

# Commission on Human Rights

## **KY Human Rights Commission recognizes Women's History Month, highlights contributions of women in KY and expresses concerns about women's equality issues**

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The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is pleased to recognize the month of March as Women's History Month. Each year in March, nations highlight the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. The Women's History Month of March corresponds with International Women's Day on March 8. The Commonwealth of Kentucky celebrates the national recognition and also celebrates its own Kentucky Women's History Month. The 2015 Women's History Month theme is "Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives."

"Meanwhile, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, which enforces laws that protect people against discrimination, including discrimination based upon gender or sex, continues to be concerned about disparities in equal treatment and equal opportunity for women in Kentucky," said Kentucky Commission on Human Rights Executive Director John J. Johnson.

"In the last 10 years, from 2004 to 2014, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights has filed for people in Kentucky, 868 discrimination complaints alleging discrimination based on sex or gender," Executive Director Johnson said. "The number of complaints based on the protected class of sex, the overwhelming majority of which claim unlawful discrimination against women, is second only to those based on race or color, which accounted for 1,525 complaints during the same decade," he said.

The following U.S. Census Bureau and other statistics cited by the Kentucky Commission on Women, also highlight concerns about the welfare of women in the state:

### Women's Earnings

The median earnings for Kentucky women is \$31,752, while the median earnings for Kentucky men is \$41,517 for full-time, year round workers.

The wage gap between women and men slightly increases with education in the U.S. With a high school diploma, women earn a weekly average of \$543 dollars compared to \$710 for men. At the college graduate level and beyond, women earn a weekly average of \$986 compared to \$1,330 for men.

A woman in Kentucky working full-time, year-round, is paid only 77 cents to every dollar paid to a man working full-time, year-round. This is equal to the nationwide wage gap of 77 cents.

#### Further Inequity in Employment for African American Women

The unemployment rate for African American women in Kentucky is 12 percent, more than twice the unemployment rate for white women in Kentucky.

**Occupational Segregation** Women in Kentucky have more jobs in certain occupations such as education, office support, and healthcare. However, men make up the majority of occupational fields such as architecture, engineering, and construction. Several jobs in the areas predominately garnered by men traditionally pay an average higher income than the jobs in the areas where women are able to focus their careers.

#### Women and Poverty

18.5 percent of Kentucky women over the age of 18 live below the poverty line, compared to 14.8 percent of men.

In the United States, 30.3 percent of families with a female householder (no husband present) live in poverty. The poverty rate for families with a female householder is 38.1 percent in Kentucky.

In Kentucky, the poverty rate for men over the age of 65 is 8.8 percent but it is 13.1 percent for women of the same age range.

#### Women's Health

Kentucky ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation on the National Women's Law Center report card on women's health and well-being.

#### Recognizing Women's Achievements

Visit <http://womenshistorymonth.gov/> to learn more about the national recognition of Women's History Month.

Visit the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights website and click on the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame to learn more about women who have contributed to the area of human and civil rights on behalf of their state, at <http://kchr.ky.gov/hof/>

Learn about Kentucky African American women who have made leading contributions to Kentucky or who have played roles in Kentucky history by visiting the Gallery of Great Black Kentuckians at <http://kchr.ky.gov/Gallery+of+Great+Black+Kentuckians/>

Visit You Tube online to watch interviews of women inductees of the human rights commission's Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame. This is part of an Oral History collaborative to showcase and archive history about the inductees, who tell first-hand, of their lives and efforts in the areas of civil and human rights in Kentucky. The Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame Oral History Project is in partnership with the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, the University Office of Community Engagement and the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. Go online to youtube.com, and type in the search browser, "Kentucky Commission on Human Rights," or "Nunn Center."

In addition, one of the state human rights commission's civil rights partners, the Kentucky Commission on Women, is premiering a new documentary showcasing the role women have played in the history, growth and development of Kentucky. It will premiere with showings in Lexington, Frankfort, Louisville and Springfield. *Dreamers & Doers: "VOICES of Kentucky Women"* profiles more than 40 women and their achievements, based on the Kentucky Women Remembered exhibit displayed in the state Capitol. The Kentucky Commission on Women, along with Gov. Steve Beshear and First Lady Jane Beshear, are hosting the premiere events (see schedule below). Shortly after, preparations will be made to distribute the documentary to every middle and high school in Kentucky, as well as all public libraries in time for the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. Call 502-564-2611 and ask for Donna, or visit [www.women@ky.gov](http://www.women@ky.gov) to reserve tickets for one or more premiere showings:

### **Louisville**

Monday, March 16  
Clifton Center  
2117 Payne St.  
6 p.m.

### **Springfield**

Thursday, March 26  
Pettus Auditorium  
St. Catharine College  
2735 Bardstown Road  
6 p.m.

### **Lexington**

Thursday, April 9  
Kentucky Theatre  
214 East Main Street  
7 p.m.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the state government authority that enforces the Kentucky Civil Rights Act (Kentucky Revised Statutes Chapter 344), and, through its affiliation

with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, enforces federal civil rights laws.

The Kentucky Civil Rights Act makes it illegal to discriminate against people in the areas of employment, financial transactions, housing and public accommodations. Discrimination is prohibited in the aforementioned areas based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, and disability. In employment, discrimination is further prohibited on the basis of age (40-years and over) and on the basis of tobacco-smoking status. In housing, discrimination is further prohibited based on familial status, which protects people with children in the household under the age of 18-years old, and it protects women who are pregnant. It is also a violation of the law to retaliate against a person for complaining of discrimination to the commission.

For help with discrimination, contact the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights at 1.800.292.5566. Learn more about the commission's work online at [www.kchr.ky.gov](http://www.kchr.ky.gov). From there, visit the commission Facebook and Twitter sites. Also, go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and type Kentucky Commission on Human Rights to visit the commission's You Tube channel.