

**20
24**



pennsylvania
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

HYBRID DISABILITY CONFERENCE



DON'T LEAVE ME OUT!

**Holistic Approaches for Disability
Inclusion & Resolving Conflict**



**FEATURED KEYNOTE:
IMANI BARBARIN**

American Writer &
Disability Rights Activist

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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We are so thankful for everyone who was a part of making this conference a reality, from our speakers, presenters, and panelists to our vendors and staff volunteers. At PHRC, it is a vital part of our mission to work towards equal opportunity for Pennsylvanians with disabilities, and the ideas and programs that were shared today are a large part of making that a reality. We hope everyone left this event with new ideas, contacts, and vigor for engaging in work towards justice for individuals with disabilities.

We owe special thanks to our ASL interpreters and captioners for making this event accessible, and to our hosts at the Harrisburg Hilton.

We've put together this document to share some thoughts, feedback, and information for further learning that arose from the conference.

THANK YOU!

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THE PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS ACT & DISABILITY RIGHTS

PLENARY SESSION (9:15-10:00 AM)

The session shared an overview of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the protections it provides in education, employment, housing, commercial property, and public accommodations to individuals with disabilities. You can access the presentation slides [here](#).

Presenter:

**ADRIAN GARCIA, DIRECTOR OF ENFORCEMENT,
PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**



ADDRESSING BULLYING & HARASSMENT OF YOUTH

BREAKOUT SESSION 1A (10:15-11:30 AM)

This session focused on bullying and harassment of youth with disabilities in school. Panelists shared bullying and harassment under Pennsylvania law and discussed actions people can take if they or someone they know are being bullied or harassed. The panelists also highlighted some resources. You can view the session recording here: [Addressing Bullying & Harassment of Youth](#).

Resources:

[Supportive Spaces Report](#)

[Black Girls Education Justice Initiative](#)

[Inclusive Schools and Honest Education](#)

[Education Law Center Mailing List](#)

[Safe2Say Something](#)

[Promising Practices to Build Antiracist and Affirming Schools](#)

[The School Board, It's Power, and How to Advocate](#)

Moderator: **Gregory Holts, Human Relations Representative, PHRC**

Presenters:

MORGAN WILLIAMS

**INTERIM CHIEF COUNSEL, PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS
COMMISSION**

PAIGE JOKI (VIRTUAL)

STAFF ATTORNEY, EDUCATION LAW CENTER



ARMED CONFLICT & INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

BREAKOUT SESSION 1B (10:15-11:30 AM)



This session examined the impact of armed conflict on people with disabilities from multiple perspectives. The perspectives included academic research on the issue, lived experience, the leader of an organization that has assisted people with disabilities throughout the armed conflict in Ukraine and the Pennsylvania Office of Veterans Affairs.

Moderator: Darlene Hemerka, Hearing Examiner, PHRC

Panelists:

NESWIL RAFAEL ACEVEDO

ANNOUNCER

JOEL H. MUTSCHLER

**DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, REINTEGRATION, AND
OUTREACH, PA DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS**

JULIANA BUSTAMANTE REYES (VIRTUAL)

**DIRECTOR, ACTION PROGRAM FOR EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, THE
UNIVERSIDAD DE LOS ANDES**

YULIA SACHUK (VIRTUAL)

DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCATE & HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: THE PERSONAL AND POLITICS OF DISABILITY

12:00-1:30 PM

IMANI BARBARIN

DISABILITY RIGHTS & INCLUSION ACTIVIST

This session focused on how perceptions and ideas that surround disability impact identity, interpersonal relationships and our historical outlook on politics both nationally and internationally.

Learn more about the session:

- View the [session slides](#)
- View the [session recording](#)
- Learn more about [Imani Barbarin's work](#)



THE INTERSECTION OF DISABILITY AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

BREAKOUT SESSION 2A (1:40-2:55 PM)

The expansion of mass incarceration during the past sixty years in the US is unprecedented. With more than 1.2 million people incarcerated in prisons, the US is a global leader in incarceration. Importantly, disability prevalence has been found to be higher among incarcerated compared with nonincarcerated people. The panel is a conversation on the intersectional work amongst disability advocacy, law enforcement, and reintegration programs. Understanding how policing impacts people with disabilities and how to help improve positive interactions and minimize negative interactions between people with disabilities and law enforcement. You can view the session recording here: [The Intersection of Individuals with Disabilities and the Criminal Justice System.](#)



Moderator: **Dr. La Dawn Robinson, Pittsburgh Regional Director, PHRC**

Panelists:

CAPTAIN VINCENT K. D'ANGELO

**DIRECTOR, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION OFFICE, PENNSYLVANIA
STATE POLICE**

STEVEN SOLIWODA

CLASSIFICATION PROGRAM MANAGER, SCI ALBION

KATLYN WILDBERGER

**DIVISION DIRECTOR OF SPECIALTY SUPERVISION, LANCASTER COUNTY
ADULT PROBATION & PAROLE SERVICES**

HOW MEDIATION CAN RESOLVE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION AND ACCOMMODATION CONFLICTS

BREAKOUT SESSION 2B (1:40-2:55 PM)

This workshop introduced ways mediation can be a helpful option when there are conflicts related to disparate treatment of someone with a disability or disputes over the reasonable accommodation process. The program helped participants understand the kinds of conflicts people with disabilities may encounter and ways mediation can help, while also raising awareness of what to do to ensure mediators are not biased or prejudiced due to their potential preconceived assumptions about parties with disabilities. The session began with a pre-recorded conversation between Dan Bernstein and Josh Kershenbaum, from New Hope Mediation

You can view the session recording here: [How Mediation can Resolve Disability Discrimination and Accommodation Conflicts](#).

DAN BERSTEIN, MHS (*VIRTUAL*) OWNER, MH MEDIATE



RESOURCES

General

- [The Disability Download](#)
 - The podcast discusses a wide range of topics, from technological advances to help with disabilities, to options for combating ableism. It is widely listened to and provides factual and research-based information on current events and the impact they have on the disability community.
- Imani Barbarin's blog: [Crutches & Spice](#)

Bullying & Harassment

- Who Is at Risk ([StopBullying.gov](#))
 - American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry: [Bullying Resource Center](#)
- [Education Law Center Bullying and Harassment Resources](#)

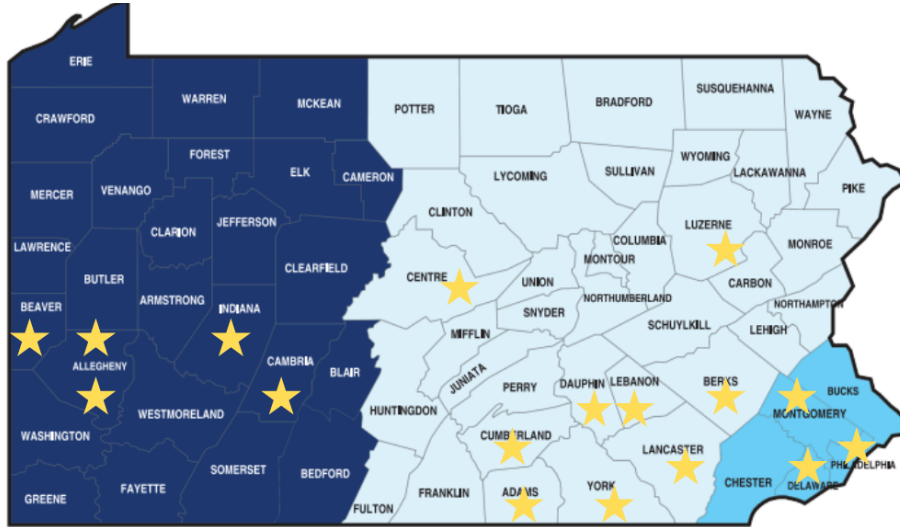
Armed Conflict and People with Disabilities

- [Fight For Right](#)
- [Living Through War with A Disability](#)
- [Disabled American Veterans](#)

Mediation

- [Resource packet provided by Dan Berstein](#)





ADVISORY COUNCILS

The PHRC has Advisory Councils throughout Pennsylvania, bringing the PHRC resources and information to local communities. These groups of 8-24 volunteers meet regularly to identify local challenges, develop partnerships, host events, and reach out to community members at risk of experiencing discrimination.

As an advisory Council members, you would:

- Advocate for your community by partnering with the PHRC to take on key civil rights issues in your area.
- Assist community members with filing complaints; raising awareness about each person's right to live, work and learn free from unlawful discrimination.
- Plan events, trainings, and discussions that raise awareness of civil rights and celebrate the diversity in your area, working with the PHRC to execute these events.

The PHRC currently has councils in:

- Adams County
- Allegheny County
- Beaver-Ohio River Valley (Beaver County)
- Berks County
- Cambria County
- Centre County
- Cumberland County
- Dauphin County
- Delaware County
- Hazleton (Luzerne County)
- Indiana County
- Lancaster County
- Montgomery County
- Penn Hills (Allegheny County)
- Philadelphia
- York County

If you'd like to inquire about joining an active council, or would like to be part of starting a council in your area, [visit our website](#).

PHRC TRAINING PROGRAMS

PHRC offers free customizable training for your team. We routinely provide trainings to housing providers, realtors, lenders, local officials, social service providers, housing authorities, community members and more. Visit our website to [request a training](#) for your organization. If you have any questions, contact bmellinger@pa.gov.

Training Programs



Are you looking for an informed presenter to speak to your community or organization on subjects affecting their ability to live, work, and learn free from discrimination? Training and events are tailored to the specific needs of your organization or community and can be workshop or seminar style and CEU/CLEs (for specific trainings, email to learn more).

PHRC trainers are available to present a variety of social justice programs including but not limited to:

Civil Rights & Filing a Complaint

Civil Rights Law and PHRC Jurisdiction
Disability & Reasonable Accommodation
PHRC Overview & How to File a Complaint

Preventing Discrimination in the Workplace and Schools

Bullying and Harassment Prevention
Conflict Resolution
Cross-cultural Communication
Sexual Discrimination in the Workplace
Sexual Harassment Prevention

Bias, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Bias and Hate Speech
Cultural Awareness and Humility
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (DEIB)
Implicit Bias for Law Enforcement
Intersectionality of Discrimination and Trauma
Unconscious Bias

Fair Housing Rights

Fair Housing Fundamentals
Fair Housing for LGBTQ+ Individuals
Fair Housing for Municipal Leaders
Fair Housing & Criminal Backgrounds
Fair Housing & Domestic Violence
Fair Housing & Individuals with Disabilities
Fair Housing & Hoarding
Service & Support Animals
Fair Lending
Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
Redlining: Yesterday & Today



To learn more, contact phrc@pa.gov or fill out an [online training request at phrc.pa.gov](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

In 2023, the PHRC launched the Social Justice Ambassador Program. Social Justice Ambassadors are key community contacts that help the PHRC outreach efforts meet the individual needs of local communities.

As an ambassador, you would:

- Promote the awareness of the existence, mission, and purposes of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Commission.
- Refer discrimination complaints to the PHRC from community members in the area of housing, employment, education, commercial property, and public accommodations.
- Keep the PHRC updated on incidents of hate and bias in their community.
- Notify the PHRC of community outreach activities and provide referrals for any PHRC-led events.
- Assist the PHRC in finding spaces for outreach events, meetings, and/or hearings.

Social Justice Ambassadors are active in the following areas:

- Bucks County
- Chester County
- Cumberland County
- Dauphin County
- Delaware County
- Erie County
- Franklin County
- Indiana County
- Lackawanna County
- Lancaster County
- Lebanon County
- Northumberland County
- Philadelphia County
- Schuylkill County
- Tioga County
- Washington County
- Westmoreland County
- York County



**BECOME A
SOCIAL JUSTICE
AMBASSADOR**

APPLY TODAY

PHRC envisions having a Social Justice Ambassador for each county in Pennsylvania to serve that area's unique community needs. Each Ambassador will be appointed by the PHRC to serve as a liaison and an extension of its outreach effort within a community.

LEARN MORE AT
WWW.PHRC.PA.GOV



If you'd like to participate in the Social Justice Ambassador program, email: RA-HRPHRCAdvCoun@pa.gov for more information.


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PHRC HYBRID DISABILITY CONFERENCE


BUILDING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

In 2023, the PHRC launched a statewide Beloved Community listening tour, with the goal that Executive Director Lassiter will visit every Pennsylvania county to listen to community concerns. Learn more about upcoming Beloved Community tour stops at the [PHRC Events webpage](#).

 Pennsylvania
Human Relations Commission

PHRC ON THE ROAD:

BUILDING PENNSYLVANIA'S BELOVED COMMUNITY




Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW
PHRC Executive Director

WHAT IS A BELOVED COMMUNITY?

A group of residents, usually within one geographic area, that work together across racial, gender, and ethnic lines through the guiding principles of unity and love for humanity.

Allegheny County

- Thursday, September 26, 2024
- 5:30-7 p.m.
- Mount Ararat Baptist Church
271 Paulson Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
- [Register Today!](#)



Scan to register!

PHRC will visit every Pennsylvania county to listen to the concerns of the community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT:
STACEY WATERS
STWATERS@PA.GOV

TAKE ACTION

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT WITH PHRC

If you believe you've experienced unlawful discrimination in housing, employment, education, or public accommodations, you can file a complaint with the PHRC.

You can start the process by:

Calling 717-787-4410

Completing a questionnaire, and submitting it to PHRC:

Email: phrc@pa.gov

Fax: (717) 787-0420 or (717) 214-0584

Mail or Drop off:

Harrisburg Regional Office

333 Market Street, 8th Floor

Harrisburg, PA 17101-2210

Philadelphia Regional Office

110 North 8th Street, Suite 501

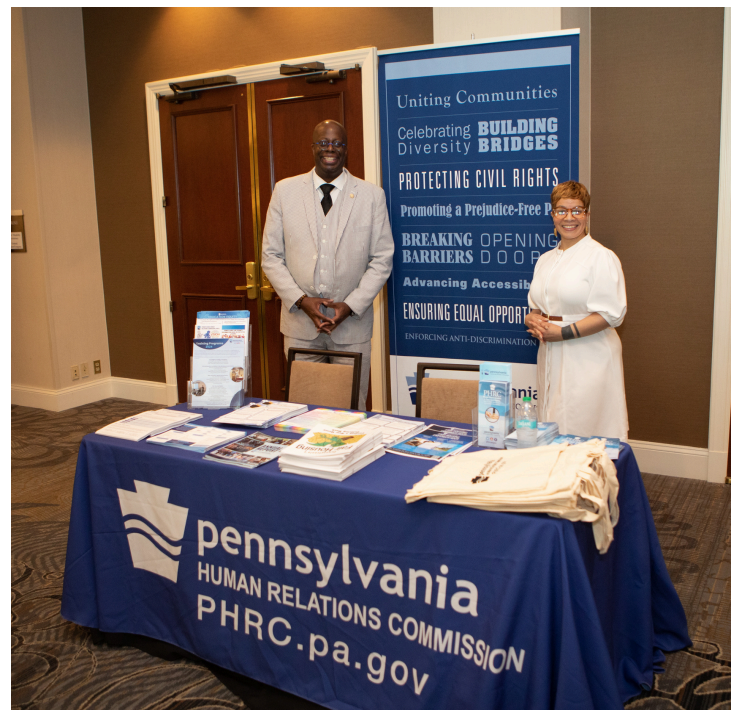
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Pittsburgh Regional Office

301 Fifth Avenue, Suite 390, Piatt Place

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Learn more at www.pa.gov/en/agencies/phrc.





NETWORKING TABLE RESOURCES

- **Center for Independent Living of Central PA**
 - [Find affordable homes and apartments in PA](#)
- **Corporation for Independent Living (CIL)**
 - [Community Residences Resources](#)
 - [Accessibility Improvements Resources](#)
- **Disability Rights Pennsylvania**
 - [Self-Advocacy Guides](#)
- **Institute on Disabilities at Temple University**
 - [Programs and Services](#)
 - [Leadership Development](#)
- **Katona Linn Consulting, LLC**
 - [Building Resilient Classroom](#)
 - [Important Links](#)
 - [Katona-Linn Consulting, LLC \(Facebook\)](#)
 - [Dr. Anne Katona Linn \(Instagram\)](#)
 - [Dr. Anne Katona Linn \(Twitter\)](#)
 - [Dr. Anne Katona Linn, BCBA \(LinkedIn\)](#)
 - [Author Dr. Anne Katona Linn \(Facebook\)](#)
- **PA Department of Military & Veteran Affairs**
- **PA Department of Human Services**
 - [Everyday Lives: Values in Action](#)
 - [Everyday Lives: Values in Action \(Spanish\)](#)
 - [Gold Book: Understanding the Office of Developmental Programs](#)
- **Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance (PRO-A)**
 - [Workforce Projects](#)

THANK YOU

Special thanks to the Disability Conference planning committee for making this event possible.

Caroline Eister
Darlene Hemerka
Gregory Holts
Amanda Martin
Brittany Mellinger
La Dawn Robinson
Heather Roth



Pennsylvania
Human Relations Commission



717.787.4410



PA.GOV/EN/AGENCIES/PHRC

