

Dutchess County  
Commission on  
Human Rights



2018/2019 Annual Report

Commission on Human Rights  
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[www.dutchessny.gov/humanrights](http://www.dutchessny.gov/humanrights)

[www.facebook.com/DutchessCountyCommissionOnHumanRights/](http://www.facebook.com/DutchessCountyCommissionOnHumanRights/)



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# 2018/2019 Annual Report

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# Members of the Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights

*Jody Miller*

Chair

*Jen Drake*

*Bailey Williams*

*Shirley Adams*

*Seema Rizvi*

*Michele Bertran\**

*Freddimir Garcia*

*Lance Ringel*

*Onaje Benjamin\**

*Victoria Anderson*

*Jen Herman\**

*Linda Balloqui-Smith\**

*Daniel Goldhagen*

*Chris St. Germain*

*Kathryn Sajdak\**

*Bailey Williams*

*Doris Diaz-Kelly*

\*Denotes prior  
members



**COUNTY OF DUTCHESS**  
**MARCUS J. MOLINARO**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Dear friends,

I was proud to work with the County Legislature in re-establishing the Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights in 2016. The Commission's work over the past four years has served as a reaffirmation of a simple but profound proposition: that every person in this county deserves to be acknowledged, heard, and treated with dignity and respect.

Dutchess County is stronger because of our diversity, which enriches the tapestry of our community. In this county all voices and diverse opinions need to be heard. We have a responsibility to one another to learn, to listen, and to work in collaborative ways that are respectful and honest, and allow for our community to pull each other up, not push each other down.

Building on the Commission's successes over the past few years, we have continued to increase productive intergroup dialogues throughout the region, and have facilitated actions to address some of the disparities and challenges that our residents face. The Commission has worked incredibly hard to foster mutual respect and understanding among all people in Dutchess County, while continuing to dissolve those barriers.

We know that we will be tested again in the future, but the progress that we make today regarding human rights will only make us stronger for what we face tomorrow and beyond. I am grateful to the volunteer members of the Commission for their dedication and commitment to defending human rights, bridging differences, and embracing diversity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcus J. Molinaro".

Marcus J. Molinaro  
Dutchess County Executive





COUNTY OF DUTCHESS  
STATE OF NEW YORK

A. GREGG PULVER  
CHAIRMAN OF THE LEGISLATURE

I am pleased to voice my support of the Commission on Human Rights and highlight my own experience with their important work this past year. Thankfully, the Commission was re-established due to their vital work on behalf of the residents of Dutchess County.

Dutchess County has a diverse population. Some of our families have lived here since the early 1700s, like my own, and others have more recently immigrated to work in our high-tech sector. I am proud that the leadership in Dutchess does not subscribe to the belief that divisive and inflammatory rhetoric is an effective way to operate a government.

In January, the Legislature participated in the *100 Cups of Coffee Transformative Dialogue Project*. It brought legislators together to share their personal experiences, successes, and failures with their colleagues. With seven new members this year, it is necessary for us know each other on a personal level- seeing each of our colleagues as merely a member of our party or the opposite party doesn't cut it. In the time since the event, I have seen legislators personal and professional relationships develop and it is thanks to a cup of coffee and a conversation.

I believe the work that the Commission is undertaking is making a visible and positive impact on Dutchess County residents. And I would like to thank Jody Miller and the fourteen members of the Commission for their dedication and hard work to further this noble mission.

Sincerely,

Chairman Gregg Pulver





COUNTY OF DUTCHESS  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Defending Human Rights. Bridging Differences. Embracing Diversity. Since its re-establishment, the Commission on Human Rights has vigorously carried out its mission. Whether through dialogue where the breadth of religious diversity in Dutchess County is valued as one of our strengths; recognition of the inherent human rights of all human beings through celebrating International Human Rights Day and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); facilitating meetings with elected officials, law enforcement and immigrant community leaders to discuss policy, procedures and practices; documenting hate speech, incidents and crimes and consulting with individuals and communities about best practices to respond, the Commission provides a unique approach to addressing human rights issues that affect people every day. As we look to 2020, our goals include supporting and empowering communities to address emerging issues, bridging and connecting people and communities to resources and best practices, and providing thought leadership on human rights issues by naming them, modeling and educating others. We look forward to engaging with communities throughout the county as we work together to realize a community where everyone is safe, valued and respected.

Warmly,

Jody

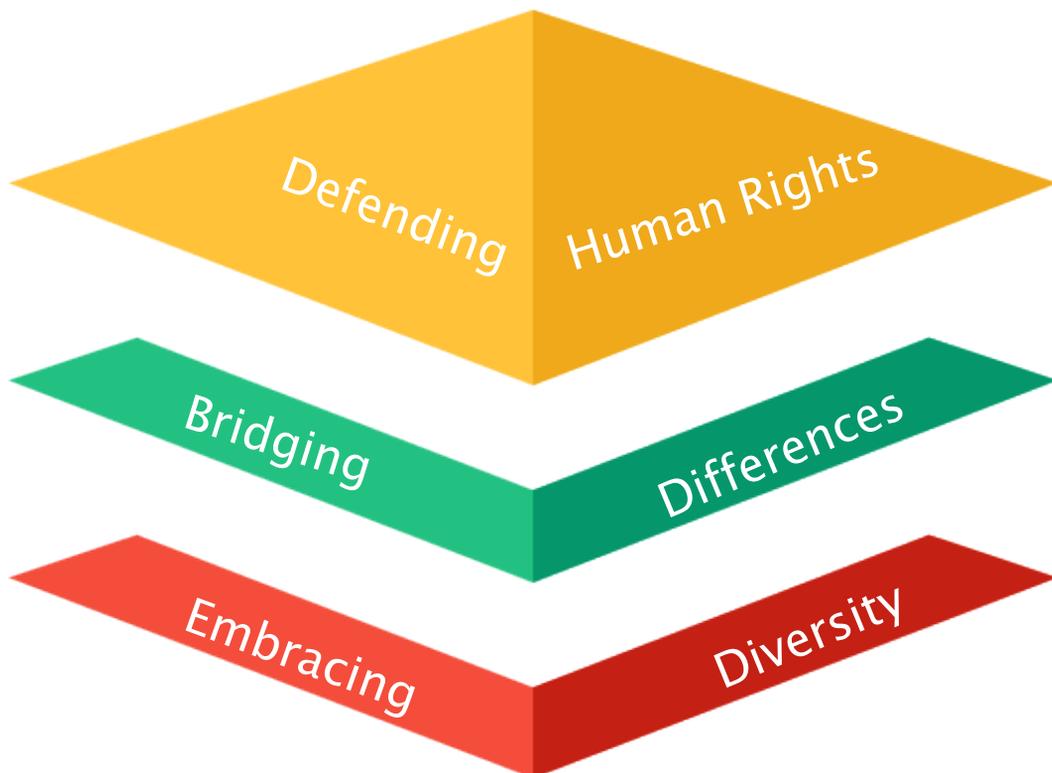


# History of the Commission

The Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights was re-established in 2016. Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro stated “Our goal is to always be responsive to our community, providing opportunities for people to have their voices heard, facilitate change where needed and help move our county forward with broader opportunities for all.” In line with this goal, County Executive Molinaro re-established The Commission and appointed Jody Miller as the County’s new Human Rights/Equal Employment Opportunity (HR/EEO) Officer. The original Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights was created in 1984 by the Dutchess County Legislature and authorized by then County Executive Lucille Pattison. The Commission has served in an inquiry/advisory/outreach role and is charged with the responsibility of addressing discriminatory practices, attempting to resolve the practices and serve as an efficient referral of complaint materials to the New York State Division of Human Rights (White Plains Office) in the event a resolution cannot be reached. The Commission fosters mutual respect and serves as a resource for the community to identify discrimination, address the issue, and work with those involved to stop the behavior.

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## Our Mission



## Our Work

The Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights, in line with its mission and commitment, has actively engaged in the Dutchess County community. Through a number of tabling events, transformative conversations, facilitator trainings, community collaboration, participatory events, and responding to concerns and collecting data, the Commission has connected with the Dutchess County community and has become established as a local resource.

## Our Commitment

Dutchess County is committed to ensuring our community is inclusive and respectful for all, with the human rights of every individual protected and championed.



*“I got information about services that I didn’t know existed.”*

“It felt amazing to be in a room with so many different people and different experiences...all working together towards bettering our community.”

## Our Purpose

The purpose of the Commission on Human Rights is to enhance the quality of life in Dutchess County by:

- ▶ Fostering mutual respect and understanding among all groups
- ▶ Inquiring into incidents of tension and conflict among or between various groups including but not limited to racial, religious, national disability, and LGBT groups and to take such possible actions as may be designed to alleviate such tensions and conflict
- ▶ Reporting complaints of alleged discrimination because of age, religion or religious practice, race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, domestic violence victim status, status, disability, military status, arrest record, conviction record, predisposing genetic characteristics, familial status (housing only), and domestic worker status (employment only) to the New York State Division of Human Rights
- ▶ Conducting and recommending such educational programs as, in the judgment of the Commission, will increase goodwill among people of the county and open new opportunities into all phases of community life for all
- ▶ Making such studies in any field of human relationship in the county as in the judgment of the Commission will aid in effectuating its general purposes



“I’m so glad I got to the right person. Thank you for your help.”

# 100 Cups of Coffee

A Transformative Dialogue Project

100 Cups of Coffee is the Commission’s Transformative Dialogue pilot project in the City of Poughkeepsie. Its primary goal is to help improve community relations in the city by providing spaces for disparate people to come together to talk about the matters of concern to them in their neighborhoods. Participants include ordinary citizens, community leaders from civic and faith organizations, police, and local leaders.

In 2018-2019, the Commission facilitated 15 different 100 Cups of Coffee sessions.

## 2018-2019, 100 Cups of Coffee Topics and Hosts

**Let There Be Light: Porch Lights in Poughkeepsie**, about how the simple act of turning on one’s porch light can help people feel welcomed and safer;

**I Stand By You-Northside Unification...Dream It...Believe It...Achieve It**, hosted by Poughkeepsie Mayor Rob Rolison, Councilmember Yvonne Flowers and Warring Elementary School Principal Jason Gerard, at which L’Quette Taylor and Chris Grant, CommunityMatters2, announced they were spearheading a community clean-up to help teach youth to have pride in their neighborhood;

**What Do You Know: Discovering Poughkeepsie’s Parks and A Talk in the Park** in Earline Patrice Park;

**Common Ground**, hosted by Scenic Hudson and Mass Design Group, about creating safety and inclusion for all communities using public spaces in Poughkeepsie;

**Religious Diversity & Compassion: Strengthening Inclusiveness**, hosted in Fishkill by Dr. Seema Rizvi, CHR member and member of the Mid Hudson Islamic Association;

**Taconic Resources for Independence**, hosted by the independent living organization, which addresses the concerns of people with disabilities

**Dutchess County Legislature**, at which 16 of the Legislature’s 25 members attended a session hosted in the Legislative Chambers by the Legislature Chairman at the suggestion of the County Executive.



“Just knowing that you were there to help with this made me feel safer.”

## Listening Sessions

Over the course of the 2018-2019, the Commission rounded out our series of listening sessions by visiting three locations in the Eastern part of the county. Listening sessions are opportunities for community members to meet with members of the Commission on Human Rights and discuss the issues that concern them most in their community. Our first session, held in Millbrook, was planned in partnership with the Lyall Memorial Federated Church in response to an incident where rainbow Pride flags were torn down throughout the village's business district. Residents and business owners came together to talk about ways to build a more inclusive community and to send a clear message that hate will not be tolerated. In Armenia, residents came together at Temple Beth David in the wake of a shooting at a synagogue in Philadelphia to talk about the ways that antisemitism and similar types of intolerance - including bullying in schools - creates fear and damages communities. Finally, our conversation with a group of senior citizens at the Pawling Resource Center focused on the ways in which lack of affordable housing and public transportation can limit people's ability to stay in their communities as they age. Commissioner members made a number of direct connections between people and resources as part of these sessions, and the information gleaned is already informing our work going forward.



## Transformative Dialogue Training

In 2017, The Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights, in collaboration with Northern Dutchess NAACP and the Dutchess County Interfaith Council, offered two 2-day trainings on Transformative Dialogue facilitation. The training was made available to members of the Dutchess County community free of charge. This training, which more than 30 community members participated in, developed facilitation skills so that individuals could assist with the 100 Cups of Coffee Transformative Dialogue Project. Participants learned how to facilitate meetings, how to better understand their own and others' responses to conflict and difficult interaction, how to listen to concerns from others, and how to increase their ability to support positive and connecting interactions among those with different perspectives. This successful certificate program is planned to be offered again in the future.

*“I was impressed by the deep and genuine sentiment expressed by those present to be part of something that can improve the City of Poughkeepsie and the County more generally.”*

## International Human Rights Day

▶ International Human Rights Day commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948. The UDHR was championed by Dutchess County’s own Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired the UN committee charged with drafting the document. The Declaration, unprecedented at the time of its adoption, propounds the basic tenets of freedom and democracy as a guide for people and governments.

▶ The Hudson Valley celebration of Human Rights Day, “Small Places Close to Home,” has sought to connect the UDHR to its Hudson Valley roots, and to address local issues and solutions. Observed annually for most of the past decade, the event has been a joint effort involving the United Nations Association of the Mid-Hudson Valley through Oakwood Friends School, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, and the Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights. An idea that originated with the Commission – to involve young people from the community in creating artwork publicizing International Human Rights Day – became an integral part of the celebration through a collaborative process with The Art Effect.

▶ The 2018 event, held on December 7 at the FDR Library’s Henry A. Wallace Center in Hyde Park, took place in conjunction with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly’s adoption of the UDHR. As with similar celebrations of Human Rights Day in previous years, the 2018 event sparked spirited discussion and creative brainstorming about the application of the Declaration’s principles to local issues and solutions.

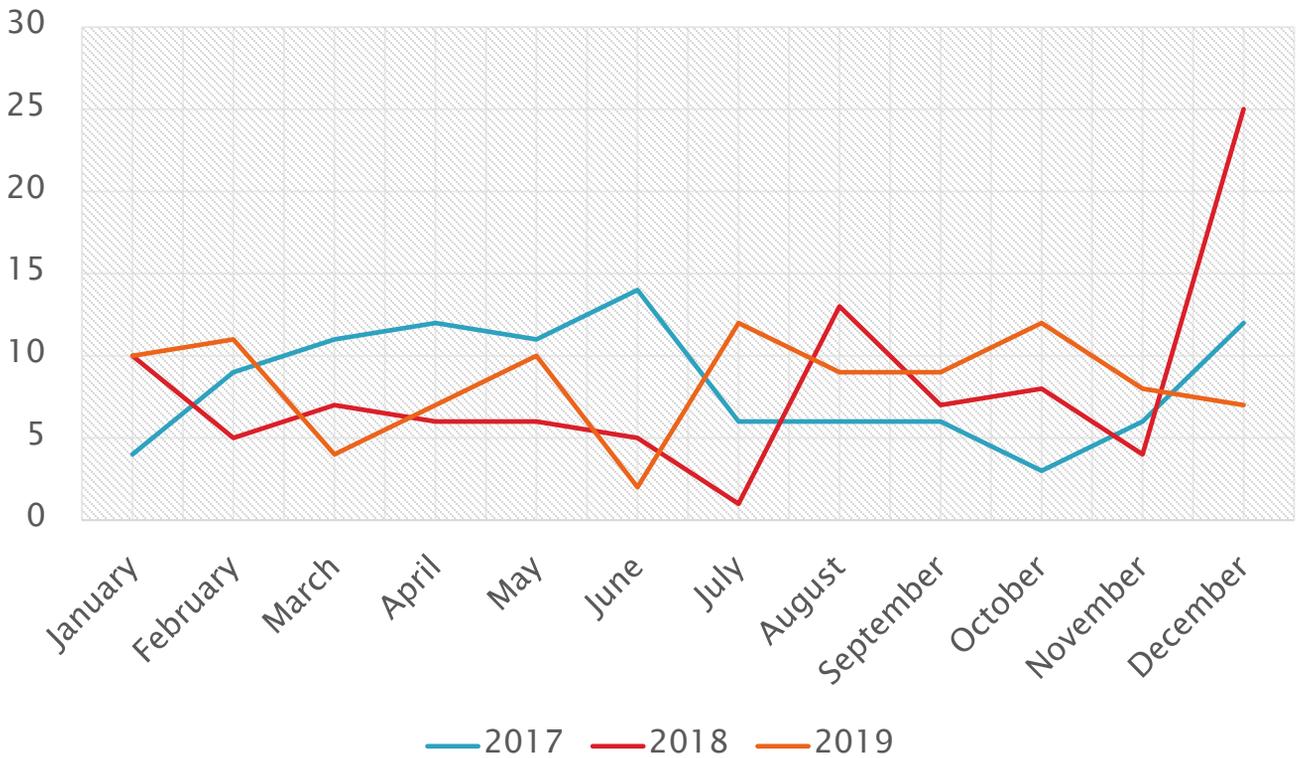


▶ The gathering brought together more than 200 people – the largest attendance ever, including community activists, government officials, neighbors, friends and, in significant numbers, middle school and high school student. The focus was on the enduring impact and relevance of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s famous “Four Freedoms” – Freedom of Expression, Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want, and Freedom of Worship. Among the speakers were Marc Molinaro, Dutchess County Executive; Kathy Hochul, Lieutenant Governor of New York; and Jody Miller, Chair of the Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights.

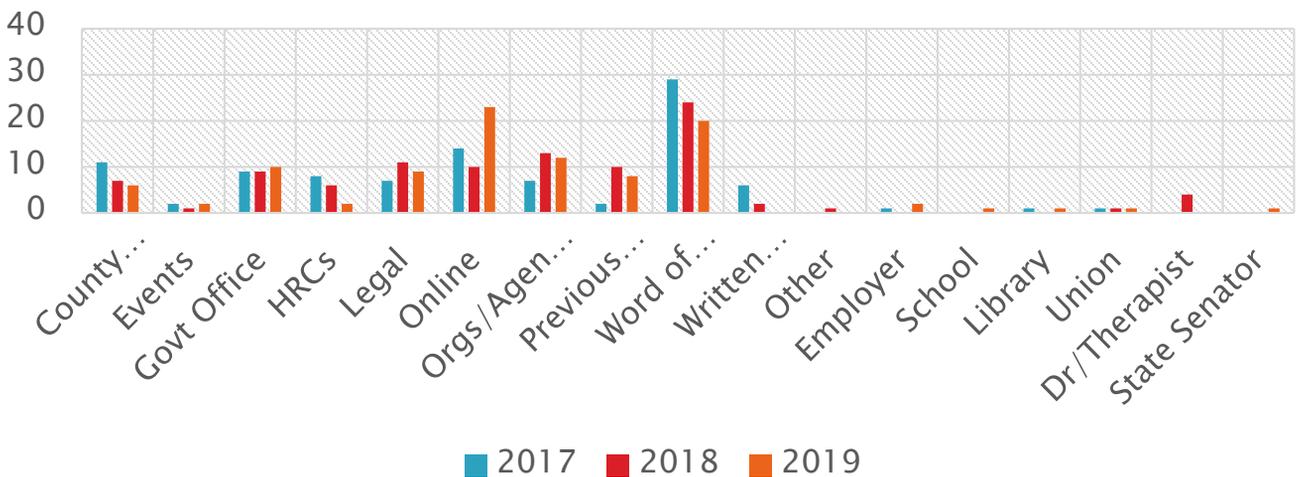
# Responding to Community Concerns

- The Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights is responsible for receiving complaints regarding alleged discrimination. It is then the responsibility of the Commission to provide resources, information, and support to those making complaints. When appropriate, individuals are aided in sending official complaints to the New York State Department of Human Rights for further investigation and support.

## Monthly Contacts

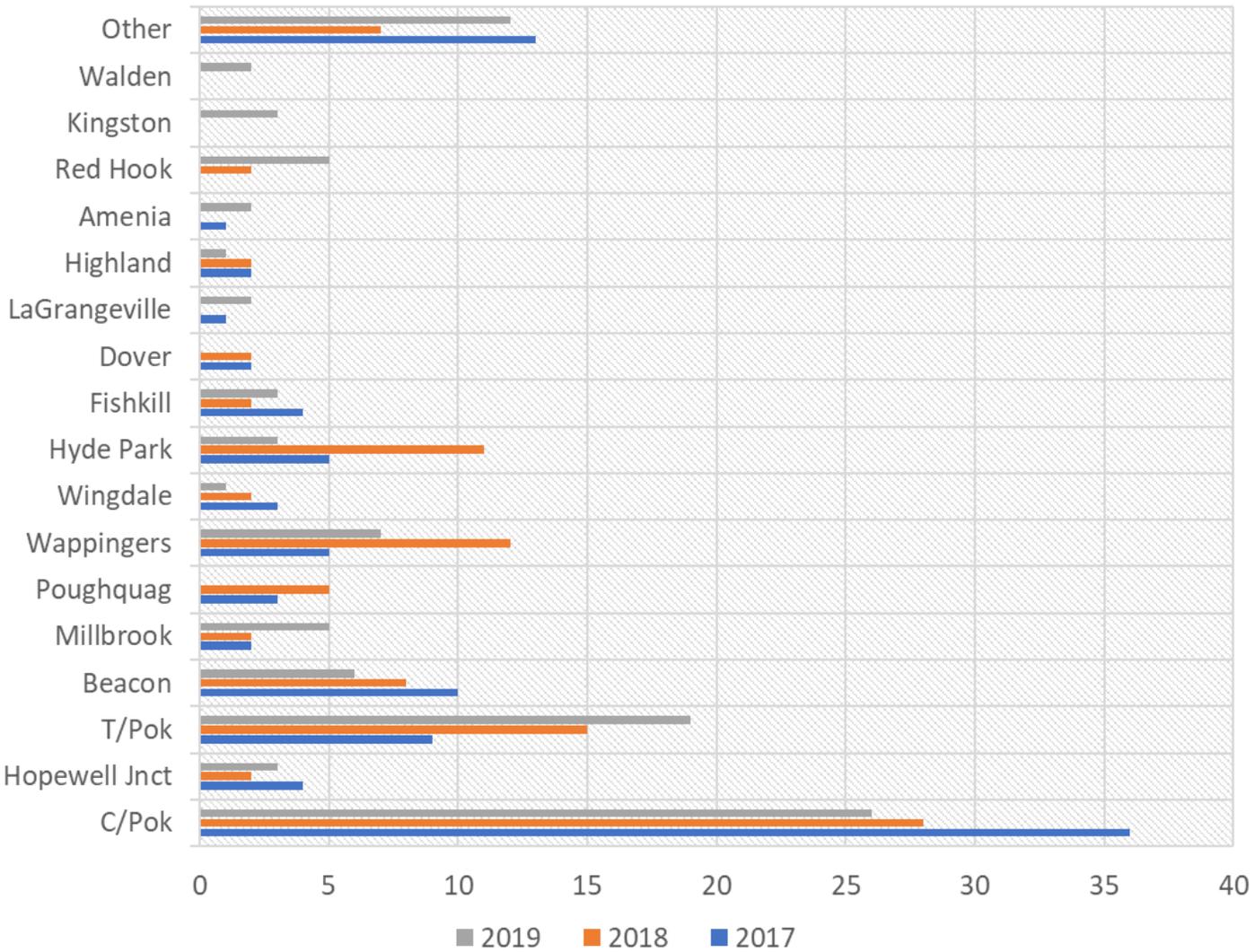


## Referral Sources



# Statistics, Locations

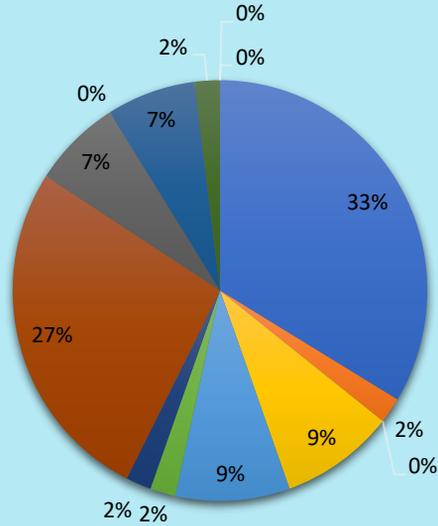
## Reports Per Area



# Statistics, Content of Complaints

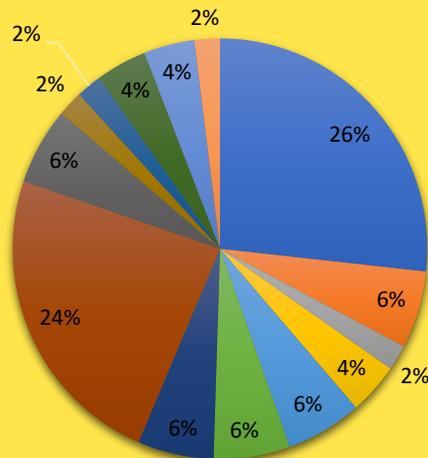
## DHR Basis 2018

- Disability
- Religion
- Sexual Harassment
- Age
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Retaliation
- Race/Color
- National Origin
- Pregnancy
- Conviction Record
- Housing Type
- Gender Identity
- Source of Income



## DHR Basis 2019

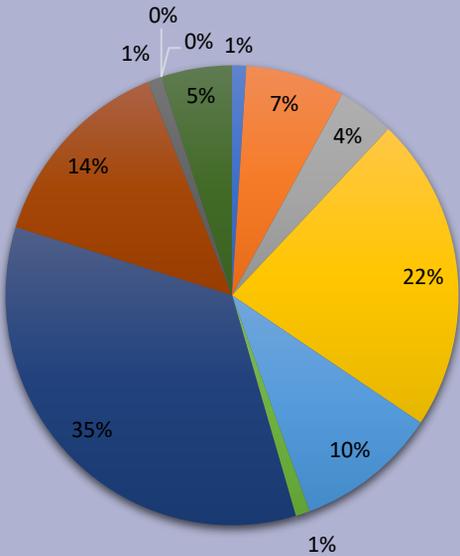
- Disability
- Religion
- Sexual Harassment
- Age
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Retaliation
- Race/Color
- National Origin
- Pregnancy
- Conviction Record
- Housing Type
- Gender Identity
- Source of Income



# Statistics, Actions Taken

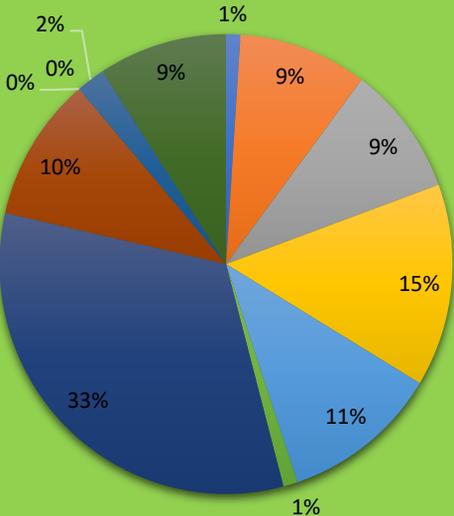
## Actions Taken 2018

- School Resources
- Facilitated Mtg
- Refer Gov't Office
- Info/Coaching
- Legal
- Mediation
- NY Human Rights
- Orgs/Agencies
- Police
- Intervention Refused
- NYS Health Dpt
- Left Message



## Actions Taken 2019

- School Resources
- Facilitated Mtg
- Refer Gov't Office
- Info/Coaching
- Legal
- Mediation
- NY Human Rights
- Orgs/Agencies
- Police
- Intervention Refused
- NYS Health Dpt
- Left Message



# Biased Incidents Reported in Dutchess County 2018-2019



*"This presentation has really given me ideas about things that I can do."*

*"I can speak up more often."*

# Hate. Do More Than Nothing.

In August 2016, the Commission received a call to report an anti-Semitic flyer that was posted in Northeastern Dutchess County. The caller said where the flyer had been found, that they had taken it down, and was very concerned because in addition to a sign of hate, there was a synagogue nearby. They took a photo of the flyer and e-mailed it to us. Over the next few weeks, the Commission received two more calls and photos of two different flyers. Two of the three flyers blamed Israel for 9/11, a conspiracy theory that has been discredited.

Soon after, the Commission received a call from a college administrator who had a frightened student in their office. The student had overheard a person who provided their off-campus housing angrily talking about letting Muslims into the country. Soon after, the person threatened the student and they did not feel safe to return, ultimately finding new housing.

Two years later, in August 2018, the Millerton News reported on the destruction of LGBTQIA Pride flags hung by businesses in Millbrook. The New York State Hate Crimes Taskforce investigated the case.

These are just three examples of the more than 45 reports of hate speech, incidents and crimes received by the Commission since it was re-established in 2016. They include those that are xenophobic, racist, homophobic, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitic incidents accounted for more than 50% of those reported.

Hate against an individual creates fear for those who share the same identity and can affect an entire community to which the individual belongs. When people are afraid, they are less likely to participate in community and civic life.

Reporting and documenting hate is critical to identifying patterns and creating effective responses. The Commission on Human Rights has been speaking out about hate and its impact, amplifying the need to report incidents to the Commission and consulting with local communities about ways to respond. Two suggested responses include:

- Taking collective action: creating a visible, collective community response that sends the message that hate isn't welcome. Without that, silence, signals apathy and hate grows ([SPLC-Southern Poverty Law Center](#)).
- Engaging elected officials to speak out: when elected officials name the problem and speak out against hate, a clear message is sent about what's acceptable and what's not. (Eric Ward, [Never is Now Conference, ADL - Anti-Defamation League](#)).

A united community against hate makes a difference. The Dutchess County Commission on Human Rights is a resource. Contact us to report hate speech, incidents or crimes, as well as to discuss ways to respond at [dchumanrights@dutchessny.gov](mailto:dchumanrights@dutchessny.gov) or 845-486-2165.

# Local Resources \*

Catholic Charities Community Services of Dutchess  
Dutchess County Catholic Charities  
[www.catholiccharities-dutchesscounty.org](http://www.catholiccharities-dutchesscounty.org)  
845-452-1400

Center for Child Abuse Prevention  
[www.thecpca.org](http://www.thecpca.org)  
845-454-0595

1-800-342-3720 Child Abuse Central Registry

Center for Victim Safety and Support - Family Services  
[www.familyservicesny.org](http://www.familyservicesny.org)  
845-485-5550 24 hr. hotline – domestic violence  
845-452-7272 – 24 hr. hotline – rape crisis & victim  
services

Dutchess County Helpline  
845-485-9700 call or text 1-877-485-9700

Dutchess County Interfaith Council  
[www.dutchesscountyinterfaith.org](http://www.dutchesscountyinterfaith.org)  
845-471-7333

Dutchess County Veteran's Services  
[www.dutchessny.gov](http://www.dutchessny.gov)  
845-486-2060

Dutchess Outreach  
[www.dutchessoutreach.org](http://www.dutchessoutreach.org)  
845-454-3792

Grace Smith House  
[www.gracesmithhouse.org](http://www.gracesmithhouse.org)  
845-471-3033 24 hr. hotline

Hudson River Housing  
[www.hudsonriverhousing.org](http://www.hudsonriverhousing.org)  
845-454-5176

Think Differently  
[www.thinkdifferently.net](http://www.thinkdifferently.net)

Hudson Valley House of Hope  
[www.hudsonvalleyhouseofhope.org](http://www.hudsonvalleyhouseofhope.org)  
845-765-0294 24 hr. hotline

Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center  
[www.lgbtqcenter.org](http://www.lgbtqcenter.org)  
845-331-5300

Family Services Inc  
[www.familyservicesny.org](http://www.familyservicesny.org)  
845-452-1110

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley  
[www.LSHV.org](http://www.LSHV.org)  
1-877-574-8529

Mediation Center of Dutchess County  
[www.dutchessmediation.org](http://www.dutchessmediation.org)  
845-471-7213

Mental Health America-Dutchess County  
[www.mhadutchess.org](http://www.mhadutchess.org)

Northern Dutchess NAACP 845-471-4421

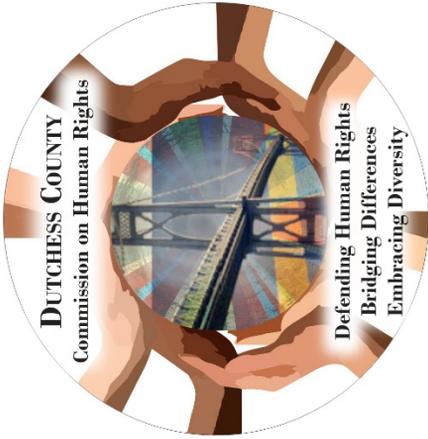
Southern Dutchess NAACP 845-235-3560

Taconic Resources for Independence  
[www.taconicresources.org](http://www.taconicresources.org)  
845-452-3913 (voice) 845-345-8416 (VP)

Worker Justice Center  
[www.wjcny.org](http://www.wjcny.org)  
845-331-4615

Dutchess County Stabilization Center  
230 North Rd., Poughkeepsie, NY  
845-485-9700

Dutchess Pride Center  
[www.Dutchesspridecenter.org](http://www.Dutchesspridecenter.org)  
845-380-6549



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