

STATE OF NEW YORK
DIVISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
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NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ELIMINATES DECADES-LONG BACKLOG OF AGED CASES

New York State Division of Human Rights Commissioner Helen Diane Foster announced today that the state agency has eliminated the backlog of aged cases for the first time in decades.

“Following Governor Cuomo’s mandate of making state government modern, efficient and transparent, the Division achieved this milestone by putting strategies in place to ensure that our cases are processed in an expedited manner,” said Commissioner Foster. “By eliminating the backlog we can advance our goal of becoming a more effective law enforcement agency while helping New Yorkers who have been discriminated against to get the justice they deserve.”

Shortly after taking office, Governor Andrew Cuomo charged Deputy Commissioner for Regional Affairs Abena Darkeh and Deputy Commissioner for Enforcement Melissa Franco with addressing the agency’s long-standing performance issues. With that goal in mind, they devised a plan to accelerate the processing and completion of aged cases, which by Spring 2012 totaled 2188.

“We examined the process from filing to resolution, identified the problems, streamlined the operation and closely monitored the implementation of the plan to ensure that we were on target to achieve our goal,” said Deputy Commissioner Darkeh.

“In the past, cases sometimes languished at the agency for years but we have taken measures to successfully optimize the case processing system despite having fewer resources,” said Deputy Commissioner Franco.

The Human Rights Law provides time frames for various steps in the individual complaint process. Specifically, the law states that case investigations are to be completed within 180 days from the filing of the complaint. The cases that proceed to public hearing after probable cause is found are to be heard and decided within 465 days of the filing of the complaint.

“As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, justice delayed is justice denied, and for a very long time that was the case for many New Yorkers who had filed complaints with the agency. I applaud the commitment and dedication of the Division’s staff who have worked diligently to bring us into this new era,” said Commissioner Foster.

New York has the proud distinction of being the first state in the nation to enact a Human Rights Law, which affords every citizen “an equal opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life.” The New York State Division of Human Rights is the agency in charge of enforcing this law which prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, credit, and other jurisdictions. For more information about the law and the work of the agency, please visit the Division of Human Rights’ website at www.dhr.ny.gov.