



Commission on Human Rights & Opportunities

Civil Rights Unites

**Connecticut
Commission on Human Rights
Civil Rights Museum**



Executive Director: Tanya A. Hughes
Deputy Executive Director: Attorney Cheryl A. Sharp

PORTAL.CT.GOV/CHRO



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CT_CHRO



CTCHRO

Civil Rights Museum Initiative



As part of the CHRO's education and outreach efforts, we are leading the initiative to establish effort to establish the nation's first state government owned and operated civil rights museum. This museum will showcase Connecticut's long and distinguished civil rights history, reflecting a rich history that resonates with us all. It is a visionary project of the current administration led by Tanya Hughes and Cheryl Sharp, whos aim is preserving and sharing these important stories and relics for generations to come! Connecticut has a rich history we can all connect with, and the museum which the brain child of the Hughes and Sharp administration.

- 1774 Connecticut bans the further importation of enslaved people, a step toward abolition
- 1833 Prudence Crandall opens the first school for Black girls in Canterbury, CT
- 1866 Connecticut is the first state to ratify the 14th Amendment, guaranteeing equal protection under the law
- 1924 Connecticut passes a sterilization law targeting disabled and marginalized groups, reflecting discrimination of the era
- 1943 The Interracial Commission, now known as the CHRO was established as Connecticut's first State agency to address race relations in the United States
- 1947 The first law in the nation to outlaw discrimination in employment is passed in CT

Civil Rights Museum Initiative



Connecticut CHRO Civil Rights Museum:

The Connecticut CHRO Civil Rights Museum will aim to tell the story of Connecticut's role in the Civil Rights Movement and the state's pioneering social justice and anti-discrimination laws.

The CHRO is the oldest governmental civil rights agency in the nation. Through this museum project, the CHRO will work with State and Federal partners and Connecticut businesses to educate stakeholders and residents about civil and human rights law enforcement.

Further, the museum would take a deep look at opportunities in Connecticut: what groups have been given opportunities in the state and what groups have been denied opportunities. These opportunities can come in the form of job choices, economic growth for communities, accessibility to affordable housing, equitable education, and more.

The CHRO will endeavor to highlight the history of programs such as Kid Governor, Connecticut Kids Court Academy, Connecticut Kids Court, the Connecticut Bar Foundation, and Connecticut Bar Association's social justice programs.

This project will profoundly impact economic development, community renewal, social justice, equity and equality, and access to opportunity.

A key part of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities' statutory mission is to provide education and training to the public regarding Connecticut's civil rights laws and to reduce discrimination and prejudice through education. We believe that the museum would be a crucial step towards fulfilling the CHRO's mission and hope for the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus' support in obtaining funding for this project.

The CHRO has submitted a funding request for the museum project to the Office of Policy and Management as a budget option for Fiscal Year 2025 and has been working with The Artist Collective Inc. regarding using the first floor of their building in Hartford for the museum.



Civil Rights Museum Initiative



Bonding Request:

Public funding:

Property of the first floor at The Artist Collective Inc.
The request for allocation yearly from the legislature is \$250,000.
Construction and build out of building = negotiating

Private funding:

Raise \$500,000-700,000 (funding should be secured by the part time Fundraiser/Grant Writer)

- **Capital reserve \$50,000 – 100,000**
- **Acquisition of curated items \$55,000 – \$255,000**
- **Operational costs for the building**
- **Utilities \$30,000 – 60,000**
- **Maintenance and repairs \$30,000 – 60,000**
- **Cleaning and janitorial services \$15,000 – 25,000**
- **Insurance \$5000 – 10,000**
- **Security \$20,000 – 40,000**
- **Property tax \$0 – 50,000**
- **Other costs \$50,000 – 100,000**

As it relates to non-public sources, the amount of yearly project costs raised would be approximately \$50,000 – 70,000.

Anticipated staffing needs:

Museum Curator I: \$72,926

Museum Curator I (educational programming): \$72,926

Fundraiser/Grant Writer part time, durational for 2 years:
approximately \$44,000/year

Other expenses: \$60,148



CHRO & The Artist Collective, Inc. propose a Partnership



Where the World of Art is Making a Difference for Greater Hartford

The Artists Collective was founded in 1970 by world renowned alto-saxophonist, composer, educator Jackie McLean as an interdisciplinary arts and cultural institution

It is the only multi-arts organization of its kind emphasizing the cultural and artistic contributions of the African Diaspora. Programs expose students and the community to great and often overlooked artists of the past and present; offering the highest quality training in dance, theater, music and visual arts

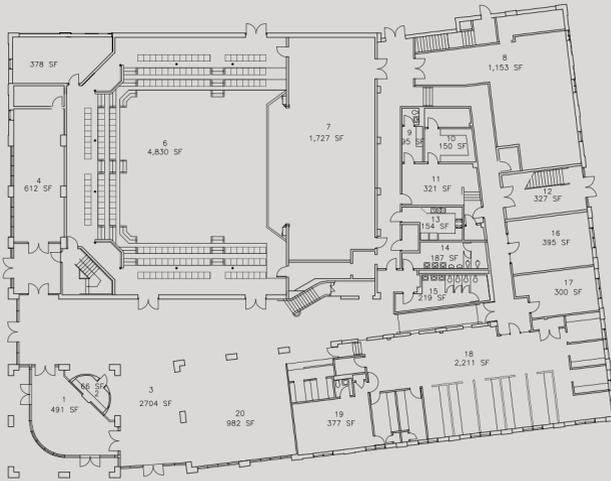
Since 1970, the Artists Collective has touched the lives of thousands of Greater Hartford youth and their families.

Today, Artists Collective alumni are all over the world and the United States. Some of you have pursued careers in the arts, been inspired to work with youth in education, the ministry, various medical fields, as well as other vocations. Some of you are grandparents and great-grandparents bringing the next generation to the Collective for their training in the arts and cultural awareness.

For 52 years, the Artist Collective has managed to continue it's mission and good work with the support of many foundations, the City of Hartford, the State of Connecticut, the National Endowment for the Arts, and individuals who have consistently supported the nonprofit for almost as long as we have been in existence.



Connecticut Commission on Human Rights Civil Rights Museum Proposed Location Layout



ROOM KEY

1. ENTRY LOBBY
2. TICKET BOOTH
3. MAIN LOBBY
4. MUSIC STORE
5. STORAGE
6. MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
7. STAGE
8. SCENERY STORAGE
9. STAR'S DRESSING ROOM
10. DRESSING ROOM
11. GREEN ROOM
12. BACK ENTRY LOBBY
13. KITCHEN
14. MENS TOILET
15. WOMENS TOILET
16. LIBRARY
17. CONFERENCE
18. ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
19. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
20. EXHIBITION LOBBY

GROUND FLOOR





General Assembly
January Session, 2025

Proposed Bill No. 1203

LCO No. 2233



* 0 2 2 3 3 *

Referred to Committee on FINANCE, REVENUE AND
BONDING

Introduced by:

SEN. MILLER P., 27th Dist.

**AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE TO ESTABLISH A
CONNECTICUT CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

- 1 That the State Bond Commission be empowered to authorize the
- 2 issuance of bonds of the state in accordance with section 3-20 of the
- 3 general statutes, in principal amounts not exceeding in the aggregate
- 4 three million five hundred thousand dollars, the proceeds of which shall
- 5 be used by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities to
- 6 establish a state civil rights museum.

Statement of Purpose:

To provide funding to establish a state civil rights museum.

You're Protected By Connecticut Law



With changes to interpretations of federal law being made at a rapid pace, it is more important than ever to know that state law offers independent protections. In Connecticut, it is the law that one cannot discriminate against someone on the basis of their:

- Age
- Alienage
- Ancestry
- Color
- Criminal Record (state employment and licensing only)
- Erased Criminal Record
- Status as a Victim of Domestic Violence
- Familial Status, responsibilities, or planning
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Genetic Information (employment)
- Use of a Guide Dog
- Lawful Source of Income (housing and public accommodations)
- Learning Disability
- Marital Status
- Mental Disability
- Intellectual Disability
- Physical Disability
- National Origin
- Race
- Religion
- Retaliation for Opposing Discrimination
- Sex, including Pregnancy and Breastfeeding
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Orientation
- Veteran Status



You're protected by Connecticut law and all protected classes will be featured in the museum.

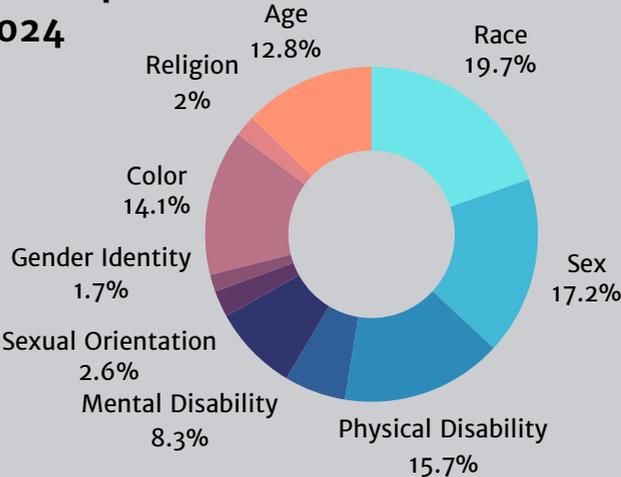
Understanding Discrimination in CT



Last year, 2,439 complaints of discrimination were filed with the Commission. Here's how those numbers broke down:

Discrimination Complaints by Basis, FY 2024

The filings in the chart are the most frequently cited reasons someone believes they were discriminated against.



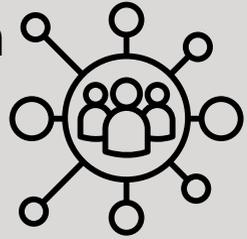
Complaint Filings by Regional Office

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| Capitol | 581 |
| Southwest | 485 |
| West Central | 761 |
| Eastern | 449 |
| Housing | 163 |



Complaints are received in our regional offices based on where the discrimination occurred, except for Housing which is statewide.

A snapshot of discrimination in Connecticut year by year will be featured



Law enforcement is only one pillar of the Commission's mission to eliminate discrimination in our state. Another is to prevent discrimination before it occurs with education. Through webinars, in-person trainings, and tabling events to social media, newsletters, op-eds and more, the CHRO is all over the state to teach people their role in the legacy of the civil rights movement.

160,717 People reached over the last year through CHRO outreach

Some of our most popular programs include:



Kids Court Academy

A bi-weekly program to teach students about civil rights law and advocacy



A series of lunch time discussions of civil rights documentaries

Children's March and Bell Ringing Ceremony
for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Sponsored by:

Saturday, January 26th, 2025
12 pm
St. Peter's Episcopal Church
89 Main St, Cheshire CT 06410
Snow/rain date: Saturday, February 1st, 12 pm
Join us as we march for unity, peace, and hope. We'll celebrate the power of our youth and elevate their voices. Let's make a difference and unite in love as we march through the streets of Cheshire.
Activities begin inside St. Peter's at 11 pm followed by the march at 1 pm.
After we march, please join us for lunch!
For more details, contact: Janet@Programs@ct.gov



YOU'RE INVITED TO A
**DISABILITY
EMPLOYMENT
AWARENESS MONTH**
MOVIE PRESENTATION



FILM ABOUT
DISABILITY RIGHTS
ADVOCACY
FOLLOWED BY A
DISCUSSION ABOUT
THE FIGHT FOR
DISABILITY RIGHTS
TODAY
10/23
11:30 - 1:30

What is the CHRO?



Part One: The Basics



Known throughout the state of Connecticut as the CHRO, the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities was first established in 1943. The agency's original mission was to "investigate the possibilities of affording equal opportunity of profitable employment to all persons."



Today, this mission has evolved to not only investigate the possibility, but *eliminate* discrimination and to *establish* equal opportunity and justice for all persons within the state.

The Commission has the power to receive and initiate discrimination complaints in employment, housing, issues of public accommodation, and credit transactions at no cost to the claimant.



Once filed, the CHRO can mediate, investigate, and conduct hearings on those complaints. In doing so, the agency can order discrimination remedied via reinstatement, monetary awards, anti-discrimination training, and/or other affirmative steps to compensate victims of discrimination.



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The agency not only enforces antidiscrimination law, but also uses **advocacy** and **outreach** to prevent discrimination from happening in the first place. Advocacy includes working with grassroots organizations to make progress at the local level as well as policy and legislative work to bring about statewide change.



In recent years, this included updating the statutory definition of sexual orientation, adding victims of domestic violence as a protected class basis, strengthening the state's laws prohibiting racial profiling by updating its definition, and more.



What is the CHRO?



Part Two: Who is Protected?

Protected Class Basis



The CHRO protects individuals against discrimination in employment, housing, places of public accommodation, and credit transactions.

Individuals are protected from discrimination in these areas based on their legally recognized protected class(es). **Protected classes** are typically based on a common trait or characteristic with a history of unequal treatment under the law.



Public Accommodation

A place of public accommodation is any establishment that caters or offers its services, facilities, or goods to the general public.

Examples include restaurants, hotels, theaters, stores, and schools.



State of Connecticut

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Ancestry
- Sex
- Gender
- Identity or Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Breastfeeding
- Status as a Veteran
- Religion/Creed
- Age
- Disability (Mental, Intellectual, Learning, and Physical)
- Marital Status
- Lawful Source of Income
- Service Animal Access
- Status as a Victim of Domestic Violence

Credit Transactions

You cannot be denied credit, such as a mortgage or other loan, because of your protected class.

State of Connecticut

- Marital Status
- National Origin
- Disability (Mental, Learning, Intellectual, and Physical)
- Religion/Creed
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Ancestry
- Blindness
- Color
- Race
- Sex
- Status as a Veteran
- Status as a Victim of Domestic Violence



Employment

The federal protections in place against discrimination in employment are enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the CHRO through dual-processing.

Federal & State of Connecticut

- Race
- Color
- Religion/Creed
- Sex (including Pregnancy, Sexual Orientation, & Gender Identity)
- National Origin
- Age (40 or older)
- Disability (Mental, Intellectual, Learning, and Physical)
- Genetic Information

Connecticut Only

- Age (no restriction)
- Ancestry
- Breastfeeding
- Prior Criminal Conviction
- Status as a Victim of Domestic Violence
- Status as a Veteran, and
- Marital Status



What is the CHRO?



Part Three: The Complaint Process



Complaints of discrimination **must be filed within 300 days** of the date of the alleged act of discrimination.



Once the **Complainant** receives **Respondent's "Answer"** (response to the Complaint), they **may** file a **"Response,"** (rebuttal) within **15 days**. *Note:* If the **Respondent** received an extension of time to answer the complaint, the **same 15-day extension** is available to the **Complainant** to submit a **Response**.

After the Complaint, Answer, and any subsequent documents are received by the Commission, they are sent to our Legal Department for **Case Assessment Review (CAR)**.

At CAR, the case will be assessed by a member of our Legal Department.

CAR?

Complaints are typically dismissed at CAR **if** the Commission **lacks jurisdiction** or if a review of the file shows **no reasonable possibility** that investigating would result in a finding of discrimination.





What is the CHRO?

Part Four: From Filing to CAR



Once the **Complainant provides** the Commission with a **completed, signed, and notarized** copy of their **Complaint and intake documents**, the Complaint is **processed and served** on the Respondent. The **Respondent** then has **30 days to respond** by filing an **"Answer,"** or request a 15-day extension of time to respond.

Within **10 days** of receipt of the Complaint, Respondents **may also request a Pre-Answer Conciliation**, which is a mediation between the parties conducted by the CHRO **prior to** Respondent submitting an **Answer**.



We recommend that you **bookmark/save this post** for later. Whether you're currently working with us, have a case with us, or may be subject to discrimination or a discrimination case in the future, knowing our process can **help you** navigate the claims important to you.



Next time, we'll dive into what **steps** to take when looking to **file a complaint** of discrimination with our agency.



After the **Complaint is signed, notarized and submitted** to one of our local offices, the Complaint and supporting documents are **served on the "Respondent"** (business, organization, or individual the Complaint is being filed against).

In **housing**, Complaints **do not have to be notarized** before filing and Respondents have **10 days** to respond with **one 15-day extension available**.

In **employment, credit transactions, and places of public accommodation involving state agencies**, the Respondent has **30 days** from the date of receipt of the Complaint to respond, with **one 15-day extension available by request.***

***Within 10 days** of receipt of the Complaint, Respondents **may also request a "Pre-Answer Conciliation,"** which is a mediation between the parties that is conducted by a CHRO Representative.

If mediation is **unsuccessful**, then the case **either** moves on to **investigation** or the parties **may request Early Legal Intervention (ELI)**. Investigation can include **witness interviews, document requests, interrogatories, and/or subpoenas**. Following a complete and thorough investigation, findings of fact will be issued that determine whether or not there is reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred in the present case.



During **ELI**, a member of our legal department will review the case and either:

- (1) send it directly to the **Office of Public Hearings;**
- (2) provide a **Release of Jurisdiction;**
- (3) recommend **further investigation;** or
- (4) recommend a finding of **No Reasonable Cause**. Such recommendation should be made within 90 days of the date of request.



On the other hand, **if** the investigator finds that there is **Reasonable Cause** to determine that discrimination has occurred in the case, then the case will go to **Post-Cause Conciliation**, a mediation session, facilitated by the investigator that issued the finding.



If the parties are **unable** to come to a settlement **agreement post-cause**, then the case is **certified** and sent **to the Office of Public Hearing (OPH** - the Commission's administrative tribunal), where a **Referee** (similar to an administrative law judge) will hear the case "de novo" (anew), then issue a **final decision**.



If retained at CAR, then the case is assigned to a CHRO employee for **Mandatory Mediation** within 60 days. **If** the parties come to an **agreement** as to how **to resolve** the case at mediation, then a **settlement agreement** is executed by the parties and the matter is **withdrawn** by the Complainant.



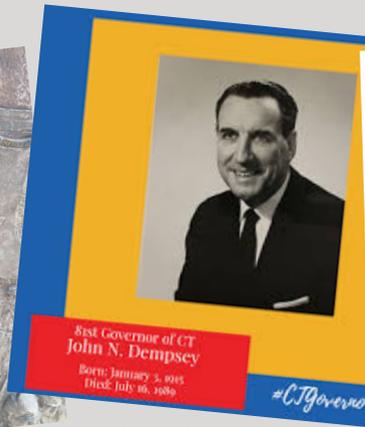
If, after an investigation, the investigator concludes that there is a **No Reasonable Cause** to believe that discrimination has occurred as alleged in the complaint, then the complaint is dismissed and the case is closed. **Within 15 days** of the date of receipt of the final finding and dismissal, the Complainant **may** make a **written request** that our Legal Department **reconsider the decision**.

Requests for Reconsideration must be submitted in writing by the Complainant and **state the specific reasons** why the reconsideration is being **requested**. The Commission's Legal Department will conduct a review, then grant or reject the request.

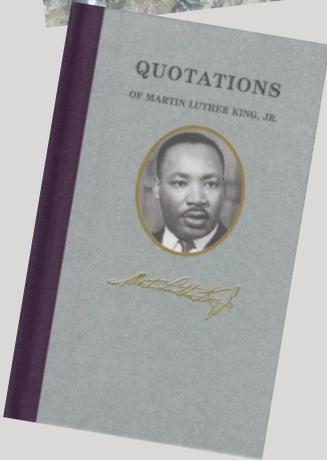
Note: Reconsideration is **not available** when a Release of Jurisdiction has been issued by the Commission.



The Museum will feature civil rights relics



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com
1871 Mark Twain Satirical Political Civil Rights Broadside



The museum will feature the social justice movement through the eyes of a child.



Latino Heritage Stamps



Social Justice Film Making



Where Art meets Civil Rights



Connecticut's Historical Figures



Black History Month

Hartford, CT Native

Thirman L. Milner
1933-2024

- First Black mayor of Hartford
- First Black mayor in New England

Served in the CT House of Representatives from 1987-1994
Namesake of the Thirman L. Milner Middle Grades Academy

While visiting students at the Hartford middle school named in his honor, "I talk to them and say if I can do it being raised in Hartford being raised basically in poverty, if I can do it, there's no reason why they can't... I just want them to know I was proud to be the Mayor of the City of Hartford and I pray I served well."

Black History Month

Contralto and Performer

Marian Anderson
1897 - 1993

- Sang at the presidential inaugurations of Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy, as well as the March on Washington
- Awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1962
- Resided at Marianna Farm in Danbury, CT for 52 years

"Sometimes racial prejudice is like a hair across your cheek. You can't see it, you can't find it with your fingers, but you keep brushing it because the feel of it is irritating."

How African Americans Persisted: Slavery and Freedom Stories of Resistance and Agency (1619 to 1819)

The first enslaved Africans were brought to the Jamestown Colony in 1619 one year prior to when the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.

In spite of enslavement, Black Americans such as Phillis Wheatley were able to find worldwide fame for their talents. Wheatley was kidnapped from her home in West Africa, learned to read and write while enslaved in Boston, and became the first published African American author. She was brought to London where her skill and knowledge

Black History Month

Connecticut Native

Constance Baker Motley
1921 - 2005

- First Black woman to argue at the U.S. Supreme Court
- First Black woman appointed to be a federal judge
- Worked with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund for 20 years, helping Thurgood Marshall during *Brown v. Board of Ed.*

"I was the kind of person who would not be put down. I rejected any notion that my race or sex would bar my success in life."

Black History Month

Politician and Civil Rights Activist

Carrie Saxon Perry
1931 - 2018

- In 1987 became the 63rd Mayor of Hartford, and the first African American woman in New England to be elected mayor
- Championed LGBT rights in Hartford, prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in Hartford schools, 5 years before legislation was adopted in Connecticut
- Became the Director of the NAACP Hartford Chapter in 2002

"The grass roots and the newcomers, the homeless and affluent... We are all irrevocably tied together. Our destinies are intertwined. We survive together, or we perish together."

Connecticut's Black Governors

Starting in the 1750s when wealthy white men traveled to Hartford to elect the colony's governor, the enslaved Black men accompanying them participated in a separate election for a leader of the Black community. In later years, elections were held locally in Derby, Durham, Farmington, Hartford, New Haven, New London, Norwich, and Seymour, and multiple Black

Black History Month

Enslaved People in Cheshire, CT

While New England had fewer enslaved people than the Southern Colonies, CT was not free from the unjust institution. Cheshire is beginning to reckon with that history.

Scroll through to learn more about one town's reckoning with its past

Black History Month

New Haven, CT Native

Edward Alexander Bouchet
1852-1918

- Bouchet's father was formerly enslaved and both his parents were active abolitionists
- First Black student to graduate from Yale University
- First African American to earn a PhD from an American university

"Optics is an example of the different ways a human is able to see things in the world. The same goes for the color of a person's skin and even though optics present that there are differences in color, these do not state that they should necessarily be treated as different."

Black History Month

Connecticut's Black Governors

For approximately a century from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s, Connecticut had what was known as Black governors.

Scroll through to learn more about this historical practice

Black History Month

As of 2025, Connecticut has yet to elect a Black person as governor of the state. In fact, there have only been three Black governors elected in the U.S. - Virginia's Douglas Wilder elected in 1989, Massachusetts' Deval Patrick elected in 2006, the Maryland's Wes Moore elected in

Douglas Wilder
Deval Patrick
Wes Moore

Black History Month

Inventor

Lewis Howard Latimer
1848 - 1928

- The only African American of Thomas Edison's engineering laboratory
- Drew the blueprint for the first patented telephone for Alexander Graham Bell
- Author of the first book on incandescent electric lighting
- Lived for a brief time in the "Little Liberia" neighborhood of Bridgeport, CT, where a statue now stands in his honor

"Tomorrow may be fair, however stormy the day of today"

BLACK HISTORY

BESSIE COLEMAN
First African American woman Pilot

If you believe you have been discriminated against in employment, housing, public accommodation, or credit because of your protected class, contact a regional office near you within 300 days of the discrimination or visit our website at www.portal.ct.gov/CHRO.

CHRO Regional Offices

Capitol Regional Office 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 2
Hartford, CT 06103
PHONE: (860) 566-7710
FAX: (860) 566-1997
TDD: (860) 566-7710

Eastern Regional Office 100 Broadway, 2nd Floor
Norwich, CT 06360
PHONE: (860) 886-5703
FAX: (860) 886-2550
TDD: (860) 886-5707

West Central Regional Office Rowland State Government Center
55 West Main Street, Suite 210
Waterbury, CT 06702
PHONE: (203) 805-6530
FAX: (203) 805-6559
TDD: (203) 805-6579

Southwest Regional Office 350 Fairfield Avenue, 6th Floor
Bridgeport, CT 06604
PHONE: (203) 579-6246
FAX: (203) 579-6950
TDD: (203) 579-6246



Civil Rights Unites



Phone Number

860-541-3400



Website

ct.gov/CHRO