

2024 Annual Human Rights Office Report

Date: October 8, 2025
To: General Government Committee
From: Chief People Officer
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on human rights inquiries and complaints involving the City of Toronto in 2024. It includes data, trends, and information related to the work of the City's Human Rights Office (HRO) as well as external legal processes. The report also identifies key initiatives and policy development undertaken by the HRO aimed at preventing human rights violations while promoting equity and inclusion.

In 2024, the HRO received 1,574 inquiries, marking a 32 per cent increase in a single year. Since 2019, inquiries to the HRO have grown by 89 per cent, reflecting a sharp rise in demand for services by City employees and the public. During this time, complaint-related inquiries have also increased by 32 per cent. In 2024, the HRO operated with eight staff performing case management work and resumed conducting its own investigative services, while continuing to support investigations carried out by Divisions and piloting new approaches to enhance service delivery. Although demand for services continues to increase, the HRO remains committed to ensuring service excellence and upholding the integrity of the complaints process. Accordingly, there was no backlog in the provision of the HRO's services, and each inquiry was responded to in line with service standards.

Incidences of workplace harassment and incivility continue to rise, and the HRO has seen a marked increase in inquiries citing race and related grounds, as well as creed and disability. These trends may reflect broader global dynamics, including international conflicts and social movements, which impact both residents and employees. The consistently growing demand for HRO services underscores its critical role in supporting City of Toronto workplaces, services, and facilities to be free from harassment and discrimination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief People Officer recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the amended Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy contained in Attachment 2.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

EQUITY IMPACT

This report has been analyzed for potential impacts on Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities who use City run-services, facilities, and workplaces. The report reflects on the City's human rights policies and their interplay with the City's Equity and Reconciliation Strategies and Plans. The human rights program outlined in this report is but one reflection of the City's commitment to equity, reconciliation, and inclusion in service delivery and employment practices. A strong foundation in human rights is fundamental to the City's efforts to address racism and enhance justice outlined in its Reconciliation Action Plan and Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

Complaint processes are often the last resort and the HRO acknowledges the intersectional experiences of oppression may create additional barriers for many accessing redress. The HRO continues to proactively work with Divisions to review their processes and practices – both complaints-related and otherwise – to enhance inclusion and prevent the harms of discrimination prior to a complaint being made. The HRO seeks to improve the experiences of individuals who do come forward with their concerns to address imbalances in power. A new resource on Anti-Oppression and Trauma-Informed interviewing has been developed to support investigators and improve the experience of those who come forward.

At the same time, the volume of inquiries and complaints to the HRO suggest that equity-deserving groups continue to face challenges during their interactions with the City, underscoring the importance of continued proactive efforts by the HRO and City more broadly. In particular, the HRO has seen a pronounced increase in inquiries related to race and related grounds, to which the City must be responsive. As demand for the HRO's services continues to increase, the HRO remains committed to maintaining service excellence and enhancing capacity to engage in proactive and preventative work. The HRO continues to facilitate appropriate complaint resolutions

and provides guidance to the organization to respond to complaints in accordance with the City's human rights policies and legislative obligations while working to support the City's capacity to embed equity, inclusion, and reconciliation.

DECISION HISTORY

June 23 and 24, 2008 City Council adopted the amended Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy, which requires the HRO to submit an annual report to City Council about statistics and trends in human rights complaints and other initiatives: [Agenda Item History - 2008.EX21.18.](#)

COMMENTS

Background

The Human Rights Office (HRO) is a confidential and neutral office that helps the City meet its legal obligations to maintain workplaces, services and facilities free from harassment and discrimination. These requirements stem from the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code), the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). The HRO supports three key City policies: the [Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy \(HRAP\)](#), the [Accommodation Policy](#), and the [Hate Activity Policy](#).

The HRO provides neutral and independent services on human rights related issues (harassment, discrimination, accommodation, hate activity) through its various functions:

- Advisory and consultative services
- Complaint early resolution services
- Division-led and External investigations support
- Conducting HRO-led investigations
- Policy, training, and program review and development

The HRO provides advice and complaint resolution services to:

- Residents who use City services, facilities, and accommodations;
- Job applicants;
- Individuals contracting with the City;
- Employees of the Toronto Public Service;
- City of Toronto management;
- Councillor Offices;
- Accountability Offices; and
- The Association of Community Centres (AOCCs).

This report includes data from 2024 and compares it with data reported between 2022-2023 to reflect trends. This report also summarizes changes made to the HRAP to align with legislative changes to OHSA and provides information on the proactive work undertaken by the HRO.

The following is a summary of notable trends in the 2024 data:

Inquiries

- A 32 per cent increase in inquiries to the HRO:¹ 1,574 inquiries compared to 1,190 in 2023, reflecting growing demand for the HRO's services.
- Complaint-related inquiries remain elevated; at 965, they constitute 61 per cent of the HRO's work and have increased by 32 per cent in one year.
- The HRO has received 24 per cent more accommodation-related inquiries in 2024 (437) compared to 2023 (353).²

Grounds Cited in Inquiries¹

- Race and related grounds saw significant increases between 2023 and 2024, which may reflect the local impact of global conflict, sociopolitical tensions, and increased awareness. Specifically:
 - Ancestry: a 281 per cent increase (from 27 to 103)
 - Place of origin: a 184 per cent increase (from 32 to 91)
 - Ethnic origin: a 112 per cent increase, (from 66 to 140)
 - Colour: an 81 per cent increase (from 54 to 98)
 - Race: a 55 per cent increase (from 117 to 181)
- Incivility-related inquiries rose by 140 per cent (from 48 to 115), indicating persistent challenges in maintaining respectful environments and increasing interpersonal conflicts, particularly in the workplace.
- Inquiries citing creed (e.g., religion) have increased by 66 per cent since 2023 (from 86 to 143).
- Sexual harassment inquiries have remained high but stable (93 in 2023 compared to 99 in 2024).

Accommodation Related Trends

- Disability-related accommodation inquiries have risen by 50 per cent (123 to 185) and disability is now the most frequently cited accommodation ground.
- Accommodation inquiries citing family status increased by 14 per cent and creed by 21 per cent since 2023.

¹ Interactions with the HRO are called "inquiries," and various data are recorded for each inquiry, including "grounds," which capture prohibited grounds defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and/or additional grounds as outlined in the HRAP.

² Accommodations relate to the obligation of the City of Toronto as an employer, facility and service provider to take steps to eliminate the disadvantage caused by systemic, attitudinal, or physical barriers that exclude groups protected under the Code from participating in all aspects of employment, use of facilities and service provision.

Legal/External Avenues of Complaint

- The City's Legal Services Division reported 48 Applications to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO), unchanged from 2023.
- Harassment and discrimination grievances decreased by 22 per cent (from 108 to 84).

Corporate Training Activities

- In 2024, 5,516 active Toronto Public Service employees completed mandatory training on Human Rights: to date, 90 per cent of eligible employees have completed this training.
- In 2024, 464 managers completed Virtual Instructor-Led Training in Accommodations Essentials for Management and 1,221 employees completed Human Rights Essentials for Management.
- HRO also provided specialized training to select divisions and employee networks on request.

Human Rights Office Structure

In 2024, the HRO complement included nine full-time positions: one Senior Manager, one Manager, two Senior Human Rights Consultants, three Human Rights Consultants, one Complaints and Research Analyst, and one Clerk.

The HRO forms part of the People & Equity Division reporting directly to the Chief People Officer.

Inquiries to the Human Rights Office

Individual contacts to the HRO are called "inquiries." In 2024, inquiries to the HRO rose overall by 32 per cent, in addition to the 43 per cent increase in inquiries between 2019 and 2023. Since 2019, inquiries to the HRO have nearly doubled (89 per cent increase from 833 to 1,574). The 1,574 inquiries represent new matters brought to the HRO and do not account for any carryover work from the prior year.

The demand for the HRO's advisory, complaint resolution, and proactive support services continues to grow significantly. City Divisions and stakeholders increasingly seek guidance to align their programs and services with commitments to enhancing equity, inclusion and reconciliation. At the same time, employees and residents continue to encounter human rights-related challenges.

This continued rise in demand may be influenced by global polarization, conflict, as well as the deterioration of equity and human rights protections internationally. As a diverse city, the trends experienced in Toronto often reflect global dynamics. Increased public awareness, driven by social movements and threats to human rights, also contribute to higher engagement with the HRO, as individuals seek information and support.

While the HRO continues to address the increase in demands for its services there was no backlog in the provision of the HRO’s services and the HRO was able to respond to each inquiry received in line with service standards.

Table 1: Total internal and external inquiries from 2022 to 2024

	2022	2023	2024
Internal	907	833	1050
External	387	357	524
Total	1294	1190	1574

Issue Types

The HRO provides a wide range of services and support to City staff and residents who contact the HRO. Such an inquiry is further categorized by “issue type(s)”, which broadly fall under six categories:³

- Complaint-related
- Accommodation
- Policy information
- Equity and Human Rights (EHR) initiatives
- Training review and development
- Referrals/Other

The composition of inquiries has remained stable between 2023 and 2024. Complaint-related inquiries were the most common and accounted for 61 per cent of all inquiries, (i.e., 965 of the total 1,574 inquiries were related to complaints), a proportion unchanged from 2023, though volume increased by 32 per cent.

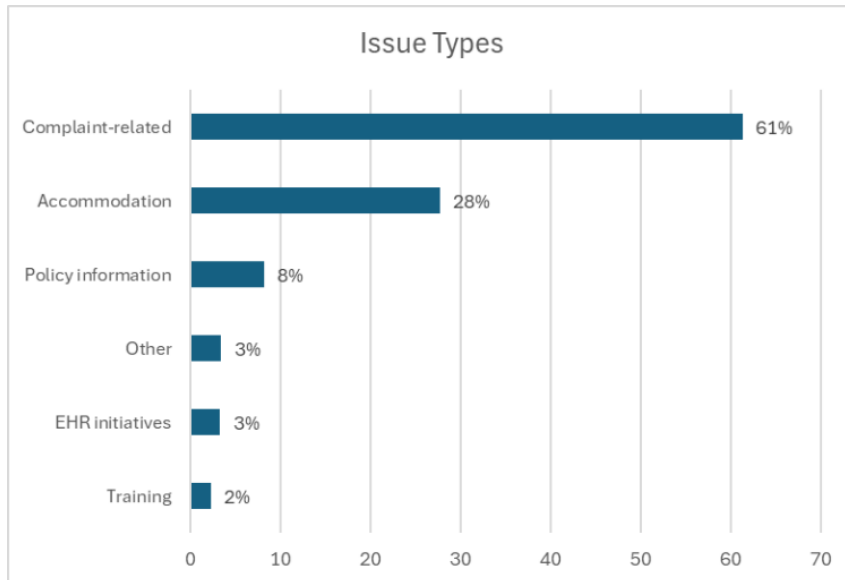
Accommodation-related inquiries made up 28 per cent of inquiries and reflected a 24 per cent increase in volume compared to 2023.

While smaller in proportion, the HRO supported a growing number of Equity & Human Rights (EHR) initiatives, which typically include projects or program support to enhance equity and inclusion (increasing from 1 per cent to 3 per cent of total inquiries) and provided additional support on policy information-related inquiries (from 5 per cent to 8 per cent).

It is important to note that these figures reflect the number of files opened, not the scope or complexity of the work involved in each file or initiative.

³ Issue types are not mutually exclusive; that is, multiple issue types may be cited in a single inquiry, as applicable.

Figure 1: Issue types across inquiries, 2024



Complaint avenues for employees and service/facility users:

Individuals can seek to resolve a complaint of harassment or discrimination through various avenues as outlined in the Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy's Complaint Procedures. Pursuing an internal option does not prohibit an individual from initiating an external process, but doing so may impact the jurisdiction of the HRO to intervene.

Internal options include:

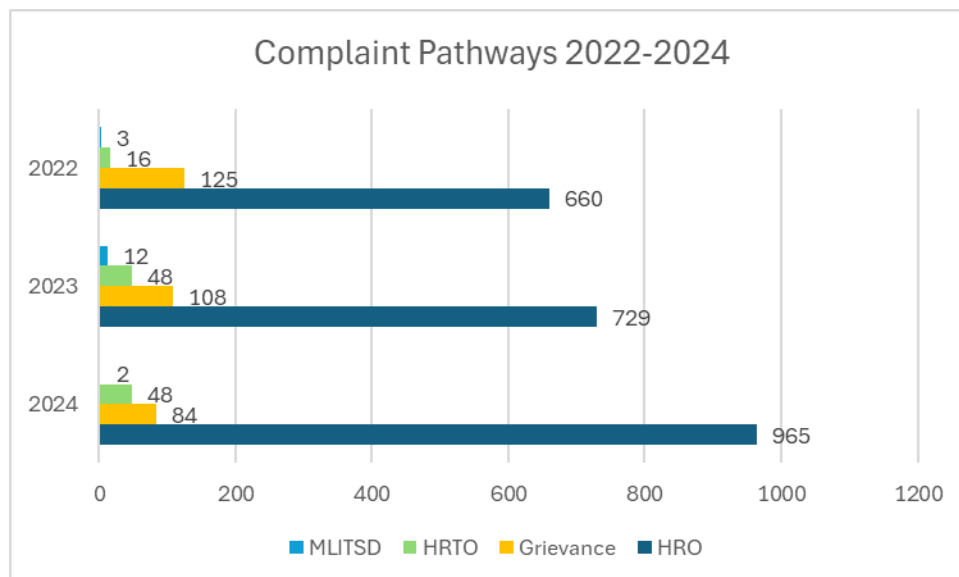
- Raising their concerns directly to divisional management; or
- Raising concerns to the HRO (or Integrity Commissioner if appropriate).

External avenues include:

- Filing a complaint to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD);
- Filing an application to the HRTO;
- Filing a grievance through the Collective Agreement process; or
- Initiating another legal process.

Figure 2 illustrates the various avenues for complaint resolution but does not include internal complaints raised to divisional management where the HRO was not involved.

Figure 2: Total complaints made through internal and external avenues, 2022 to 2024



Breakdown of total grounds cited in HRO inquiries

The City’s HRAP prohibits discrimination and harassment based on protected grounds under the Code and includes additional protections, such as level of literacy, membership in a union/association, and political affiliation. Staff are also protected from incivility, workplace harassment, and reprisal. Together, these are referred to as “grounds” under the HRAP. Grounds are recorded for every inquiry made to the HRO: Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the frequency with which each individual ground was cited by an inquirer and/or identified by HRO staff from 2022-2024 while Figure 3 further differentiates grounds cited in internal and external inquiries.

Table 2: Total grounds cited to the HRO across all inquiries 2022 to 2024

Grounds - All	2022	2023	2024
Age	33	28	43
Citizenship	7	11	25
Creed	166	86	143
Disability	183	186	291
Family status	241	161	179
Gender expression	11	24	24
Gender identity	26	35	44
Harassment-related ¹	278	279	367
Harassment ²	42	25	50
Sexual harassment ³	87	93	99

Grounds - All	2022	2023	2024
Workplace harassment ³	227	245	292
Incivility	70	48	115
Level of literacy	8	5	16
Marital status	8	4	12
Membership in a union or staff association	3	7	8
Political affiliation	5	3	6
Race and related ⁴	167	169	259
Ancestry	27	27	103
Colour	62	54	98
Ethnic origin	63	66	140
Place of origin	39	32	91
Race	112	117	181
Receipt of public assistance	5	5	8
Record of offence	2	2	8
Reprisal ⁵	48	43	70
Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding) ⁶	105	110	150
Sexual orientation	26	24	27
No specific ground	325	361	492
Non-jurisdictional/ Referral ⁷	387	341	441
Total Grounds	2318	2143	3135

1. Composite of harassment, workplace harassment, and sexual harassment; this total reflects number of inquiries citing one or more of these grounds. Please note that the sum of harassment-related inquiries is not included in the sum of Total Grounds.

2. Harassment here refers to non-Code and non-workplace harassment, which is often non-jurisdictional.

3. Workplace Harassment as defined in OHSa includes harassment based on sex, gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation (i.e., sexual harassment), and non-Code harassment (i.e., harassment involving workers that is not based on a Code ground). When sexual harassment is cited in an inquiry, the HRO also identifies the specific protected ground engaged when allegations of sexual harassment are raised.

4. Composite of ancestry, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, and race; this total reflects number of inquiries citing one or more of these grounds. Please note that the sum of race and related inquiries is not included in the sum of Total Grounds.

5. Reprisal refers to complaints citing retaliations as defined in the HRAP Complaint Procedures.

6. Inquiries citing sex may include accommodation, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination.

7. Issues that may not cite a prohibited ground or may be general in nature (e.g., certain policy information inquiries) are captured under No ground, whereas non-jurisdictional/referral captures inquiries that, on submission to the HRO, fall outside of the HRO's jurisdiction as outlined in the HRAP.

Inquiries received by the HRO often cite more than one ground. In 2024, 1,574 inquiries cited 3,135 grounds, reflecting the complexity of the inquiries and intersectionality of issues raised. Among complaint-related inquiries, 38 per cent (363) cited more than one ground, constituting a 29 per cent increase in volume since 2023, when 281 complaint-related inquiries (also 38 per cent) cited multiple grounds.

The HRO applies an intersectional lens to assess and understand how multiple personal characteristics may interact to shape experiences of and present barriers to the individuals participating in the process. These findings underscore the importance of applying an intersectional lens to both respond to and prevent human rights concerns and reflect the complexity of matters brought to the HRO for resolution.⁴

While workplace harassment inquiries increased by 19 per cent, incivility related inquiries rose significantly year-over-year (140 per cent).⁵ Sexual harassment remains elevated but has not risen at pace with other grounds, having increased by six per cent in the last year. This suggests that the challenges faced when in-person services resumed in 2022 remain persistent but steady. Since 2019, prior to the pandemic and related changes to in-person work and service delivery, during which time sexual harassment decreased substantially, sexual harassment has risen by 29 per cent (from 77 to 99 inquiries).

The HRO has seen a marked increase of inquiries citing the protected grounds of ancestry (281 per cent), place of origin (184 per cent), ethnic origin (112 per cent), colour (81 per cent) and race (55 per cent). At the same time, inquiries citing creed have increased by 66 per cent. These increases may reflect the impact of global and domestic events including global conflict (see section on External Forces below), rising police-reported hate crimes,⁶ and equity and human rights protections. Employees, service and facility users may be impacted by these events, which may correlate with the increase in incidents and complaints of discrimination and harassment, as well as broader awareness of human rights obligations and protections.

While the threats to trans and gender diverse individuals' identities remain present, inquiries related to gender identity have increased at pace with inquiries in general (26 per cent increase). Sex-related inquiries have increased by 36 per cent since 2023.

Disability-related inquiries saw a disproportionate increase, rising by 56 per cent in the last year, which may be attributable to both an increase in accommodation-related inquiries and complaint-related inquiries.

The HRO is often contacted by individuals whose concerns do not engage with a ground under the HRAP or are not otherwise within its jurisdiction as outlined in the HRAP Complaint Procedures; these inquiries too have increased at pace with inquiries

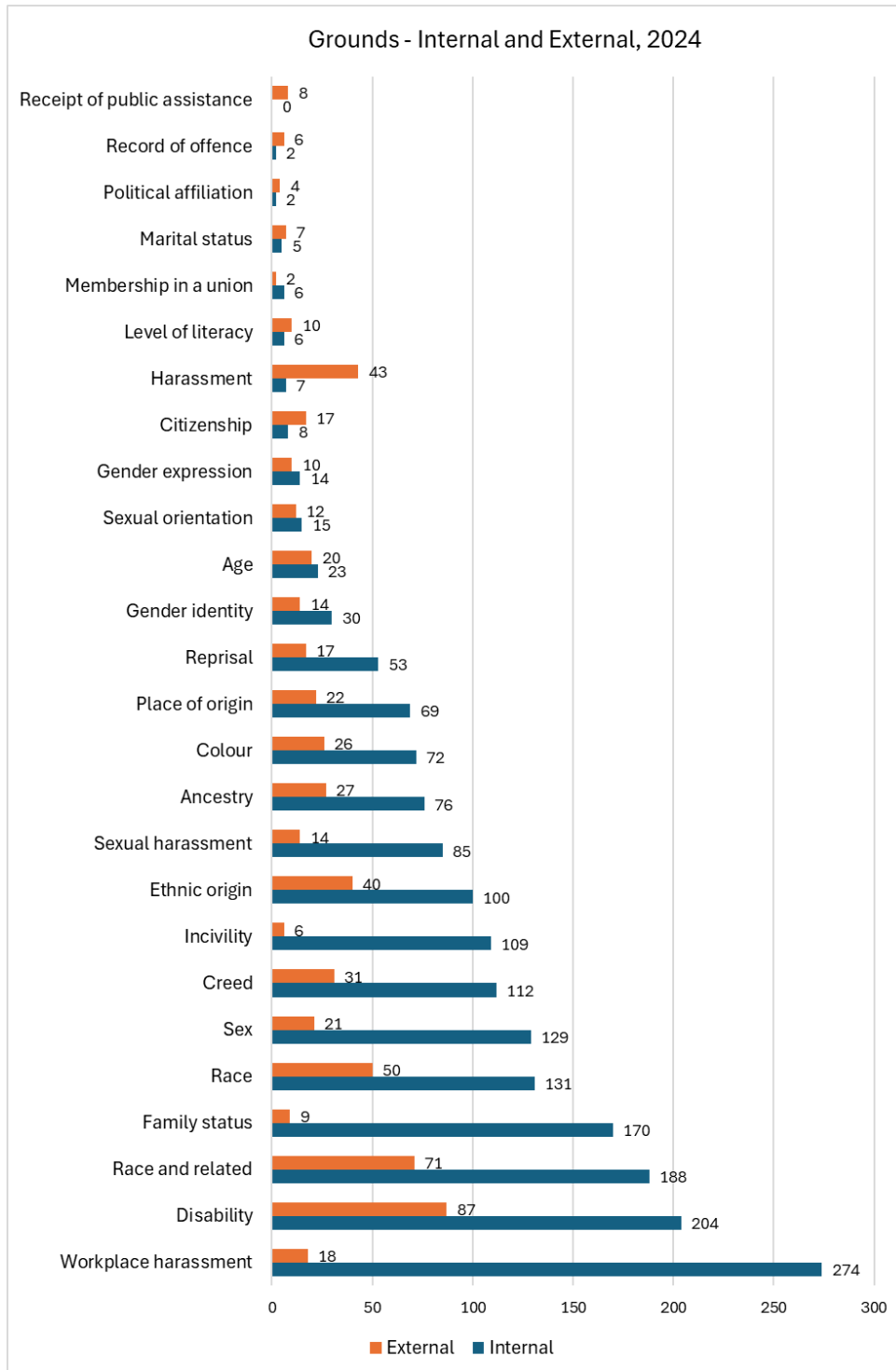
⁴ The HRO captures grounds cited by the inquirer not demographic data.

⁵ The HRO has limited insight into non-Code related matters. This data should not be interpreted as the total number of workplace harassment and incivility complaints received by the City more broadly, as many such complaints are often never raised to the HRO but directly to the relevant Division.

⁶ According to the Toronto Police Service and Statistics Canada.

overall (by 36 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively). The HRO continues to provide appropriate referral services for matters outside its jurisdiction and/or facilitate transition to the impacted Division, as well as provide general human rights consultations.

Figure 3: Grounds cited in internal and external inquiries to the HRO, 2024

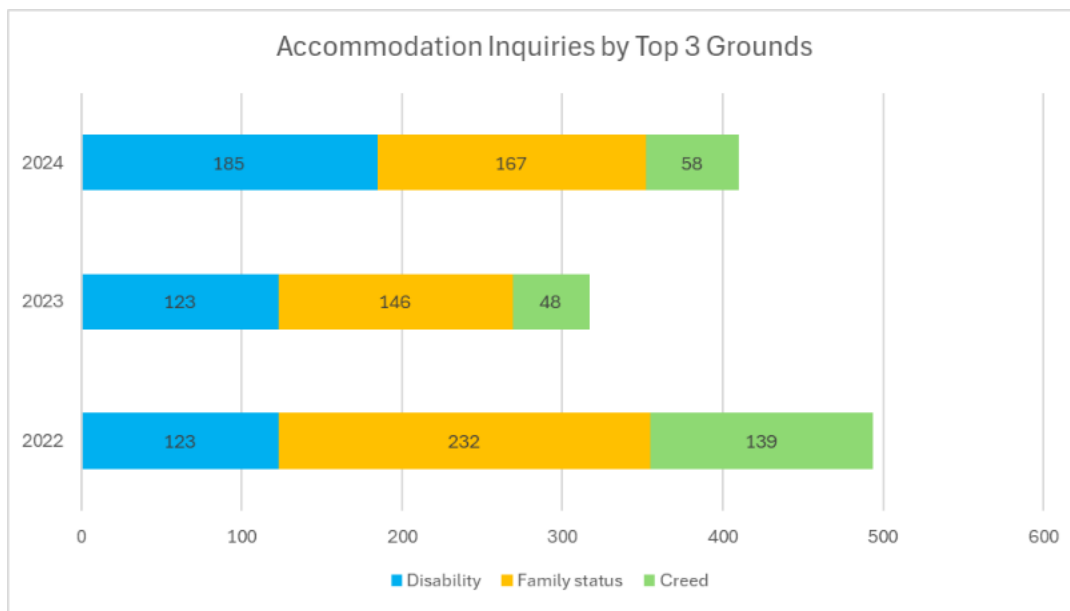


Accommodations

The City of Toronto has a duty to accommodate service and facility users, job applicants and employees who require accommodation based on the prohibited grounds enumerated in the Code. The City's Accommodation Policy and corresponding Procedures outline the City's legal obligations. The policy requires that the HRO be contacted when management intends to deny an accommodation request and otherwise can provide advice to all parties to the process when consulted.

As such, the numbers recorded by the HRO do not reflect the total number of accommodation requests received and assessed by Divisions under the Accommodation Policy, but reflects where parties require assistance in interpreting and applying the Policy or where there are complexities or risk.

Figure 4: Top three accommodation grounds, 2022 to 2024



The HRO received a total of 437 accommodation-related inquiries in 2024. While the number of this type of inquiry has decreased from 2022, when there were remaining impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, general accommodation-related inquiries to the HRO have nonetheless been continually climbing.

Between 2023 and 2024, the HRO has seen a 24 per cent increase in accommodation inquiries. Disability-related accommodation inquiries specifically have risen by 50 per cent year-over-year; disability is now the most frequently cited ground for the first time since 2018. Disability, family status and creed remain the top three most cited grounds in accommodation-related inquiries and the latter two have also experienced modest increases (14 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively) as the total trends upward.

Accommodation-related inquiries often require significant support, as they are highly individualized. The HRO has noted that accommodation requests on which Divisions are seeking advice are increasingly complex. The City's approach to flexible work

options has enhanced inclusion for some staff, which may ultimately decrease the need for accommodation.

Hate Activity Policy

The City of Toronto is committed to eliminating hate activity and actions that are meant to intimidate and harm identifiable groups of people contrary to the principles of dignity, respect and inclusion. The Hate Activity Policy (HAP) and Procedures provide a mechanism for complaints related to hate activity to be addressed.

The HAP requires Divisions to report incidents of suspected Hate Activity to the HRO. In 2024, the HRO received inquiries related to 16 alleged incidents (3 external and 13 internal) that engaged the HAP, as compared to 8 in 2023.⁷ Of these complaints, common grounds cited were creed, ethnic origin, and ancestry, with several complaints indicating all of those grounds. Six incidents were related to social media activity.

External Forces

Inquiries to the HRO coincide, on occasion, with local, national and international events, which can influence the volume and nature of the concerns raised. The HRO tracks “external forces” cited within such inquiries to identify any emerging trends, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or other events that may significantly influence issues raised to the HRO. In 2024, the conflict in Israel and Palestine was cited in at least 89 inquiries, both as a direct concern and as a factor influencing the experiences of employees and members of the public.

In addition to the 1,574 inquiries reported in 2024, the HRO also received 264 additional contacts referencing the conflict in Israel and Palestine, sent as form letters or copies of an online petition. To preserve the integrity of HRO data and not over-report, the HRO applied a protocol for petitions, recording these 264 emails as a single “inquiry” submitted by multiple individuals. Where unique communications were received, these were responded to and recorded separately. These community-driven petitions are becoming more frequent and complex, contributing to the volume and demand for the HRO’s services.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

The HRO uses alternative dispute resolution processes (ADR) to resolve complaints and seeks to do so in a manner that is timely, accessible, fair and inclusive.

As a neutral internal office, the HRO supports the resolution of human rights issues at the earliest stages to restore trust and good relations wherever possible, prevent further harm and avoid escalation into adversarial or legal processes.

Early intervention often requires providing support directly to the individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination. The HRO provides advice on

⁷ This data reflects the number of alleged incidents; if multiple complaints/inquiries relating to a single incident are raised to the HRO, they are counted as a single incident in this section. However, each inquiry is reflected individually in the HRO’s yearly total.

resolution options, facilitates connections with the appropriate individuals in the Toronto Public Service, conducts assessments of the issues, provides advice and suggestions to resolve the matter and, where required, supports or conducts investigations.

The HRO also provides resolution supports directly to City management and human resources professionals to build divisional capacity,⁸ ensure matters are reviewed through a human rights and equity lens, and provide guidance aligned with the City's complaints procedures and legislative obligations.

Beyond individual concerns, the HRO examines potential systemic issues contributing to complaints and offers recommendations to support respectful and inclusive workplaces and service environments. Through early intervention, the HRO seeks to mitigate harm and reduce risk by addressing matters before they escalate to external legal channels.

Human Rights Investigations

The City receives a high number of human rights-related complaints involving both employees and members of the public. Under the HRAP and Complaint Procedures, Divisional management is responsible for addressing complaints related to their staff or services. Divisions are generally responsible for conducting investigations when appropriate. The HRO can provide consultative support to Divisions throughout this process, particularly where human rights issues are involved.⁹

A small number of the most complex complaints are investigated by the HRO (HRO led investigations). The HRO resumed some investigative functions in 2024, and this expanded in 2025 through a pilot with a Divisional partner. With the 32 per cent increase in complaint-related inquiries, the HRO prioritizes the most complex and challenging investigations for the organization. The HRO balances supporting Divisions with a high volume of complex human rights issues through its advisory services, while also maintaining capacity to investigate the most serious human rights centered matters. The HRO continues to work with the organization to optimize resources in order to support the City's robust human rights framework to prevent and respond to complaints.

⁸ Where a complaint is Code-related, Divisional Management are expected to contact the HRO, while non-Code matters are not generally within the HRO's jurisdiction and are referred to the Division to be addressed. The HRO may retain a role where there are complex procedural issues, where there is evidence management has not met their policy obligations, or where a complaint contains both non-Code and Code-based issues.

⁹ The HRO must be contacted where Code-based harassment or discrimination, including sexual harassment is alleged; where allegations are serious/complex and/or requires a level of expertise beyond the Division's capacity; and/or if Code-based harassment/discrimination has not been addressed in accordance with the Procedures.

Employment harassment and discrimination grievances

Employees who belong to a union may grieve harassment and/or discrimination through provisions in their respective Collective Agreements. As illustrated in Table 3:

- The City received 84 harassment/discrimination grievances¹⁰ in 2024, representing a 22 per cent decrease from 2023.
- Workplace harassment and disability (failure to accommodate) remain among the top three most cited grounds; grievances citing creed (failure to accommodate) decreased significantly as the City emerged from the pandemic.

Table 3: Grounds cited in grievances from 2022 to 2024

Prohibited Ground:	2022	2023	2024
Disability (failure to accommodate)	24	26	26
Disability (discrimination)	2	1	1
Sex (includes sexual harassment)	2	--	2
Race	1	--	--
Creed/Religion (failure to accommodate)	36	3	--
Family Status (failure to accommodate)	5	--	1
Family Status (discrimination)	--	--	1
Workplace Harassment	41	58	30
Tied to Discipline	1	2	2
Ground not identified	13	18	21
Total	125	108	84

Applications to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario

Employees, service recipients, and facility users are entitled to file human rights complaints, referred to as 'Applications', directly to the HRTTO. The City’s Legal Services Division is responsible for representing the City at HRTTO hearings.

¹⁰ The data reflected here may not capture all grievances related to harassment or discrimination if these issues are not identified within a grievance but rather pursued under another provision in a Collective Agreement.

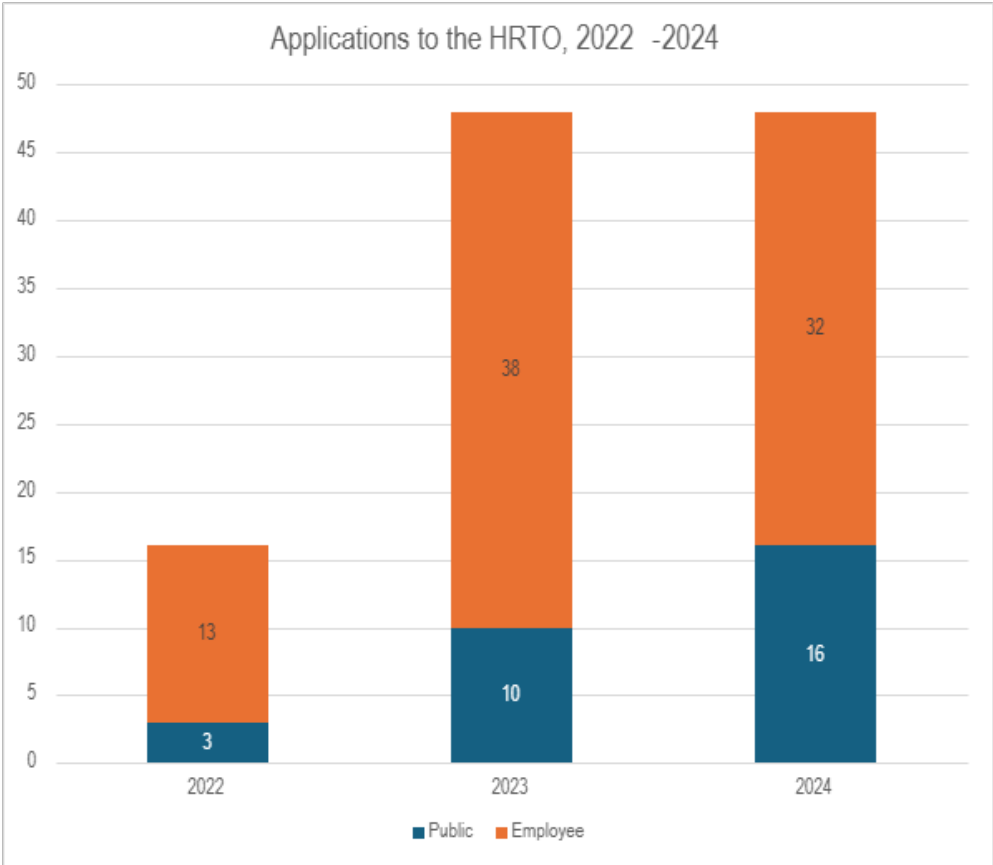
Where an individual initiates a legal process, the HRO is typically not made aware and there is no opportunity for the HRO to attempt internal alternative dispute resolution in the matter. Where the HRO was involved in a matter, the HRO case manager may act as a witness to the proceedings.

Due to the lengthy process of filing an Application at the HRTTO, these numbers may not reflect all Applications made in the reported year, but likely reflect some Applications made in previous years that were received by the Legal Services Division in 2024.

The Legal Services Division reported:

- In 2024, there were 48 HRTTO Applications received, 32 of which were filed by employees and 16 of which were filed by members of the public.
- The number of Applications to the HRTTO are comparable to 2023, when there were 48 HRTTO Applications (38 by employees, 10 by members of the public); as the HRTTO has worked through a backlog of COVID-19 related Applications, it appears that the volume of Applications to the HRTTO have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- The most commonly cited grounds in HRTTO Applications filed by employees were disability and reprisal. Members of the public most commonly cited race and related grounds, disability, and gender identity.
- No findings were made against the City by the HRTTO in 2024.

Figure 5: Applications to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario for 2022-2024



Employee harassment complaints filed with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

A resolution mechanism available under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) involves filing a complaint with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD). Employees may file a complaint based on non-Code workplace harassment and/or sexual harassment. The MLITSD made two visits to City workplaces in 2024 relating to workplace harassment. No orders related to workplace harassment were issued by MLITSD against the City in 2024.

Ensuring legislative and policy compliance

Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy

In 2024, the Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy (HRAP) and Procedures were reviewed as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The HRAP was updated to account for legislative changes from Bill 190, “Working for Workers Five Act,” which resulted in changes to the City’s definitions to specifically include the amended language in OHSA. The HRAP definitions of workplace harassment and sexual harassment were revised to include harassment which occurs “virtually through the use of information and communications technology.” This change is aligned with how the City had been interpreting the definition of workplace, and the HRAP already contained examples of social media usage. The updated language will not reflect a change in practice but ensures consistent application and alignment with legislation.

Advancing Human Rights

The HRO provides strategic advice on Divisional and City-wide policies, procedures, resources, as well as novel issues that arise, with a goal to proactively embedding human rights, equity and reconciliation into City workplace culture and services. In 2024, the HRO supported many substantial projects and initiatives with a human rights and equity lens. Among the most notable examples, the HRO:

- Initiated an extensive review of the City’s Accommodation Program (policy, procedures, and associated guidelines) to enhance accessibility, inclusion, and reconciliation.
- Supported the City’s capacity to address emerging trends in Artificial Intelligence with a human rights lens. Presented in partnership with Technology Services Division on International Digital Rights Day.
- Supported the review of select People & Equity policies to ensure a human rights and equity lens was applied.
- Developed and led presentations upon request by Divisions and employee Communities of Inclusion on: creed-based accommodations, human rights responsibilities, introducing the HRO and City human rights policies, and trauma informed investigations.

- Continued to deliver virtual human rights training, including:
 - o Human Rights Essentials for Management (HREM) course attended by 1221 employees (to date, 28% of eligible population),¹¹
 - o HREM Virtual Instructor Led Training workshops attended by 195 people managers (to date, 9% of eligible population), and
 - o Accommodations Essentials for Management online workshops attended by 464 people managers (to date, 17% of eligible population), building organizational capacity relating to the City's duty to accommodate.
 - o Mandatory training on Human Rights for active Toronto Public Service employees completed by 5516 staff members (to date, 90% of eligible population).
- Partnered with the Workforce Equity unit to provide key metrics and recommendations to select Divisions, as part of a pilot to enhance divisional understanding of complaint trends along with employee engagement and Count Yourself In (CYI) data.

Looking forward (2025)

The HRO will continue to be a leader in promoting human rights and addressing concerns at the earliest stages through education, capacity building, and early intervention. These efforts aim to minimize harm, prevent recurrence, and support inclusive and respectful environments for all.

The HRO's work is supported by robust policies, procedures and guidelines that outline the City's human rights obligations. The City's internal complaint process remains a viable and effective alternative to more adversarial and formal complaint avenues, helping to advance equity, reconciliation and inclusion. The sustained increase in demand for the HRO's services and expertise highlights its value and impact. In 2025, the HRO plans to:

- Launch a pilot for human rights and respect training for 150 leaders on "*Lead with Respect: Human Rights Essentials for People Leaders.*"
- Create an Anti-oppression and Trauma informed Interviewing Guide.
- Pilot a divisional partnership to increase investigation capacity.
- Conduct an extensive review of the City's Accommodation program (policy, procedures, and supporting documents) with key stakeholders and review of other jurisdictional best practices to ensure the City's commitments to accessibility, inclusion, and reconciliation are reflected in its policies and processes.
- Support FIFA human rights pillar consultations.

¹¹ This course, while designed for management, is open to all. As such, the percentage of the eligible population who have completed this course may be inflated.

- Develop resource to support the use of Declaration of Compliance with Legislation and City Policy for City contracts.
- Provide customized training on request to divisional management and employee communities of inclusion on Accommodation based on creed & disability.
- Support review of divisional processes related to client services and discriminatory requests.
- Support policy reviews for requesting Agencies and Corporations.

CONTACT

Jenny Neiman, Director, Human Rights Office, People & Equity

Phone: 416-397-5230, Email: Jenny.Neiman@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Mary Madigan-Lee
Chief People Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Summary of changes to Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/
Discrimination Policy

Attachment 2: Amended Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy