

## PHRC's Two Harrisburg Offices Consolidate & Move Move Increases Efficiency, Saves \$500,000 Annually

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission's two Harrisburg offices consolidated and moved to 333 Market Street, 8th floor in Harrisburg, on July 30. PHRC executive offices moved earlier in the month and the Harrisburg Regional Office is now officially open in the new location.

The consolidation will save commonwealth taxpayers approximately \$500,000 per year in leasing and administrative costs.

"This is just one part of a comprehensive effort to continue providing excellent service and protecting Pennsylvanians from discrimination, despite an ever-tightening fiscal environment." Executive Director JoAnn Edwards said.

"This will not only save taxpayer money, it will help increase our efficiency and improve communication among investigative, administrative and executive staff members."

The new location offers better meeting facilities and technology because the building is shared with the PA Department of Education and other larger agencies. The public is invited to attend the commission's monthly meeting on Monday, August 26 at 1 p.m. in the Honors Suite on the building's 1st floor.

If you would like to address the commission, or would like to attend and require an accommodation for a disability, please contact us at 717-783-8266 or by email at [phrc@pa.gov](mailto:phrc@pa.gov). Please allow at least three business days for us to arrange disability accommodations.



**Promoting Literacy & Educational Opportunity** - Harrisburg Investigator Deven Price and Camp Curtin Elementary students show their enthusiasm for reading at 500 Men Reading, an annual event to promote literacy in Harrisburg city and suburban schools.

The commission's Harrisburg Regional Office serves a 39-county area including Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Bradford, Cambria, Carbon, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mifflin, Monroe, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Pike, Schuylkill, Snyder, Somerset, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne, Wyoming and York counties.

Two other regional offices are located in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Discrimination complaints do not have to be filed in person, but intake staff members are available to assist by phone or in the office. Appointments are recommended.

Find filing instructions, complaint forms, directions and parking information online at [www.phrc.state.pa.us](http://www.phrc.state.pa.us).

## Mediation Now Available for Employment Discrimination Complaints New Option Offers Faster Resolution for Both Parties

This June, PHRC launched a mediation program to resolve employment discrimination complaints within a short timeframe. Trained, neutral mediators guide the process, which aims to produce settlements agreeable to both parties.

"With mediation, everyone gets relief faster," Commission Chairman Gerry Robinson said. "People who believe they have been wronged, as well as employers facing complaints will get conflicts resolved faster, avoiding lengthy investigations, costly hearings and potential court filings."

There is no cost to those who choose mediation

as a way of resolving their disputes, and they do not need to hire an attorney. The process is confidential.

"Mediation will help our overburdened investigators better manage their caseloads and be able to serve more people." Robinson said. "It will also help relieve our overburdened court system by decreasing the number of unresolved complaints that end up in court."

Continued on page 2

Mediation - cont.

"Ultimately, workers will get back to work quicker and employers can focus on building their businesses.

"Most importantly, discriminatory workplace practices end and are prevented in the future, which is our goal as a commission. Pennsylvania's taxpayers win on all fronts."

The commission now offers mediation as an option to anyone who files an employment discrimination complaint, with the exception of complaints filed against state agencies and a few other limited instances.

Cases are handled by state attorneys who are trained, certified mediators. They have been given specialized training by the commission in Pennsylvania equal opportunity law.

A successfully mediated case will end in a confidential settlement that satisfies both parties.

If a settlement has not been reached 10 days after the complaint is served on the employer, the case will be investigated through normal commission procedures.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or EEOC, has used mediation to resolve employment discrimination complaints for over 20 years. Virtually every state's Fair Employment Practice Agency has a mediation program in place.

The PHRC Mediation Program was developed as part of the Governor's innovation initiative. Since its inception, the Governor's Innovation Office has worked with state agencies on efforts to reduce costs, increase efficiency and improve services. These initiatives have resulted in more than \$170 million in savings and productivity gains. For more information about innovation in state government, visit [www.innovation.pa.gov](http://www.innovation.pa.gov).

More information about mediation, in English and Spanish is available on our website

## Strategic Planning — Acknowledging the Past, Assessing the Present, Meeting the Future Head-on

In April 2013, PHRC kicked off a strategic planning process with the goal of producing a five-year plan of action to fulfill the agency's vital mission in changing times. Over the past two years, through fiscal prudence, innovation and improved efficiency, the agency has eliminated a \$1.5 million deficit, in addition to upgrading technology and re-engineering our business processes. But operating with a workforce that is forty percent smaller than five years ago, a decreased budget and ever-increasing operating costs, we still must change in order to effectively enforce Pennsylvania's non-discrimination laws and promote equal opportunity.



"The process of change has to include understanding our rich history – both legal and procedural – while designing structures and processes that reflect today's discrimination issues as well as budgetary, human and technological resources," Executive Director JoAnn Edwards said in a letter to commissioners and staff members participating in the kickoff.

Millersville University V.P. for Student Affairs Dr. Aminta Hawkins Breaux and Dr. Yvette D. Robinson, both talented and experienced organizational-change consultants, graciously volunteered their time to facilitate the kickoff. The Camp Hill-based Dering Consulting Group, well known for strategic planning work with state agencies, is consulting with the commission for the remainder of the process.

Commissioners have held subsequent working sessions, surveyed staff for their input and researched demographic and discrimination trends. Over the next few months, the commission will develop regional action plans specifically tailored to community needs in the areas served by each PHRC regional office.

A detailed five-year plan will be released publicly at the conclusion of the process.

**Strategic Planning Kickoff** - PHRC Commissioners and Executive Staff at the April kickoff of a commission initiative to establish a five-year, comprehensive strategic plan for PHRC.

### Fair Practice Notices

Businesses, schools, housing providers and housing lenders subject to the PA Human Relations Act can download updated Fair Practice Notices free at [www.phrc.state.pa.us](http://www.phrc.state.pa.us) or request by email at [phrc@pa.gov](mailto:phrc@pa.gov) or phone at 717-772-2845.

These notices are required to be posted in order to help protect schools and businesses from liability and inform their customers, employees, students and others of their rights under PA nondiscrimination laws.



# PA Fair Housing Hotline Toll-free•855•866•5718

## PA Fair Housing Hotline: New Toll-free Number for Housing Discrimination Help

Pennsylvania now has a toll-free hotline for people experiencing housing discrimination issues. Housing discrimination is illegal in Pennsylvania, so equal opportunity in housing is a right. If you believe your rights have been violated, calling the PA Fair Housing hotline, 855-866-5718, will get you to a housing discrimination investigator who can help you file a complaint.

Housing discrimination investigators are specialists who can also refer you to another agency or organization for help if your issue is not under our jurisdiction.

The PA Human Relations Act makes it illegal for anyone to deny you the sale or rental of a home OR a home loan based on your race, color, age (40 or over), sex, religion, national origin, family status (having children who are under 18), pregnancy, disability, relationship to someone with a disability, or because you use, handle or train a support or guide animal for a disability.

It is also illegal to offer you different terms and conditions for home sales based on any of those protected factors, and it is illegal to retaliate against you for filing discrimination complaints or otherwise opposing discrimination.

Some examples of housing discrimination include:

- refusing to rent to a family with children,
- charging loan fees not justified by someone's income, but because of their race, etc.,
- charging fees for a disability support animal,
- refusing to allow a person with a disability to make and pay for changes that enable them to use a housing facility, and
- printing ads that indicate a preference or exclude people based on race, religion or other protected factors.

These are just a few examples. Learn more about housing discrimination and your rights at [www.phrc.state.pa.us](http://www.phrc.state.pa.us).

## FAQ

**Q.** I use a support animal for a disability. Am I required to show certification or proof to my employer, my landlord, or a business I wish to visit?

**A.** No. You have a right to use a support animal for a disability on the job, in your housing, in educational institutions and in restaurants, stores and other businesses. There is no state requirement for certification or state agency that certifies support animals. You may be asked to describe the support the animal provides, but you cannot be asked for details of your disability.

Download our free brochure, **Disability Support Animal Facts** at [www.phrc.state.pa.us](http://www.phrc.state.pa.us).

# New Leadership in PHRC's Regions: Meet the Regional Directors

## Harrisburg Regional Director Heather Roth

Heather Roth came to PHRC in January 2013 with over 15 years of management experience, having spent most of her career in Human Resource Management, working to foster equal opportunity for non-union and union workers.

Roth has served in multiple senior management roles, overseeing human resources for multi-state organizations. She has been involved with many change-management initiatives, streamlining



organizational processes while preserving integrity and quality standards.

Roth holds a BA from Penn State University, where she studied Public Relations. She also holds

her Senior Professional in Human Resources certification from the HR Certification Institute. Roth is a member of the Human Resource Professionals of Central Pennsylvania, as well as the National Society for Human Resource Management.

Roth is a lifetime resident of Central Pennsylvania. She lives in New Cumberland with her husband, Rob and daughter Alexis. She is proud to join the PHRC team and serve Pennsylvanians in her new role.

## Pittsburgh Regional Director Adam Stalczynski

Adam Stalczynski joined the PHRC staff in December 2012 with over 14 years of experience managing projects and grants, and designing solutions



to complex social and economic problems in developing countries.

He has forged strategic partnerships between diverse public and private organizations to address

human rights, economic and environmental challenges, producing real, measurable improvements in the lives of individuals and communities.

Stalczynski holds a masters degree in public policy and management from University of Pittsburgh, with a focus on Western Pennsylvania social and economic development issues. After receiving a BA from Penn State, he served for three years with the Peace Corps in Gabon, Central Africa. He has since worked on economic development projects in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Haiti,



## PHRC REGIONS

Malawi, Mali, Republic of Congo, Togo, Uganda and the U.K.

Stalczynski has returned to his roots in Pittsburgh to focus on civil rights as an issue that is central to the economic prosperity of Western Pennsylvania families and communities. He manages the work of the Pittsburgh PHRC staff in investigating complaints of illegal discrimination and promoting equal opportunity through public outreach.

## Philadelphia Regional Director Juan Xu

Juan Xu has been a PHRC employee since 1990, most recently, serving as intake supervisor. She has taken an active role in many of the commission's innovative programs, including leading a Philadelphia's pilot team for the case-management re-engineering project, which is currently in progress.



Xu has been an active participant in equal opportunity outreach and public education for PHRC, particularly with the Asian-American community. Through volunteer work, she has established good relationships with many Asian-American organizations.

Born in China, Xu came to the U.S. in 1986 to pursue a graduate degree. She earned her BA from Shanghai International Studies University and a master's degree from Temple University. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, creative writing and singing Chinese opera.

Equal Opportunity is a Right, Not a Privilege!

[www.phrc.state.pa.us](http://www.phrc.state.pa.us)



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