

PUBLICATION

EEOC on 2011: Record Number of Charges Filed, \$51 Million More Obtained

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On January 25, 2012, the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reported that it received a record number of discrimination charges in 2011. During that same period, the EEOC also noted it obtained a record amount of relief for discrimination claimants.

Specifically, the EEOC received 99,947 charges of harassment, discrimination and/or retaliation charges against private sector employers between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011, just up from the 99,922 it received in FY 2010. Charges alleging retaliation accounted for the largest number of private sector complaints received (37.4 percent), followed by race discrimination complaints (35.4 percent). Claims of religious discrimination, while not as numerous as retaliation and race discrimination claims, increased by a little more than 9 percent, which was the highest percentage increase of any of the charge categories.

The agency also reported that it obtained a record \$455.6 million in relief for private and governmental applicants and employees, representing a \$51 million increase over FY 2010. ADA charges produced the largest portion of monetary relief among all of the statutes, accounting for \$103.4 million in recovery, versus \$76.1 million during the previous fiscal year.

This increase in charges likely reflects both the EEOC's increasingly aggressive enforcement tactics, as well as the impact of a sustained weak economy. It is more important than ever for employers to be mindful of their obligations under state and federal employment laws and to be able to defend their actions when and if a charge is filed.