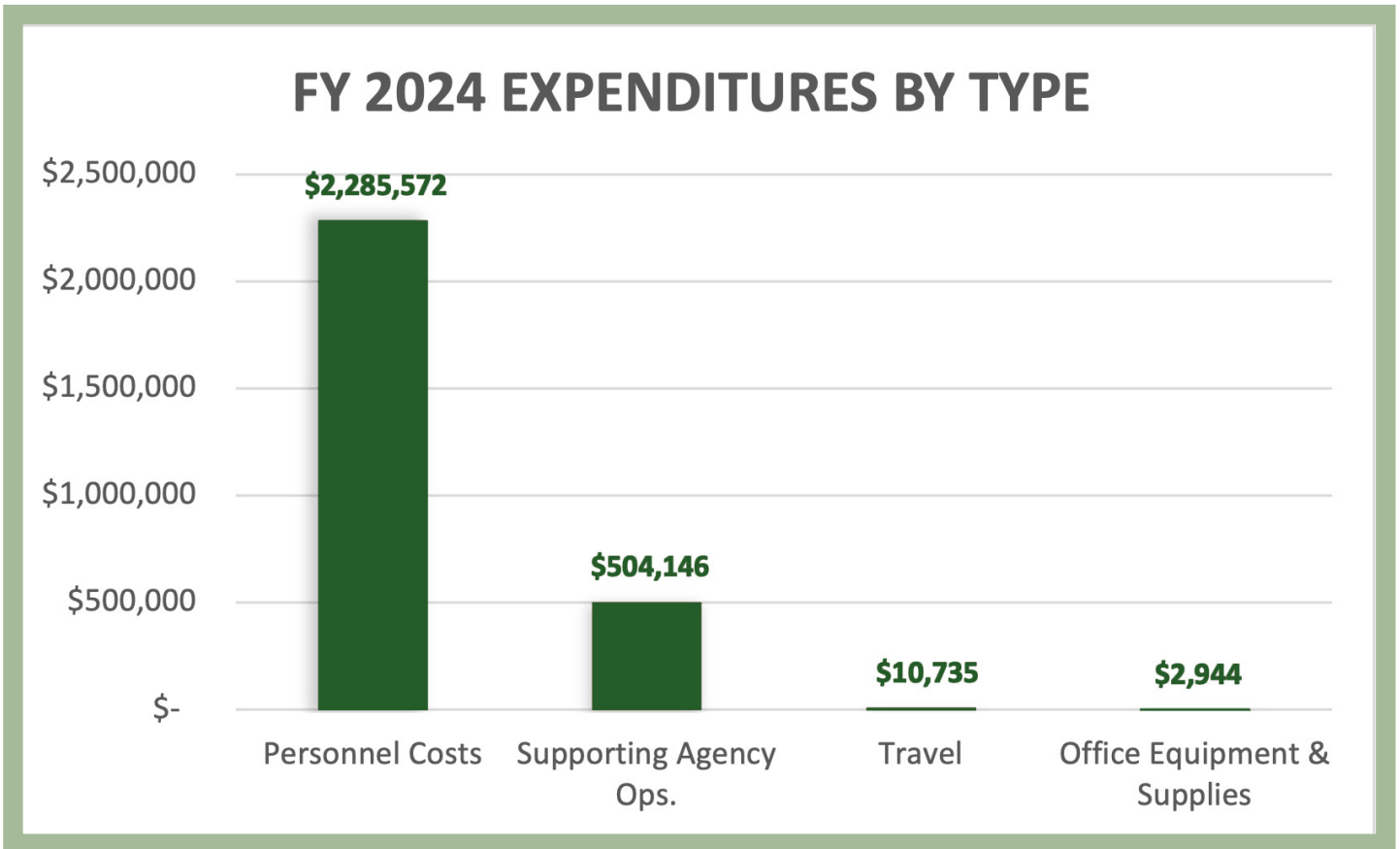
### APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR



### EXPENSES BY FISCAL YEAR



FY 2024 EXPENDITURES BY TYPE



## what's next? a preview of fiscal year 2025

December 2024 will mark the 45th anniversary of the passage of the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Such milestones are notable because they give us an opportunity to reflect on how much has changed in the law and in our society since 1979, but also because they reinforce that the Act remains a vital, constantly evolving tool to protect the civil rights of every Illinoisian.

The Commission has and will continue to exercise vigilance to maintain our forward momentum and ensure that litigants before the Commission—either complainants or respondents—are not unduly delayed from an unbiased, legally sound, and expeditious decision in all matters before our agency. To that end, the Commission will continue to identify and implement efficiencies in our internal processes and share information more freely with litigants regarding their specific proceedings at the Commission.

The Commission also looks forward to continuing to collaborate with our legal aid partners and others to build upon the burgeoning network of supportive legal resources established during FY 2024 to assist self-represented litigants in navigating this forum.

The Commission will continue to engage with our partners at the Illinois Department of Human Rights, the Office of the Governor, and the Illinois General Assembly to identify opportunities to clarify the language of the Act and to educate the public about the protections afforded by it. The Commission also looks forward to continuing to make the case to the legal community about the benefits of litigating before the Commission.





*Top left: Chief Judge of the Northern District of Illinois, (and former Commission ALJ) Rebecca R. Pallmeyer participates in training session for current Commission judges in 2023.*

*Center Left: Commissioners and Staff celebrate Commission ALJ William Borah's receipt of the Elmer Gertz Human & Civil Rights Award from the Illinois State Bar Association in September 2023.*

*Bottom Left: Commissioner Glenn and General Counsel Larson present to the Rotary Club in April 2024.*

*Right: Picture of the Illinois State Capitol building, March 2024.*

## commissioners and commission staff\*

To read biographical information on our Commissioners and Senior Staff, please visit the Commission website at <https://hrc.illinois.gov>

### Chair and Commissioners

The Hon. Selma C. D'Souza, Chair<sup>+</sup>  
The Hon. Demoya R. Gordon, Vice Chair<sup>+</sup>  
The Hon. Jacqueline Y. Collins, Commissioner  
The Hon. Elizabeth A. Coulson, Commissioner  
The Hon. Janice M. Glenn, Commissioner  
The Hon. Stephen A. Kouri II, Commissioner  
The Hon. Howard A. Rosenblum Commissioner<sup>+</sup>

<sup>+</sup> *Pending Senate Confirmation*

### Former Commissioners and Staff

The Hon. Barbara Barreno-Paschall<sup>◆</sup>  
LaNade Bridges<sup>◀</sup>  
Denise Hutton<sup>◀</sup>  
The Hon. Mona Noriega<sup>◆</sup>  
The Hon. Michael R. Robinson<sup>◀</sup>

- \* As of December 1, 2024
- ◆ Former Commissioner
- ◀ Former Staff

### Commission Staff

Tracey B. Fleming, Executive Director  
David R. Larson, General Counsel and Ethics Officer  
Claudia P. Ortega, Chief Fiscal and Human Resources Officer  
The Hon. Brian Weinthal, Chief Administrative Law Judge  
The Hon. Azeema N. Akram, Deputy Chief  
Administrative Law Judge  
John Aten, Office Specialist  
Adrian J. Atwater, Assistant General Counsel  
Shantelle Baker, Administrative Assistant I  
The Hon. William J. Borah, Administrative Law Judge  
Michelle Crayton, Private Secretary I  
Emily Curosh, Assistant General Counsel  
Graciela Delgado, Administrative Assistant I  
The Hon. Emily A. Fancher, Administrative Law Judge  
Jose Galvez, Office Administrator III  
Bricia Herrera, Administrative Assistant I  
Samantha Judd, Administrative Assistant II  
Bonnie Kim, Deputy General Counsel  
The Hon. Kathleen A. McGee, Administrative Law Judge  
The Hon. Jennifer S. Nolen, Administrative Law Judge  
The Hon. James S. Shovlin, Administrative Law Judge  
Cecilia E. Torres, Office Coordinator SS2  
Christine Welninski, Administrative Assistant I

# Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission

555 W. Monroe St., Ste. 600-S

Chicago, IL 60661

(312) 814-1094 phone

<https://tirc.illinois.gov>

# 2024 Annual Report

Executive Director Aryn Evans



## STATE OF ILLINOIS TORTURE INQUIRY AND RELIEF COMMISSION

### HISTORY

The Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission (“TIRC”) was created by statute in 2009 to address the problem of coerced confessions by the Chicago Police Department related to former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge. The General Assembly was responding to the fact that a number of people convicted in that era were later exonerated, and certain claims of torture, disregarded at the time of conviction, had been shown to be true.

The Commission is an eight-member panel of volunteer commissioners appointed by the Governor. TIRC staff attorneys investigate claims of torture and make a recommendation to the Commission at bimonthly meetings as to whether there is sufficient evidence of torture to merit judicial review. The Commission, which is not bound by the staff’s recommendation, ultimately votes on whether or not to refer the claim to Cook County Circuit Court, or to deny the claim. Five affirmative votes are required to refer a claim to court for further judicial review, and a minimum of four negative votes are required to deny it.

If the Commission finds that a claim is sufficiently credible to merit judicial review, the claim is referred to the Circuit Court of Cook County where a judge is assigned to determine whether the convicted person’s confession was coerced. This enables convicted persons to get appropriate relief if they were convicted due to a confession that was obtained by torture – even if their appeals and regular post-conviction proceedings would otherwise be exhausted. If a judge finds a confession was tortured, that judge can order a new trial at which the prosecution must prove the defendant’s guilt without use of the tortured confession.

TIRC is an investigatory body empowered to conduct inquiries into claims of torture and prepare reports outlining its investigations and recommendations to the trial court at the completion of each inquiry. When the Commission was first established, organizational and funding deficiencies delayed its initial work. The Governor’s Office appointed the first Commissioners in late 2010, but the Commission lost funding in 2012 and 2013. Without funding or an adequate number of staff, the Commission nevertheless adopted initial administrative rules and began reviewing claims, obtaining documents, and recruiting the assistance of *pro bono* counsel.

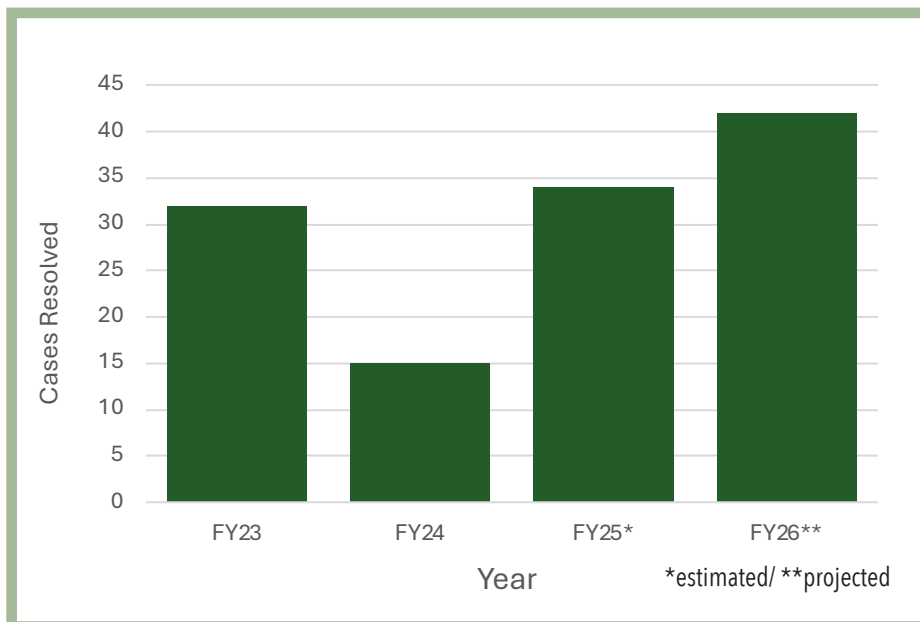
In 2016, the legislature expanded TIRC’s jurisdiction (through the passage of Public Act 99-688) by removing the requirement that claims involve Jon Burge and his subordinates to allow any claims occurring in Cook County and extending the deadline to file a claim through August 10, 2019. As a result, the Commission experienced an avalanche of new claims and went from having approximately 80 pending torture claims to more than 600 torture claims. As of November 2024, that number has been reduced to approximately 408 claims remaining.

## INVESTIGATION & STAFFING

The investigation of each torture claim currently takes commission staff attorneys approximately one year to complete. Among other things, attorneys review thousands of pages of court records, serve and monitor subpoenas for additional records, review hundreds of pages of police records, conduct interviews of claimants and witnesses, and review medical records and consult medical experts as appropriate.

In 2020, following the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer, large protests were held throughout all 50 U.S. states and internationally in what *The New York Times* described as “the largest protests in the United States since the Civil Rights era.” The subject of police brutality (especially against black people) dominated headlines. That year, TIRC received a surge of interest from *pro bono* attorneys who volunteered to investigate torture claims for the Commission; As a result, in 2021-2022 TIRC experienced a dramatic increase in the number of cases resolved as many of those *pro bono* attorneys completed their respective investigations. TIRC continues to receive assistance from *pro bono* attorneys and is currently hiring additional staff attorneys to investigate the backlog of claims.

In FY 2024, TIRC resolved 15 claims of torture. This number was notably lower than the previous year due to commissioner vacancies and staff leadership transitions. The Commission operated without a Commission Chairperson for most of FY 2024, and multiple commissioner vacancies directly impacted quorum for two of the six Commission meetings scheduled per year. Specifically, TIRC’s April 2024 meeting was canceled for lack of quorum and TIRC’s February 2024 meeting ended before the Commission could conclude the business on its agenda when it lost quorum. Commissioner vacancies also resulted in at least two claims receiving insufficient commissioner votes to reach a final resolution (e.g., *In re TIRC Claim of Donald Haywood* and *In re TIRC Claim of John Hudson*).



In FY 2024, TIRC also experienced significant transitions in leadership including the resignation of its longtime Executive Director Robert Olmstead. In August 2023, Aryn Evans began serving as Interim Executive Director, which resulted in a vacancy for the Supervising Attorney Pro Bono Liaison position she held. The Governor's Office appointed a new Chair Commissioner, Hon. Michael Strom, who joined TIRC in the final month of FY24. Soon thereafter, on October 16, 2024, the Commission appointed Aryn Evans as the Executive Director.

## TORTURE CASES & RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

### In FY 2024, TIRC:

- prevailed in circuit court in the matters of *People v. Daniels* and *People v. Murray* when the trial judge ruled that the TIRC Act is not unconstitutional. TIRC had filed through the Attorney General's Office and was granted a Petition to Intervene in the matters of *People v. Daniels* and *People v. Murray* to oppose the People's Motion to Dismiss the referrals of torture claimants Devon Daniels (96 CR 9385) and Kevin Murray (88 CR 2309) on the basis that the TIRC Act violates the separation-of-powers provision of the Illinois Constitution.
- prevailed on its friend-of-the-court (*amicus*) brief filed through the Attorney General's Office with the Illinois Supreme Court in the matter of Darrell Fair (No. 128373) when the Supreme Court agreed with TIRC that determining whether torture occurred requires a consideration of the totality of the circumstances at the time of the alleged torture.
- prevailed on its *amicus* brief filed through the Attorney General's Office with the Illinois First District Appellate Court in the matter of Abdul Malik Muhammad (No. 1-22-0372) when the Appellate Court held that TIRC acted within its scope of authority when it referred the claim of Muhammad based on TIRC's definition of "tortured confession" in its administrative rules.
- resolved dozens of cases, including the following representative cases:
  - ❖ **William Clarke:** Clarke alleged that he was physically and mentally tortured into confessing by police detectives, during which he was handcuffed to a wall, punched in the chest, back, mouth and ribs, as well as kicked when he fell to the floor. The Commission referred his claim for judicial review.
  - ❖ **Nelson Rivera:** Rivera alleged that Detective Reynaldo Guevara coerced his confession by choking him, hitting him in the ribs, smacking him in the face, and threatening to imprison his pregnant girlfriend. In April 2023, Judge Hooks granted an order for post-conviction relief, vacating Rivera's conviction and sentence. Because his conviction was vacated, TIRC summarily dismissed his claim for no longer having jurisdiction.
  - ❖ **Kristopher Deloney:** Deloney alleged that he was tortured by detectives who held him in custody for nearly four days, depriving him of sleep, food, water, and restroom use. Additionally, he alleged that he was physically abused by Detective Halloran. The Commission referred his claim for judicial review.

- ❖ **Clifton Young:** Young alleged that he was detained for over three days in a hot, unventilated room that made it difficult to breathe, kept handcuffed to a wall and unable to sleep, slapped, and was denied asthma medication, food, water, and restroom use by Area 2 Detectives. His allegations were further supported by a significant complaint history against the accused detective, as well as corroboration of his allegations by his former attorney, who filed an emergency habeas petition on his behalf after seeing his condition at the police station. The Commission referred his claim for judicial review.

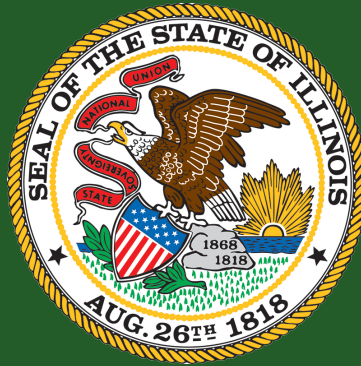
As of the end of FY 2024, TIRC has referred 75 torture claims to court for further proceedings and denied 142 claims. Another 82 claims or attempted claims were withdrawn by claimants or were administratively dismissed due to being filed late or other jurisdictional bars. Of the 75 claims that TIRC has referred to court for further proceedings, several claimants have had charges dropped and at least 5 have received Certificates of Innocence. Many of these proceedings are still pending.

## LOOKING FORWARD

With the Commissioner appointments made at the end of FY24 and the start of FY25, TIRC has been able to hold its meetings with a full panel of voting commissioners and a Commission Chair for the first time in years. As a result, TIRC has resolved 12 torture claims in its first two Commission meetings of FY 2025. TIRC continues to collaborate with the Governor’s Office in their continued efforts to fill the remaining vacancies.

## TIRC COMMISSIONERS (as of Nov 2024)

|                               | <i>Primary Commissioner</i>    | <i>Alternate Commissioner</i> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Chairperson</i>            | Michael Strom                  | <b>(vacant)</b>               |
| <i>Former Prosecutor</i>      | Steven Block                   | Bennett Kaplan                |
| <i>Former Public Defender</i> | Johanes Maliza                 | <b>(vacant)</b>               |
| <i>Practicing Attorney</i>    | Erica Zunkel                   | Daniel Fenske                 |
| <i>Law Professor</i>          | Vanessa Del Valle              | Sheila Bedi                   |
| <i>Public Member</i>          | Linnet Burden                  | Tameka Walton                 |
| <i>Public Member</i>          | Yanajah Kafi Moragne-Patterson | Ivory Snow                    |
| <i>Public Member</i>          | Brian Richardson               | <b>(vacant)</b>               |



# Illinois Human Rights Commission

<https://hrc.illinois.gov>

## Chicago

160 North LaSalle Street,  
Suite N-1000  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
312-814-6269 phone

## Springfield

300 West Jefferson Street,  
Suite 108  
Springfield, Illinois 62702  
217-785-4350 phone

TTY/TDD Line 866-832-2298



**REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS:** Services at the Illinois Human Rights Commission are accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities in compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act. A person with a disability needing an accommodation to participate in any Commission activities should contact the Commission Disability Access Coordinator at 312-814-6269 or (TTY) 866-832-2298 or at [HRC.NEWS@illinois.gov](mailto:HRC.NEWS@illinois.gov). The Commission requires five (5) business days to review any reasonable accommodation.