HOUSE FISCAL AGENCY

Budget Briefing: Department of Civil Rights

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Briefing Topics

- Funding Sources
- Appropriation Areas
- Major Budget Topics

Department of Civil Rights

- The 1963 State Constitution created the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and charged it with investigating "alleged discrimination against any person because of religion, race, color, or national origin”.
- Since then, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (1976 PA 453) and the Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act (1976 PA 220) have added sex, age, marital status, familial status, height, weight, arrest record, genetic information, physical and mental disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, hairstyle, and source of income to the original four protected categories.
- The Department of Civil Rights was established in 1965 to serve as the commission's administrative arm charged with implementing commission policies.
- The department works to ensure equal protection by:
  - Investigating complaints
  - Resolving complaints through legal action and mediation
  - Conducting outreach and education.

Key Budget Terms

Fiscal Year: The state's fiscal year (FY) runs from October to September. FY 2026-27 is October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2027.

Appropriation: Authority to expend funds. An appropriation is not a mandate to spend. Constitutionally, state funds cannot be expended without an appropriation by the legislature.

Line Item: Specific appropriation amount that establishes spending authorization for a particular program or function in a budget bill.

Boilerplate: Specific language sections in a budget bill that direct, limit, or restrict line item expenditures, express legislative intent, and/or require reports.

Lapse: Appropriated amounts that are unspent or unobligated at the end of a fiscal year. Appropriations are automatically terminated at the end of a fiscal year unless designated as a multi-year work project under a statutory process. Lapsed funds are available for expenditure in the subsequent fiscal year.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, historical budget figures in this presentation have not been adjusted for inflation.

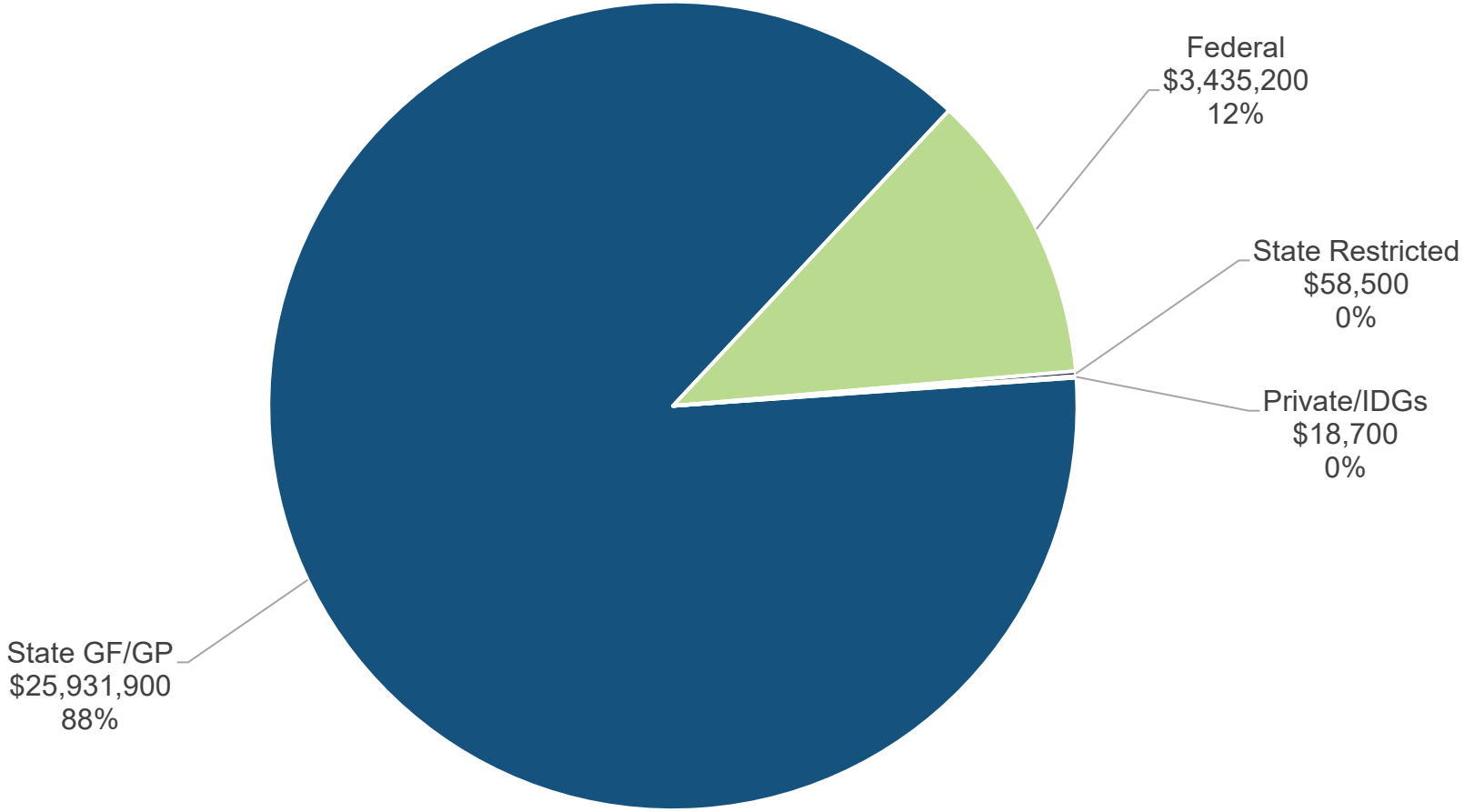
Funding Sources

FY 2026-27 Civil Rights Budget

Fund Source	Funding	Description
Gross Appropriations	$29,444,300	Total spending authority from all revenue sources
Interdepartmental Grants (IDG) Revenue	0	Funds received by one state department from another state department, usually for services provided
Adjusted Gross Appropriations	$29,444,300	Gross appropriations excluding IDGs; avoids double counting when adding appropriation amounts across budget areas
Federal Revenue	3,435,200	Federal grant or matching revenue; generally dedicated to specific programs or purposes
Local Revenue	0	Revenue received from local units of government for state services
Private Revenue	18,700	Revenue from individuals and private entities, including payments for services, grants, and other contributions
State Restricted Revenue	58,500	State revenue restricted by the State Constitution, state statute, or outside restriction that is available only for specified purposes; includes most fee revenue
State General Fund/General Purpose (GF/GP) Revenue	$25,931,900	Unrestricted revenue from taxes and other sources available to fund basic state programs and other purposes determined by the legislature

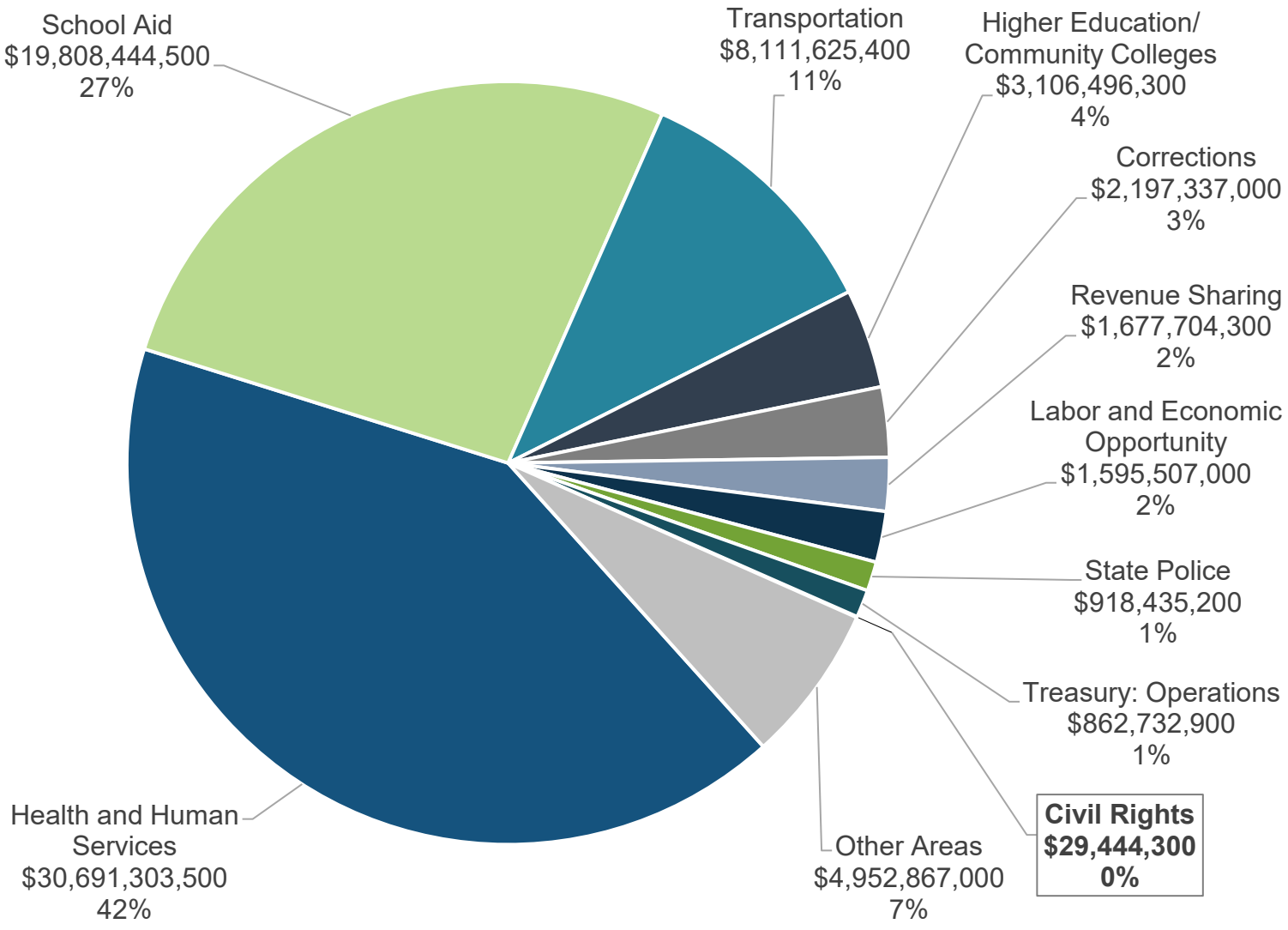
FY 2026-27 Fund Sources

Of the **$29.4 million** Civil Rights budget, **88%** is funded by GF/GP.



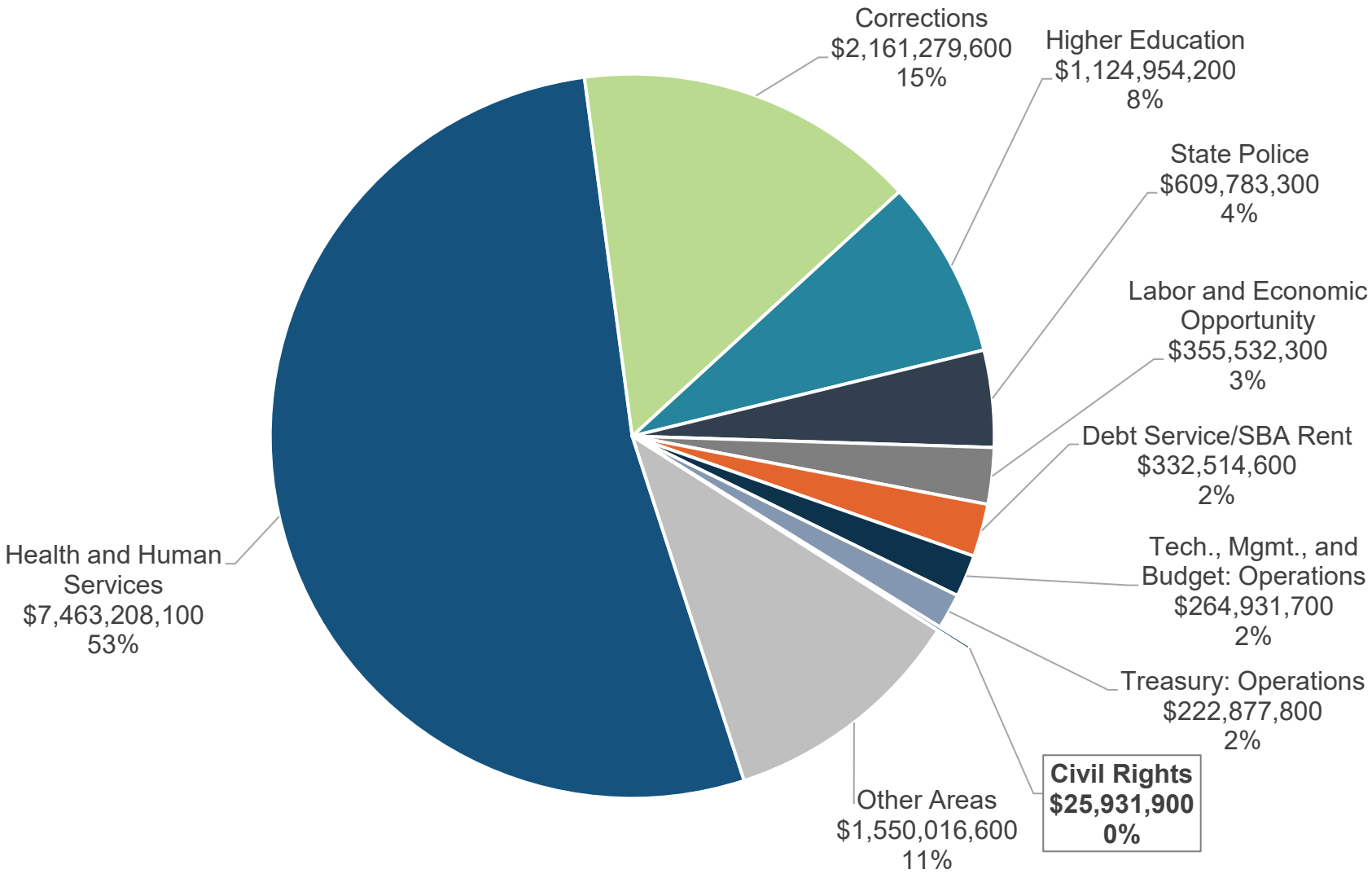
Civil Rights Share of Total State Budget

The Department of Civil Rights budget represents less than **1%** of the **$74.0 billion** state budget (adjusted gross) for FY 2026-27.



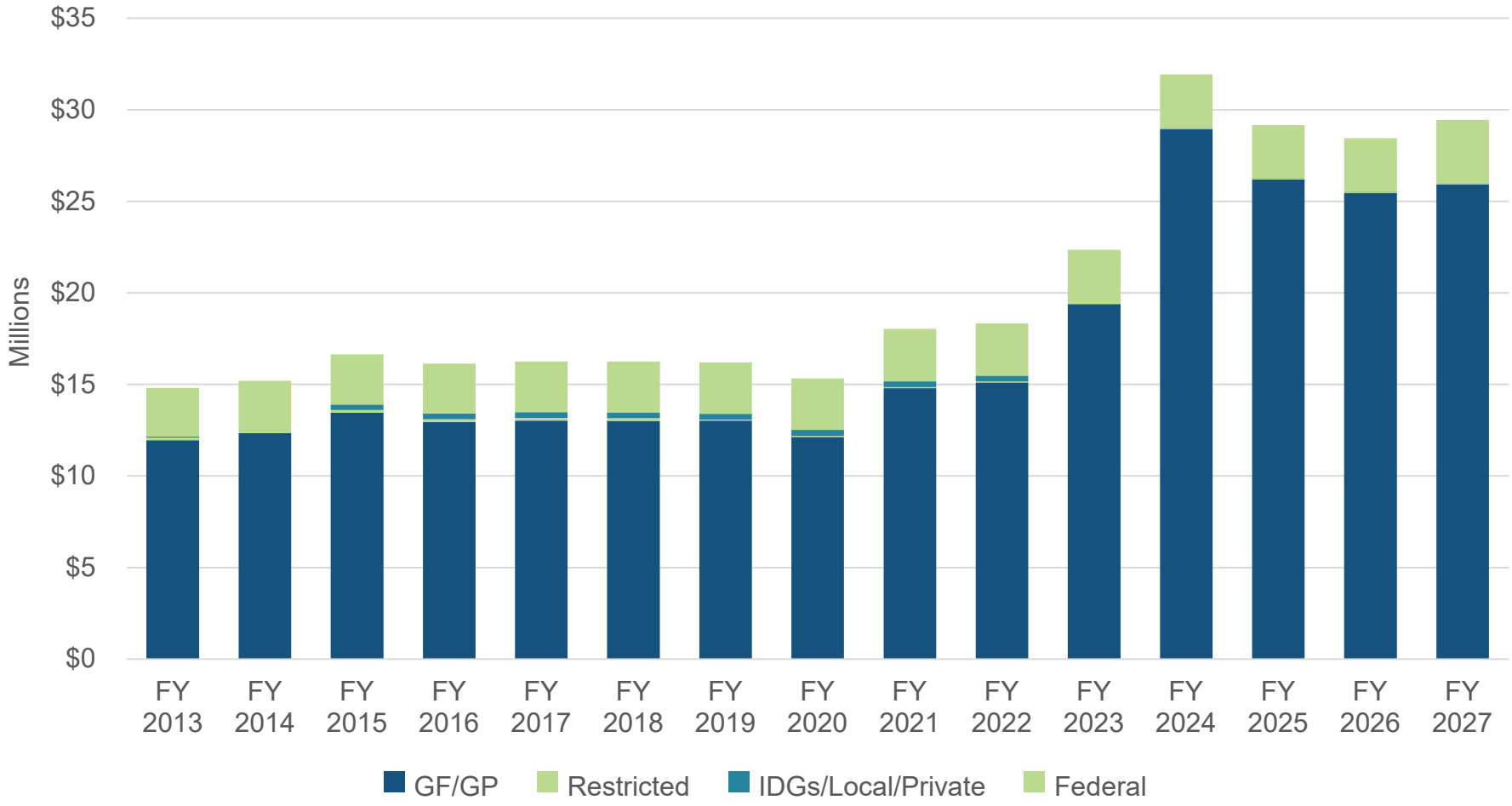
Civil Rights Share of Total GF/GP Budget

The Department of Civil Rights budget represents less than **1%** of the state's **$14.1 billion** GF/GP budget for FY 2026-27.



Civil Rights Funding History

Funding for the Department of Civil Rights had remained steady until FY 2022-23 when one-time and ongoing funding increased mainly for processing and investigating complaint investigations. Decreases since FY 2023-24 come from removal of one-time appropriations and grants to cultural museums.



Appropriation Areas

Civil Rights Appropriation Areas

Complaint Investigation and Enforcement: Investigates discrimination complaints and enforces civil rights laws. There are seven Civil Rights enforcement units located in five offices throughout Michigan (Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Flint) to assist persons in need

Disability Rights and Compliance: Oversees compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Freedom of Information Act, the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing, and the contract compliance program, which certifies state of Michigan vendors for nondiscrimination in employment.

Executive Office: Administrative support staff and operations to support executive director

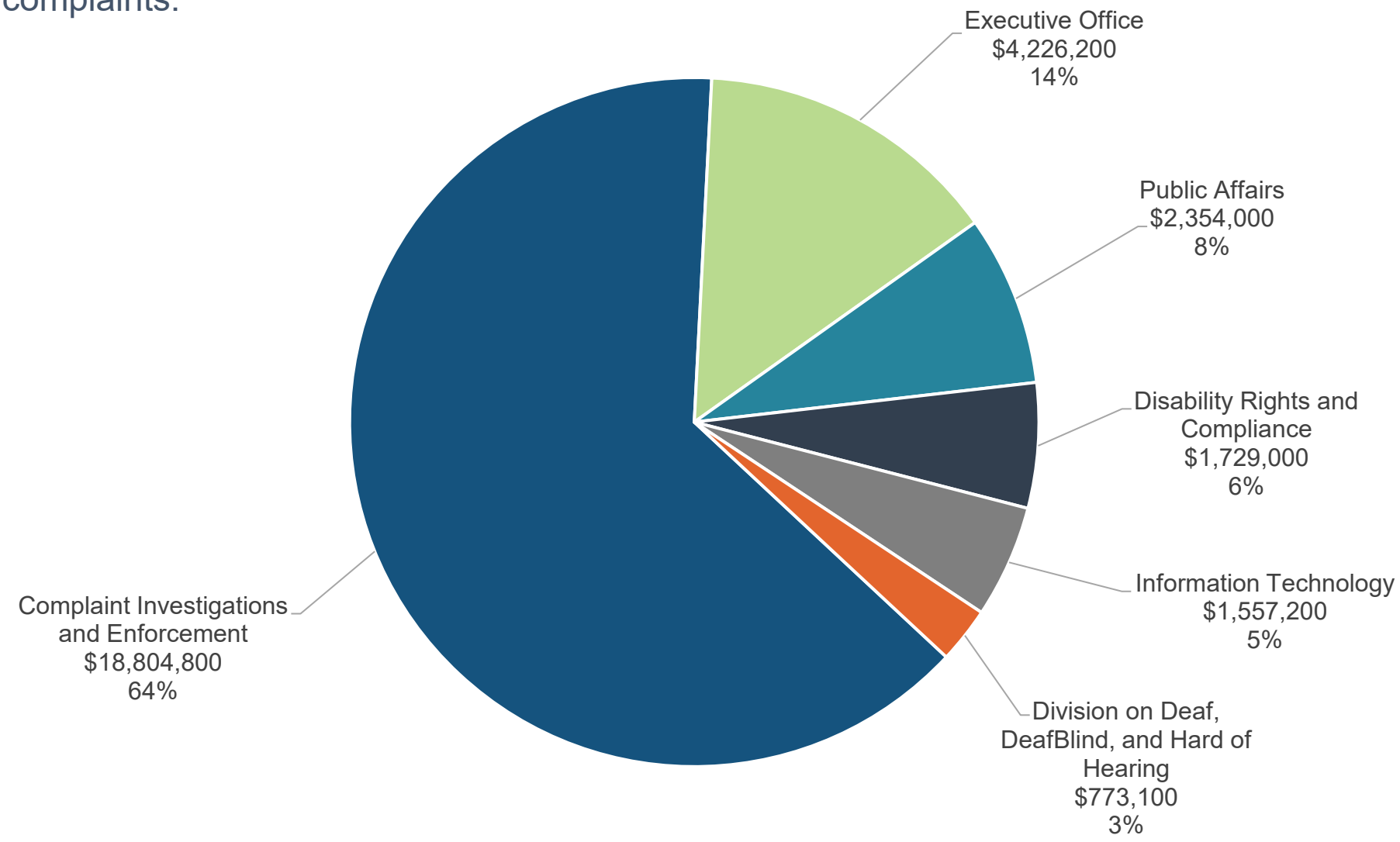
Public Affairs: Collaborates with governmental units, community-based organizations, law enforcement, advocacy groups, educational institutions, and private sector; activities include networking, partnership, presentations, crisis intervention, training, and technical assistance

Information Technology: IT-related services and projects that support department activities; administered by the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget

Division on Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing: Advocates on behalf of deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing persons and provides technical support, information, referral services, and interpreter information

FY 2026-27 Gross Appropriations

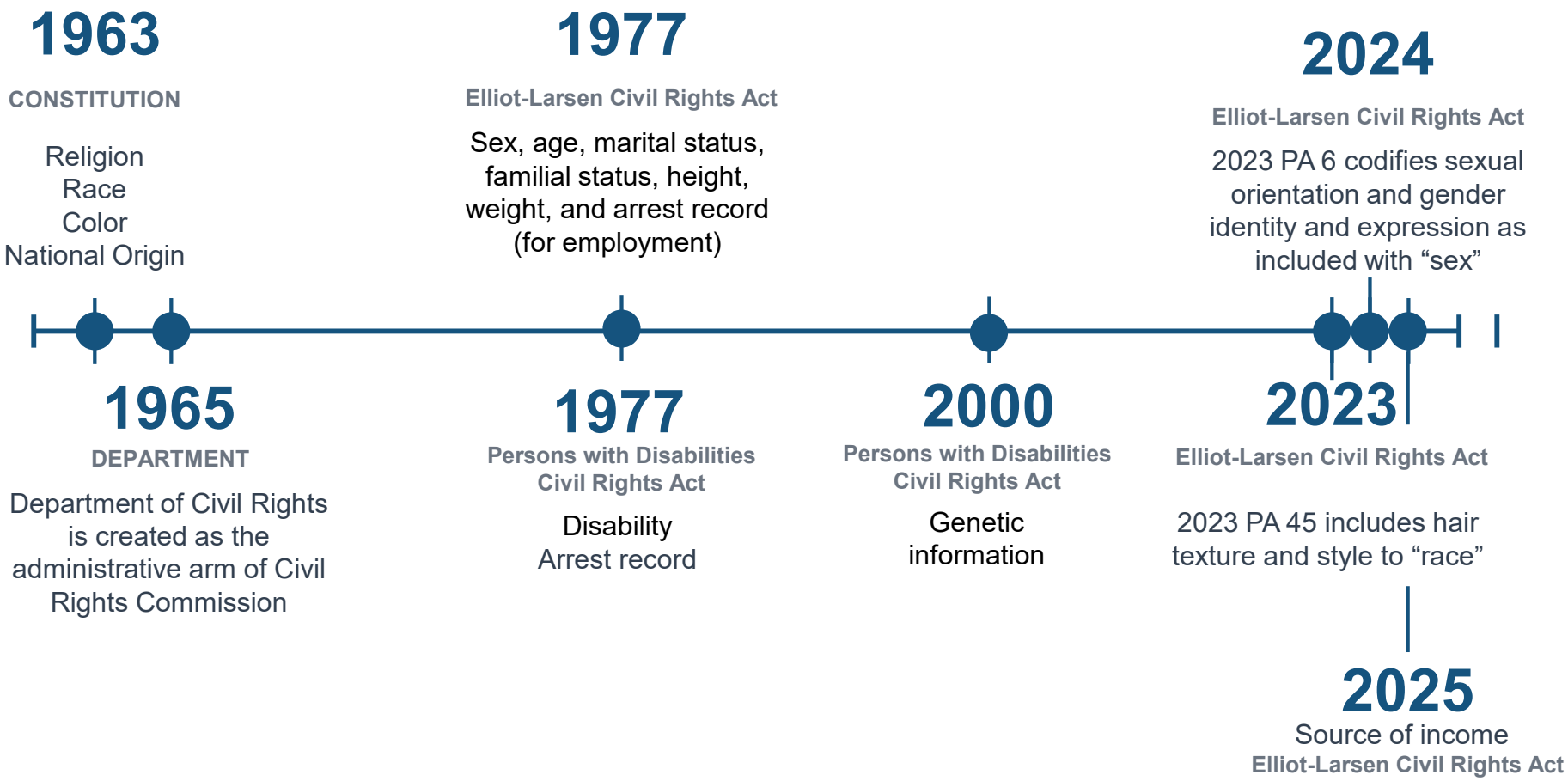
Of the **$29.4 million** Department of Civil Rights budget, **64%** is appropriated for the department's constitutionally required responsibility of investigating civil rights complaints.



Major Budget Topics

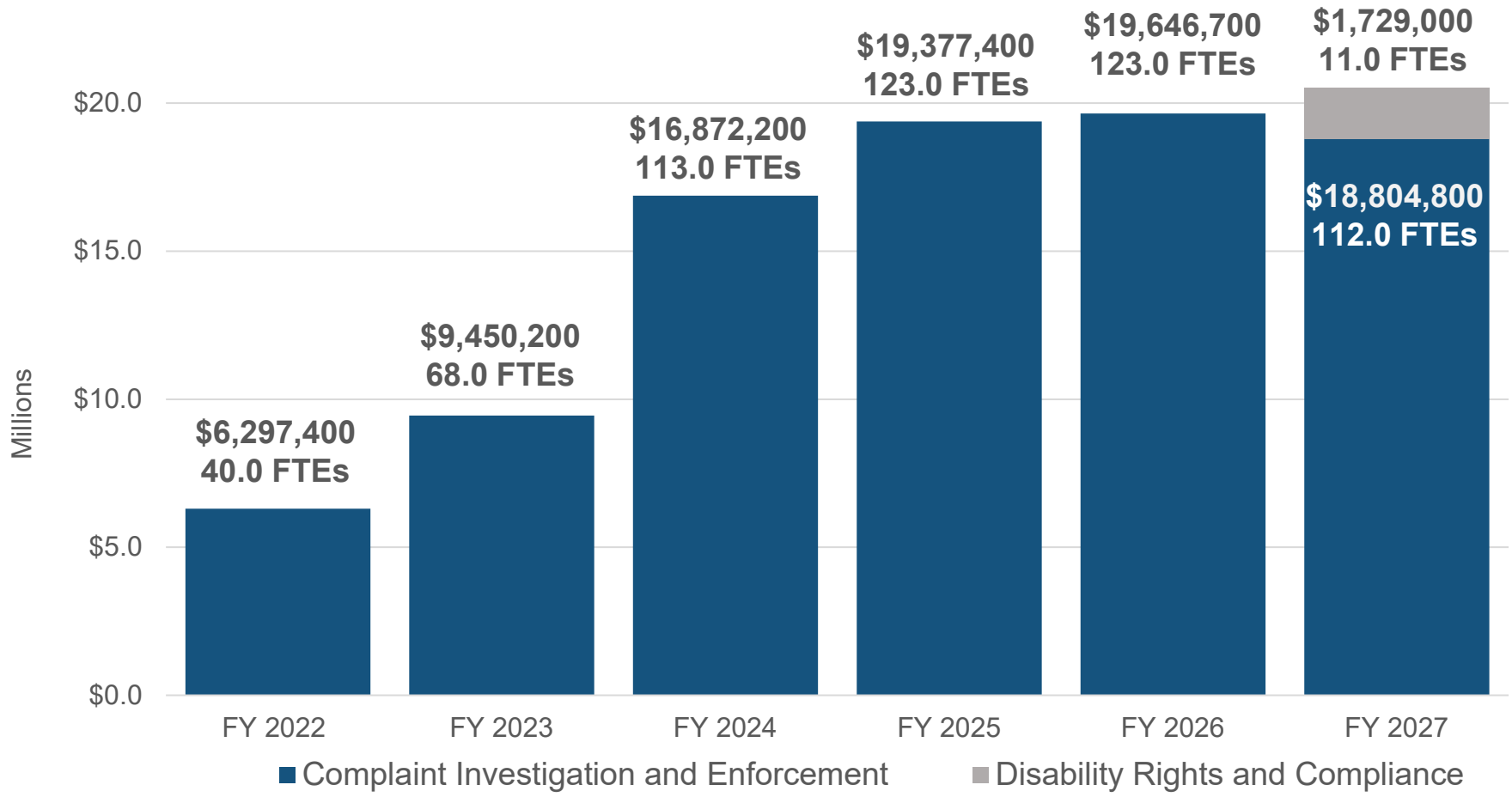
Protections and Protect Classes History

Recent amendments to ELCRA have expanded protections by codifying and clarifying categories, leading to potential increases in complaint cases.



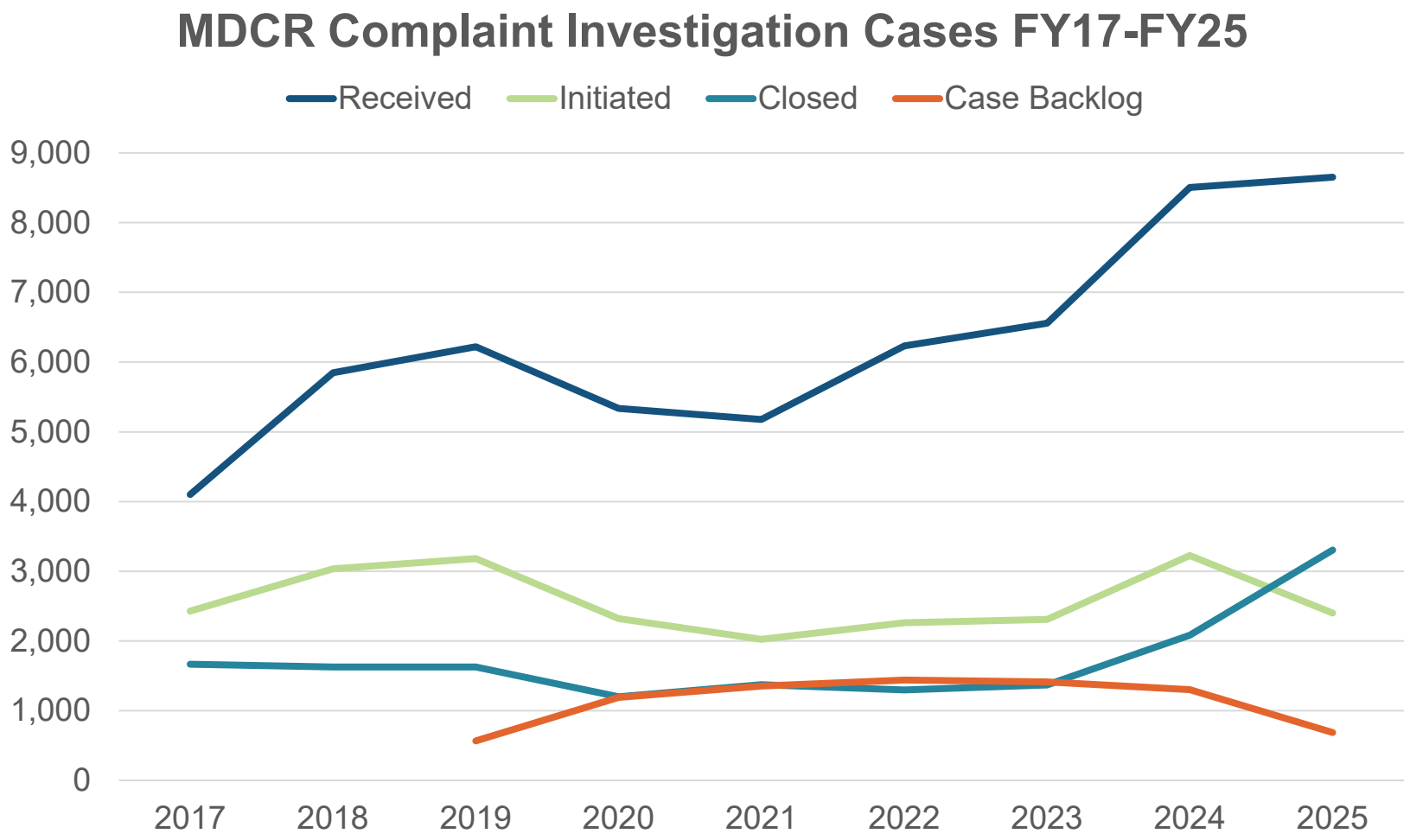
Complaint Investigation and Enforcement

Funding for Complaint Investigation and Enforcement increased **$14.2 million**, or **226%**, since FY 2021-22 to help reduce case backlogs and to cover new investigative responsibilities. The Disability Rights and Compliance Division was unrolled from the existing line item in FY 2026-27 to have a new line for the division.



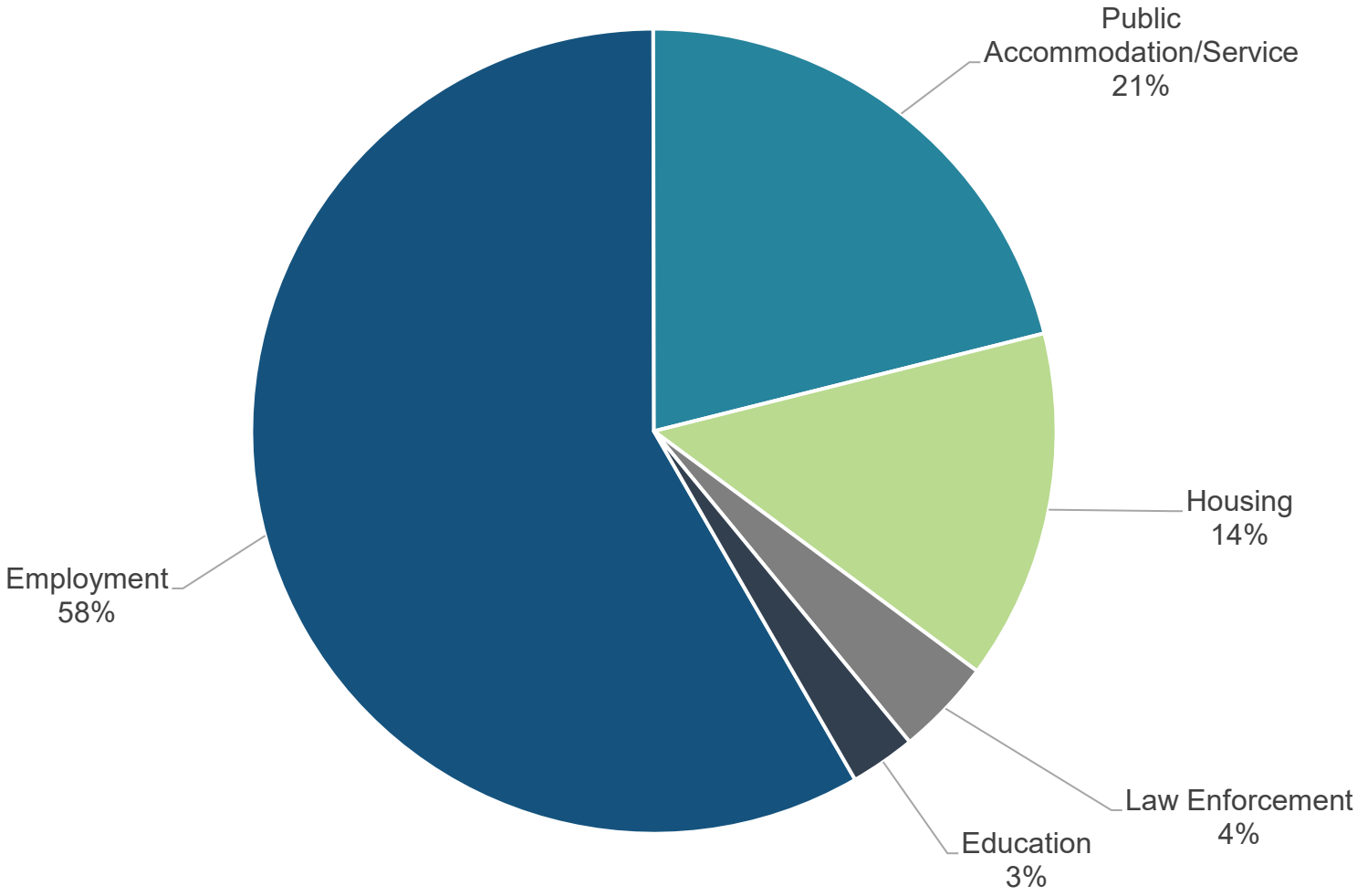
Complaint Case Backlog Status

Following increased funding and FTE positions, the case backlog has been decreasing while the number of total complaints received has increased.



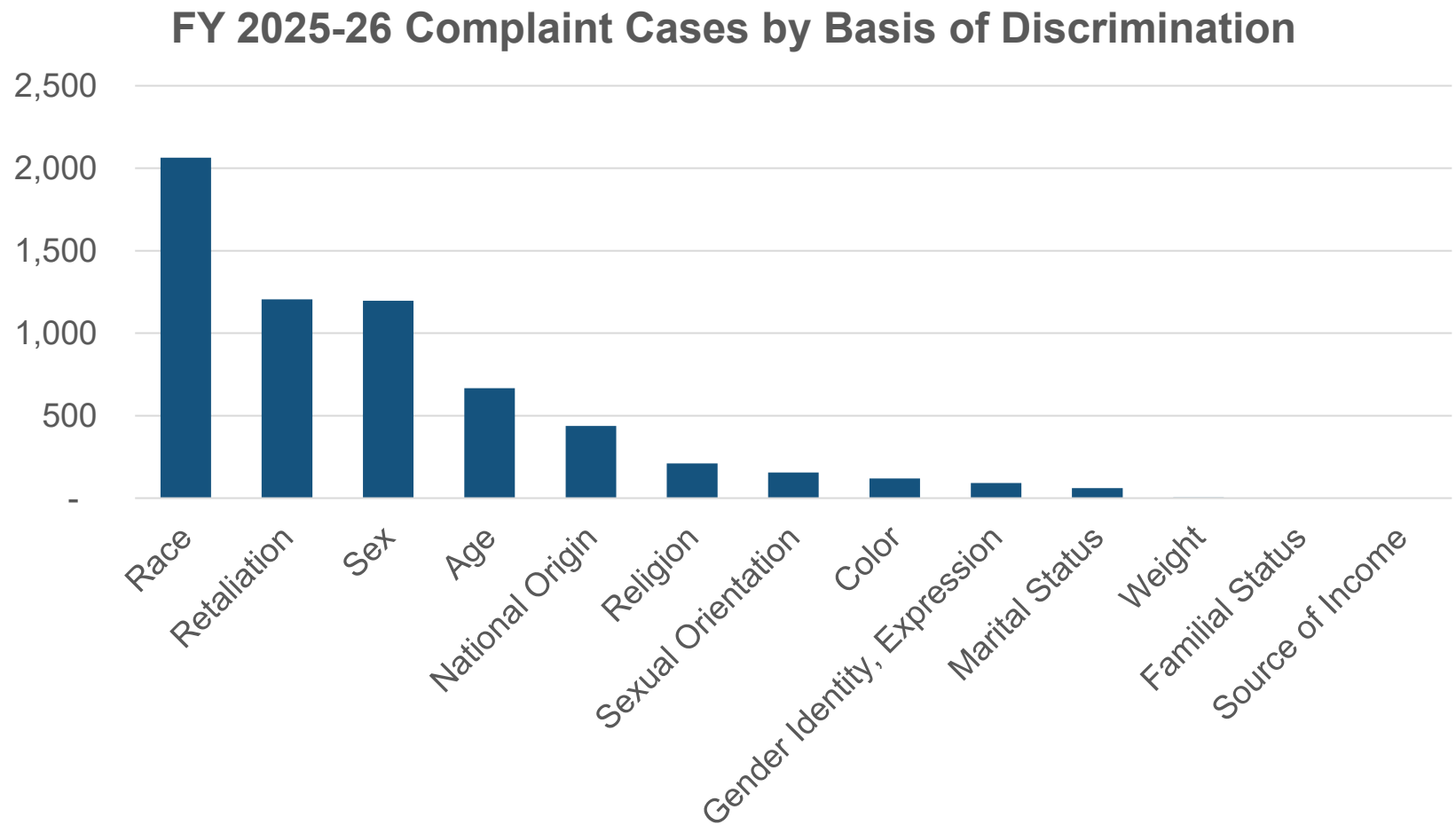
Formal Complaints by Area of Discrimination

The department is required to investigate properly filed complaints under areas protected by law. Employment-related complaints made over half of all 2,498 complaints in FY 2024-25.



Formal Complaints by Basis of Discrimination

Discrimination complaint cases are grounded on legally protected group statuses. Individual cases can have more than one status as a basis alleged discrimination, resulting in the data not reflecting the total number of certified complaints for the same period.



For more information about the Department of Civil Rights budget:

HFA Resources

http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/GeneralGovernment.asp

Contact Information

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