



**YUKON
HUMAN
RIGHTS**
COMMISSION

**COMMISSION
DES DROITS
DE LA PERSONNE**
DU YUKON

Annual Report

2024-2025





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Chair's Message

I am pleased to present to the Legislative Assembly and the public the Yukon Human Rights Commission's 2024-2025 Annual Report. It attempts to convey the significant efforts and real advances made by the Commission during the 2024-25 reporting year. However, while reporting on our local work over the past year, we cannot ignore the broader context and real challenges faced globally.

"War is the ultimate violation of human rights."

— Volker Türk, UN Human Rights Chief

Sadly, our world continues to be riven by strife and war. At the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland (March 2025), Volker Türk called out that in a war-torn world we must "build peace around human rights." This approach is essential not only in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and Myanmar but also for us here in Yukon and across all of Canada. The challenge to uphold human rights is global. Authoritarians of all ilks threaten our inherent human rights and unless checked, point us towards a future amoral world-order.

Many in Yukon may not perceive that they are directly impacted by unchecked aggression or abuse targeted at LGBTQ2S communities, Indigenous, religious, or ethnic minorities in distant lands. Ultimately, though, we all are. More and more we will feel the collective impact, along with our global neighbours, of the erosion of socio-economic and cultural rights due to these actions abroad, along with environmental degradation and climate change.

At home, the Yukon *Human Rights Act* has paramountcy over all other Yukon Acts, with few exceptions. This means the Act supersedes most other laws in Yukon.

To breathe life into the *Act* and see that Yukoners' human rights are upheld, the responsibility indeed rests with all of us. Every resident calling out discrimination and abuse in everyday life, and every organization protecting housing, setting best practices for businesses, or overseeing services provided to the public, are upholding human rights.

"The fight for human rights is about speaking truth to power."

— Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland

The Commission welcomes its community partnerships and is proud of the free public legal information, training, and policy reviews it provided throughout 2024-25, as it seeks to spread understanding and strives to dismantle systemic discrimination and oppression. Systemic discrimination can be difficult to identify and investigate, but eliminating deeply embedded patterns is our best bet to prevent future societal harm.

The Yukon Human Rights Commission wishes to acknowledge our gratitude to the fourteen Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous groups for sharing their traditional lands with us and all Yukoners living and working here. Our commitment to reconciliation remains paramount.

On behalf of all Commission members, I would like to thank the staff who left the Commission in 2024-25 for their dedicated service contributions: Simone Kitchen, Amna Bhatti, and Molly Swain. Commission members welcome our new staff and are especially pleased to recognize Karen Moir on the completion of her first year of excellent service as our Director of Human Rights.

Michael Dougherty
Chair

Director's Message

“Justice is the application of law to life, not just the application of laws to facts.”

— Justice Rosalie Abella, Supreme Court of Canada

For nearly 40 years, the Yukon Human Rights Commission has administered the *Human Rights Act* from the traditional territory of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation. Through this Act, we work to support those who experience the most egregious discrimination and harassment in Yukon, to uplift those who have fallen through the cracks, and to provide hope in peoples' darkest hours. Complaints filed with us often involve complex human rights violations. The Commission sees the effects of discrimination firsthand, and as complaints increase, our ability to respond is pushed to the limits. When our responsive capacity is fully taxed, there is little left for prevention and education, and the cycle of discrimination continues.

Our legislation has not kept pace with the realities of the communities we serve, and a lack of funding continues to be a barrier. Both hinder us from innovating policy, processes, and tools that enable our mandate. Throughout 2024-25, the Commission advocated to address these issues. Notable advances have been made, including the introduction of an electronic case management system and the review of countless associated procedures, but more remains to be done. The Commission can only go so far without a change to our legal and financial structures, which requires action from the Government of Yukon. We remain hopeful that our relationship-building of this past year will bear fruit in the months ahead.

As the *Act* states, human rights are a fundamental part of Canada's heritage. They are essential to how we understand our community's values and engage in the world. From housing to employment and everything in between, all across Yukon, the *Act* sets the standards for us all. I am proud of our progress in 2024-25 towards eliminating discrimination.

As we seek to enforce what is universally required to ensure a life in dignity and rights, I hold up the resolute members of our team in championing this important work.

Karen Moir

Director of Human Rights



About the Commission

The Yukon Human Rights Commission (the Commission) is an independent body established in 1987 under the Yukon *Human Rights Act* (the Act). The Commission's role is to promote human rights by addressing discrimination and inequity in the territory through education, outreach, research, and complaint resolution.

The Commission is a member of the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA). CASHRA brings member agencies together to improve and promote human rights in Canada, including providing opportunities for members to exchange information about human rights laws.

Day-to-day operations of the Commission are led by the Director of Human Rights and carried out by staff. The Commission also has 3-5 Commission members who are appointed by the Legislative Assembly of Yukon. This year, the Commission members were Michael Dougherty, Aja Mason, Helena Tlen, Nathan Cross, and Leonard Wall.

The Commission welcomed four new staff members to the team this year, including Senior Investigator Ruth O'Gorman, Human Rights Officers Love Babajide and Erin Gobert, and Administrative Officer Ivy Hsu.



The Commission is located in Whitehorse at 215-305 Main Street. It is open to the public from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday to Friday.

Commission Roles and Responsibilities

Commission Members*

Decide if complaints should proceed to the Yukon Panel of Adjudicators



Director

Responsible for the administration of the Commission and enforcement of the Act



Legal Counsel

Facilitate settlements, provide Commission with legal analysis and review of complaint decisions



Administrative Officer

Supports day-to-day operations through administrative and financial services



Senior Investigator

Investigates complaints and provides strategic advice to management



Human Rights Officers

Take public inquiries, conduct research, and investigate complaints



*Appointed by Legislative Assembly



Commission News



Ombudsman's Report

In August 2024, the Yukon Ombudsman released an investigative report on the Yukon Human Rights Commission. In the report, the Ombudsman made eight recommendations: five to the Commission and three to the Government of Yukon (from which the Commission receives funding). The recommendations aimed to close gaps in Commission policy and procedure, and clarify elements of the Act. The Commission accepted all five recommendations and released a response to the report, which can be found on our [website](#).



New Case Management System

In March 2025, the Commission launched a new system for tracking complaints and inquiries. As part of the transition, five years' worth of past data was transferred to the new system. This effort was undertaken to improve information and data management, which in turn will allow for more insights into both discrimination in the territory and the Commission's enforcement functions. Additionally, this means the public may now submit complaints online through a private portal, provided they have first completed an inquiry with the Commission.



Amendments to the Act

This year, the Commission proposed technical changes to the *Human Rights Act* in an effort to improve our ability to administer complaints. Drafted in consultation with the Government of Yukon, these proposed changes include allowing complaints of retaliation to be investigated by the Commission, clarifying the definition of systemic discrimination, and more. To ensure the proposals meet needs, Yukoners were invited to provide feedback. Results of the feedback survey can be found online: yukon.ca/en/engagements.



CRRF Project

The Commission was supported by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to build better internal capacity to investigate race-based complaints, update the information that we provide to the public, and hold community discussions. Notably, Commissions across the country are seeing the number of complaints filed about national origin, ethnicity, and race skyrocket, in some cases, eclipsing disability related complaints for the first time. The Commission is better prepared today to address that shift and will continue to evolve in the service of those in need.

Complaint **Services**

If you have been discriminated against in the territory, you may be able to seek a remedy through the Commission. To determine if your experience falls within our mandate, we recommend you meet with a human rights officer for an inquiry, a free and confidential consultation. After this, you may or may not decide to file a complaint.

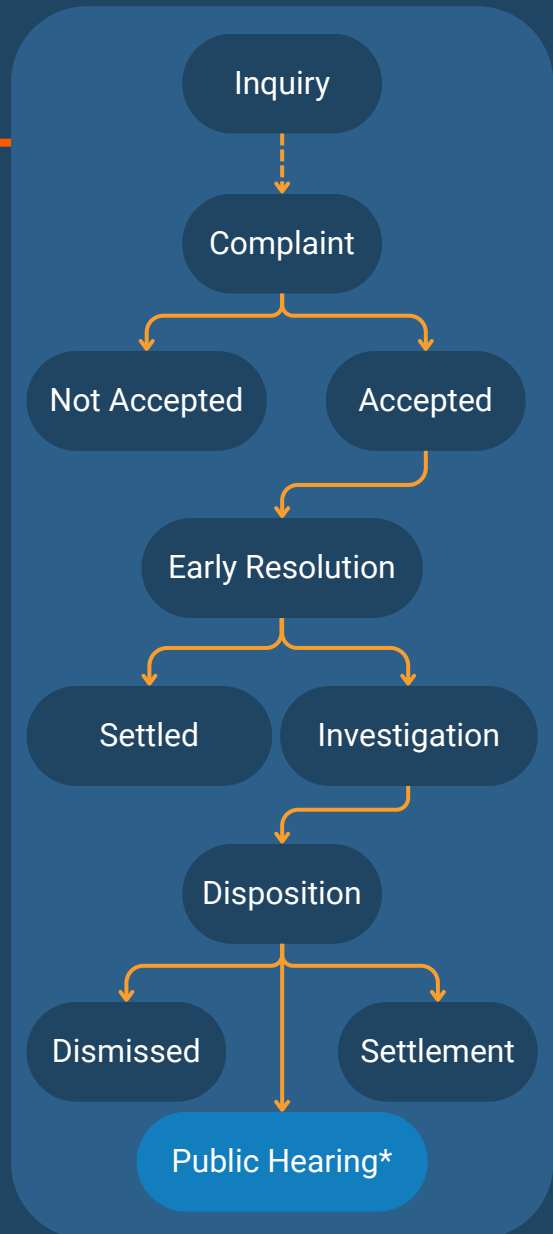
To file a complaint, you must complete a complaint form and submit it to the Commission. This form asks for information regarding your experience of discrimination, including under which ground(s) you believe your complaint falls.

There are 14 protected grounds under the *Act*: (1) Ancestry, including colour and race, (2) National origin, (3) Ethnic or linguistic background/origin, (4) Religion or creed, (5) Age, (6) Sex, including pregnancy, (7) Gender identity or gender expression, (8) Sexual orientation, (9) Physical or mental disability, (10) Criminal charges or criminal record, (11) Political belief, association, or activity, (12) Marital or family status, (13) Source of income, and (14) Actual or presumed association with other individuals or groups who identify with the grounds above.


What is Discrimination?


Discrimination, for the purposes of the *Yukon Human Rights Act*, occurs when a person or group is treated unfavourably **because** of a protected personal characteristic (also known as a “protected ground”) **in an area** such as employment, housing, services, public contracts, or membership in unions or professional associations.


Every submitted complaint then undergoes a screening process to determine if it will be accepted for next steps. To proceed, a complaint must show reasonable grounds for believing there has been a contravention of the Act. If shown, you will have the opportunity to settle the complaint (“early resolution”). However, many complaints proceed past early resolution to an investigation where staff conduct interviews and analysis, resulting in a report. The report is presented at a disposition meeting where Commission members assess the evidence. Based on this assessment, the Commission members may refer the complaint to the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators for a public hearing, refer it to settlement, or dismiss it.



*Moves outside of Commission process and timeline

- 1  Does the complaint allege facts that meet the legal test for discrimination?

- 2  Did the alleged discrimination occur within our jurisdiction?

- 3  Did the alleged discrimination occur within the last 18 months?

Accepting Complaints: Reasonable Grounds Criteria

By the Numbers | 2024-25

A key component of the Commission's mandate is to provide complaint and inquiry services to Yukoners. Inquiries are free consultations with Commission staff and may or may not result in a submitted complaint. If a complaint is submitted, the timeline for resolution is highly variable, often dependent on the nature and complexity of the complaint. This fiscal year, Commission staff received 316 inquiries and 64 complaints, for a combined net new caseload of 380. Compared to 5 years ago, i.e., the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, this is up 11%.

316

INQUIRIES
RECEIVED

64

COMPLAINTS
RECEIVED

121

COMPLAINTS
CARRIED OVER FROM
PREVIOUS FY

37

COMPLAINTS
ACCEPTED

6

COMPLAINTS
WITHDRAWN

0

COMPLAINTS
ABANDONED

1

COMPLAINT
STOPPED

9

COMPLAINTS
SETTLED

11

INVESTIGATIONS
COMPLETED

8

DISPOSITIONS
HELD

1

HEARING
HELD

141

COMPLAINTS
OPEN AT END OF FY

Accepted Complaints | 2024-25

By Area*



30 complaints related to **employment**



2 complaints related to **housing, leasing or renting**



6 complaints related to **receiving goods and services**



1 complaint related to **union membership or representation**

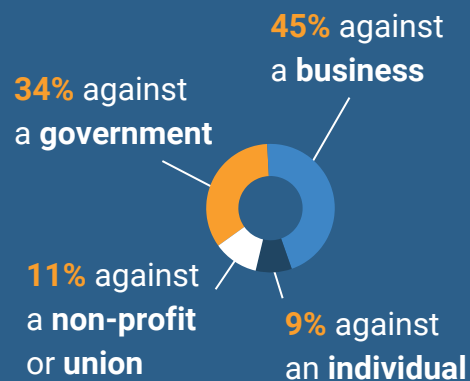
By Location

92% occurred in **Whitehorse**



8% occurred in **rural Yukon**

By Respondent Sector



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding

By Ground*

Physical or mental disability	18	Actual or presumed association	1
Sex, including pregnancy	14	Criminal charges or criminal record	1
Marital or family status	9	Political belief, association, or activity	1
Ancestry, including colour and race	4	Sexual orientation	1
Ethnic or linguistic background/origin	3	Age	0
Gender identity or gender expression	3	Religion or creed	0
National origin	3	Source of income	0

*Complaints can be accepted on multiple areas and grounds

Rights Promotion

In addition to complaint and inquiry services, the Commission also promotes human rights through accessible resources, materials, and training for individuals, organizations, and schools.

This year, the Commission facilitated 15 trainings, covering topics like the duty to accommodate, workplace sexual harassment, and human rights 101.

Contact the Commission to inquire about human rights training:



info@yukonhumanrights.ca



867-667-6226



215-305 Main Street
Whitehorse, Yukon

Training

15

**TRAININGS
FACILITATED**

13

**ORGANIZATIONS
SERVED**

133+

**PEOPLE
TRAINED**

38

**HOURS
OF TRAINING**

0

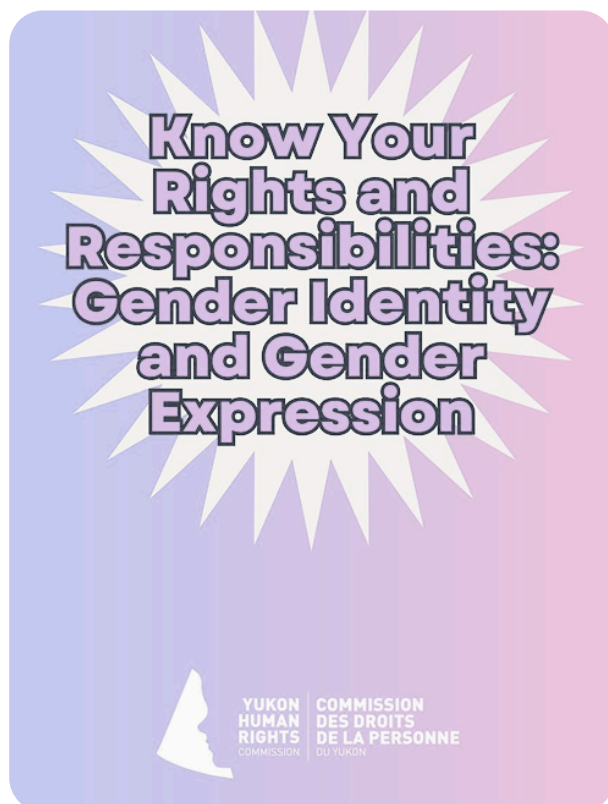
**RURAL
TRAININGS**

2

**SETTLEMENT-
MANDATED
TRAININGS**

Human Rights Day

International Human Rights Day was commemorated on December 10, 2024 with an online and in-person learning event addressing systemic discrimination, racism, and advocacy. A dynamic panel discussion between Toni DeMello and Chris Tse was moderated by the former Director of the Yukon Human Rights Commission, Birju Dattani. Together with community members, we explored pressing human rights challenges and discussed pathways for meaningful change.



Gender Rights Zine

The Gender Expression and Identity zine was created by the Yukon Human Rights Commission in partnership with Queer Society Yukon and in honour of Pride 2024. The zine provided information about Yukoners' rights related to gender identity and expression – one of the 14 protected characteristics in the Yukon *Human Rights Act*. It is available [online](#) and in print! Keep an eye out for more zines about rights and responsibilities specific to the characteristics protected by the Yukon *Human Rights Act*.

Research **Activities**

The Commission has a mandate to conduct research and share information about equality, harassment, discrimination, and human rights. Commission staff engage in research daily to fulfill their roles effectively.

Here are some key ways staff leverage research:

- 1** While the Commission cannot provide legal advice to the public, staff must be aware of current law and best practices
- 2** To stay alert to the social, political, economic, and cultural context in which human rights violations occur, staff seek out news, studies, and reports
- 3** Staff gather evidence to understand the impact, harm, and consequences of human rights violations to provide a trauma-informed approach to inquirers and complainants



On the Horizon | *Pay Equity Research*

In 2024-25, a long-range research plan was developed to investigate pay equity in the private sector under section 15 of the Act (“Equal pay for work of equal value”). The goal is to better understand how Yukon compares to other jurisdictions.



Commission Budget

REVENUE

Yukon Government

Government of Canada and other grants

Canadian Race Relations Foundation

Interest and other income

TOTAL REVENUE

2024-25

\$1,073,928

-

\$44,000

\$6,250

\$1,124,178

2023-24

\$808,000

\$466,269

-

\$1,194

\$1,275,463

EXPENSES

Advertising and promotion

Amortization

Annual report

Bank charges

Board liability insurance

Case investigation

Commission members - honouraria

Employee travel and training

Events and catering

Insurance

Janitorial

Memberships

Office

Other contract services

Penalties and interest

Professional fees

Rental

Repairs and maintenance

Salaries and wages

Subscriptions

Telephone and internet

Website

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$3,406

\$8,501

\$3,560

\$898

\$7,478

\$168,395

\$13,984

\$12,648

\$11,117

\$9,046

\$4,944

\$1,000

\$8,392

\$49,058

\$2,454

\$6,000

\$122,500

\$22,398

\$769,664

\$30,198

\$9,505

\$9,032

\$1,274,178

\$19,816

\$11,154

\$5,622

\$896

\$6,547

\$45,184

\$20,406

\$20,977

\$2,129

\$9,668

\$4,800

\$3,701

\$11,096

\$26,195

-

\$7,500

\$120,000

\$17,279

\$857,078

\$19,499

\$9,487

\$28,259

\$1,247,293

Discussion

The Commission's core funding from the Government of Yukon was initially set at \$913,000 for 2024-25, which was \$319,659 less than requested. The amount was later amended to add \$10,928 in response to two applications to fund a portion (less than 15%) of a project to address the Ombudsman's August 2024 report recommendations. Despite this nominal increase, the lack of financial resources impacted our ability to fully address the recommendations within the prescribed timelines. Progress was made by reassigning our small staff contingent and displacing other priorities.

In addition, late in the fiscal year the Commission was required to fully utilize a historic cash balance to provide cash flow protection, to pay rent and staff wages. The Commission then struggled to secure an amendment of \$150,000 to cover essential expenses. The operating costs of the Commission are consistent year over year, and yet the allocated core funding does not meet this stable target. This means additional administrative effort is required to advocate for sufficient funding, impacting our statutory mandate.

Underfunding of the Commission delays policy development, renders tools and technology redundant, and contributes to a backlog. The Ombudsman's report was critical of delays in the complaint management process and of policy gaps linked to capacity. The Ombudsman recommended a change to our funding structure in order to address this and strengthen the Commission's independence.^[1] This requires action by the Government of Yukon and has not been advanced to the knowledge of the Commission. The Commission will continue to advocate for this change in service of our public mandate.

[1] "1) Amend the *Human Rights Act* so that the Authority is funded directly by the Legislative Assembly. Alternatively, allow the Authority the opportunity to make submissions on its budget directly to the Management Board." Yukon Ombudsman, Investigative Report, August 2024: https://yukonhumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/OMB-INV-2023-02-047-02-048-04-084-YHRC-Investigation-Report-Final-Original-Signed_0.pdf, p. 46



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