



EQUITY FOR ALL

Fort Wayne Employment, Housing
and Public Accommodation
Discrimination Study Overview

CITY OF FORT WAYNE



METROPOLITAN HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

2022 STUDY

Fort Wayne is a community on the rise. Over the last ten years, the city has been recognized as an All-America City, while also collecting countless “top-ten list” spots as a great place to live, work and play.

During that same time period, the Fort Wayne Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (Fort Wayne Metro) has received more than 10,000 inquiries and filed and investigated more than 4,000 complaints of discrimination. As a result, Fort Wayne Metro has settled a portion of these complaints and obtained more than \$1,600,000 and other non-monetary relief on behalf of residents in the areas of employment, housing, education and public accommodation.

While our city strides toward prosperity, not all are able to keep in step.

Recognizing the importance of equity for all to a community’s success, Fort Wayne Metro conducted the Fort Wayne Employment, Housing and Public Accommodation Study to gain a deeper understanding of the unfair experiences our residents face.

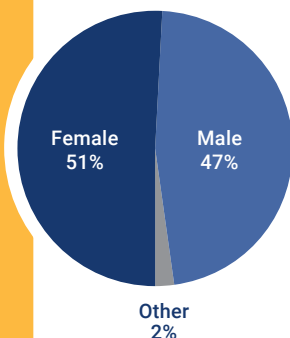
METHODOLOGY

Fort Wayne Metro commissioned Purdue University Fort Wayne Community Research Institute (CRI) and the Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics to formulate the survey questions. The goal was to achieve a better understanding of residents’ perceptions of their unfair experiences with employment, housing and public accommodations. SurveyUSA was commissioned to administer the survey.

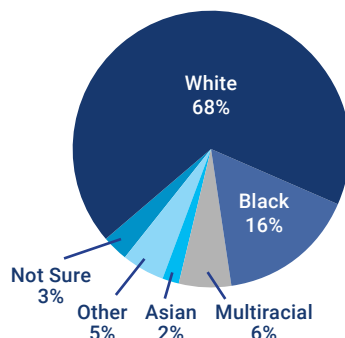
SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Eight-hundred adults ages 18–64 were interviewed via phone call (in English and/or Spanish) or online surveys during a two-week period in March of 2022. The population sampled reflects Fort Wayne’s demographics.

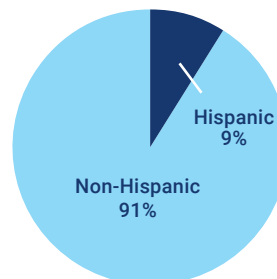
GENDER



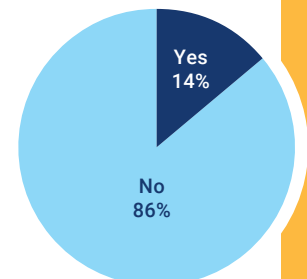
RACE



ETHNICITY



DISABILITY



OVERVIEW

In Fort Wayne, our differences are a cause for celebration, not discrimination. While most Fort Wayne residents feel they are treated fairly, members of minority or historically disadvantaged populations are more likely to cite unfair and discriminatory experiences.

→ This report focuses on these experiences in three key areas.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Unfair experiences are prevalent in Fort Wayne workplaces. This data set reflects those individuals who are currently working.

- **80%** of Black respondents who experienced unfair treatment believed race or ethnicity was the cause.
- **68%** of all survey respondents heard slang, jokes or offensive language about race in their workplaces.
- **53%** of women who experienced unfair treatment cited their gender as the cause.
- **41%** of individuals with a disability who experienced unfair treatment cited their disability as the cause.

And individuals aren't likely to report their experiences.

- **73%** of all survey respondents said they *would* file a complaint with their HR department if they experienced unfair treatment at work; only **27%** of those who reported experiencing unfair treatment at work *did* file a complaint.
- **56%** of all survey respondents had never heard of their local civil rights agency.

Residents believe unfair housing practices are taking place in Fort Wayne.

- **48%** of all survey respondents believed Fort Wayne housing providers and apartment complexes use an applicant's race or ethnicity in making rental decisions.
- **37%** of those who experienced unfair treatment in housing believed it was because of their race or ethnicity.

Public accommodations present challenges for many individuals.

- **48%** of respondents who experienced unfair treatment in stores or restaurants believed it was because of their race or ethnicity.
- **45%** of those who reported being unfairly stopped, searched, questioned or threatened by police believed it was because of their race or ethnicity.





EMPLOYMENT



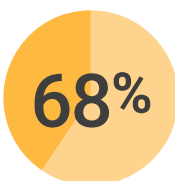
Employees have the right to a fair work environment, and providing one is good for business. Any form of discrimination leads to higher turnover and greater instability in the workplace. Improving workplace culture, creating a safe work environment and ensuring respect for all employees positively impacts everyone in our community.

**Fort Wayne is recognized for its employment opportunities—
but we still have work to do to ensure fair, equitable workplaces.**

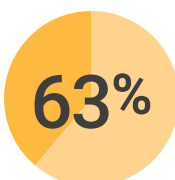
→ Employment data reflects respondents who are currently employed.



Approximately half of all survey respondents heard negative comments about people with disabilities, immigrants or people who do not speak English in their workplaces.



of all survey respondents heard slang, jokes or offensive language about race in their workplaces.



of all survey respondents heard negative comments, jokes or other offensive language about people who identify as LGBTQ+ in their workplaces.

Race and Ethnicity

Black, multiracial and Hispanic individuals were more likely to cite their race or ethnicity as a cause of unfair treatment at work.

31% of Black respondents reported experiencing disrespect at work on a weekly basis.

28% of those who speak a language other than English at home cited being criticized at work multiple times a month for their accent.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

Women were four times as likely as men to cite their gender as a cause of unfair treatment at work.

31% of LGBTQ+ respondents believed their sexual orientation was the cause of unfair treatment at work.

77% of all survey respondents stated that they have never been exposed to sexual suggestive images, videos, jokes or messages from coworkers.

Disability

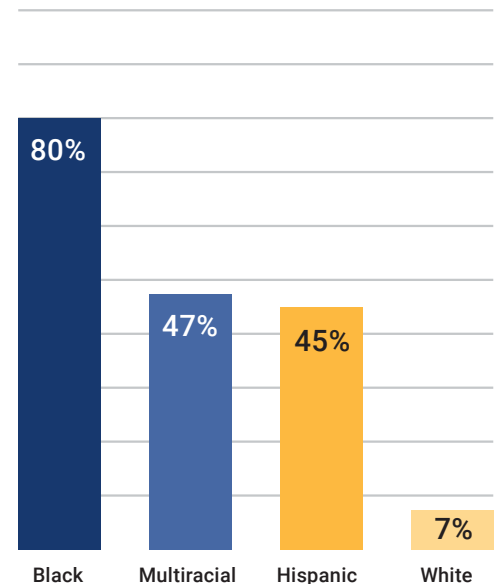
Respondents with a disability were more likely to experience unfair treatment than those without a disability.

47% of respondents with a disability reported they had been unfairly fired.

36% of respondents with a disability believed they were unfairly not hired.

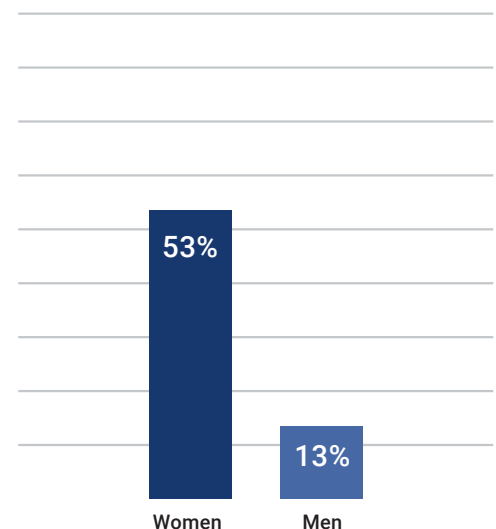
Experienced Unfair Treatment at Work Because of their Race or Ethnicity

Data reflects survey respondents who are currently working and indicated they experienced an unfair event.



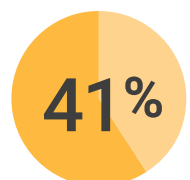
Experienced Unfair Treatment at Work Because of their Gender

Data reflects survey respondents who are currently working and indicated they experienced an unfair event.



Experienced Unfair Treatment at Work Because of their Disability

Data reflects survey respondents with a self-reported disability who are currently working and indicated they experienced an unfair event.





HOUSING

Fair housing fosters inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity. Where a person lives impacts their access to food, jobs, quality education, childcare, transportation, healthcare and more. When we ensure fair housing for everyone, we take steps towards eliminating inequity.

While Fort Wayne has made progress in housing access—it's still not equitable for all.

Race and Ethnicity

- **51%** of all survey respondents believed housing providers and apartment complexes are faster to evict based on the tenant's race or ethnicity some or most of the time.
- **48%** of all survey respondents believed Fort Wayne housing providers and apartment complexes use an applicant's race or ethnicity in making rental decisions.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

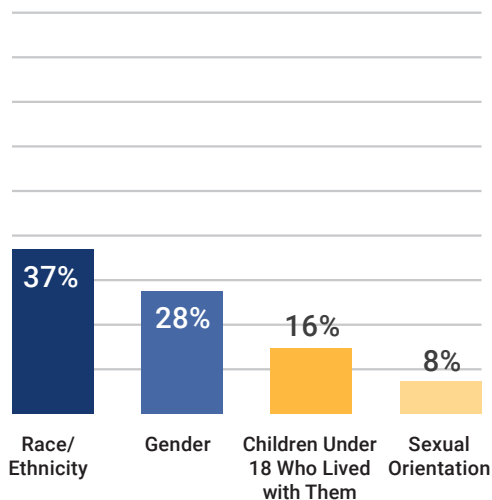
- **40%** of women cited their gender as the cause of unfair housing experiences.
- **49%** of LGBTQ+ respondents believed their sexual orientation was the cause of unfair housing treatment.

Disability

- **57%** of all survey respondents believed Fort Wayne housing providers use modifications for disabilities, including assistance animals, in making rental decisions.
- **34%** of respondents with a disability believed they experienced unfair housing because of their disability.

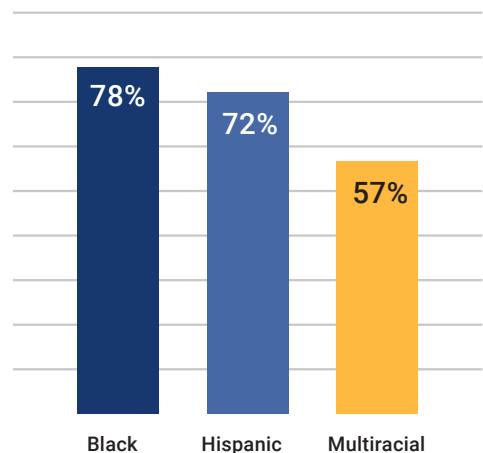
Causes of Unfair Housing Experiences

Data reflects survey respondents who indicated that they experienced an unfair event. Respondents checked all that applied.



Experienced Unfair Housing Because of their Race or Ethnicity

Data reflects survey respondents who indicated that they experienced an unfair event.





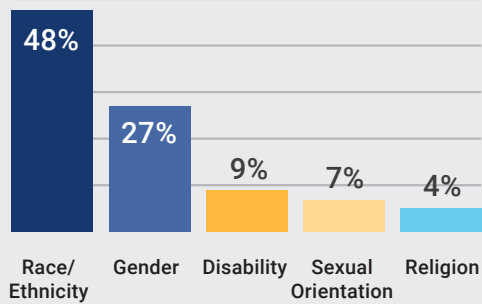
PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION

Public spaces are where individuals access goods and services—as well as each other. They're where people secure their families' necessities, and where communities gather to connect. When residents feel welcomed in these places, it cultivates a sense of belonging.

Utilizing public accommodations proves to be challenging for some populations in Fort Wayne.

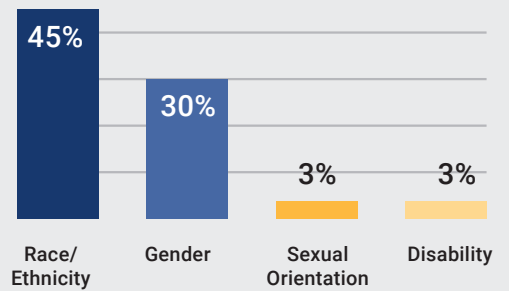
Causes of Unfair Treatment at Restaurants/Stores

Data reflects survey respondents who indicated that they experienced an unfair event. Respondents checked all that applied.



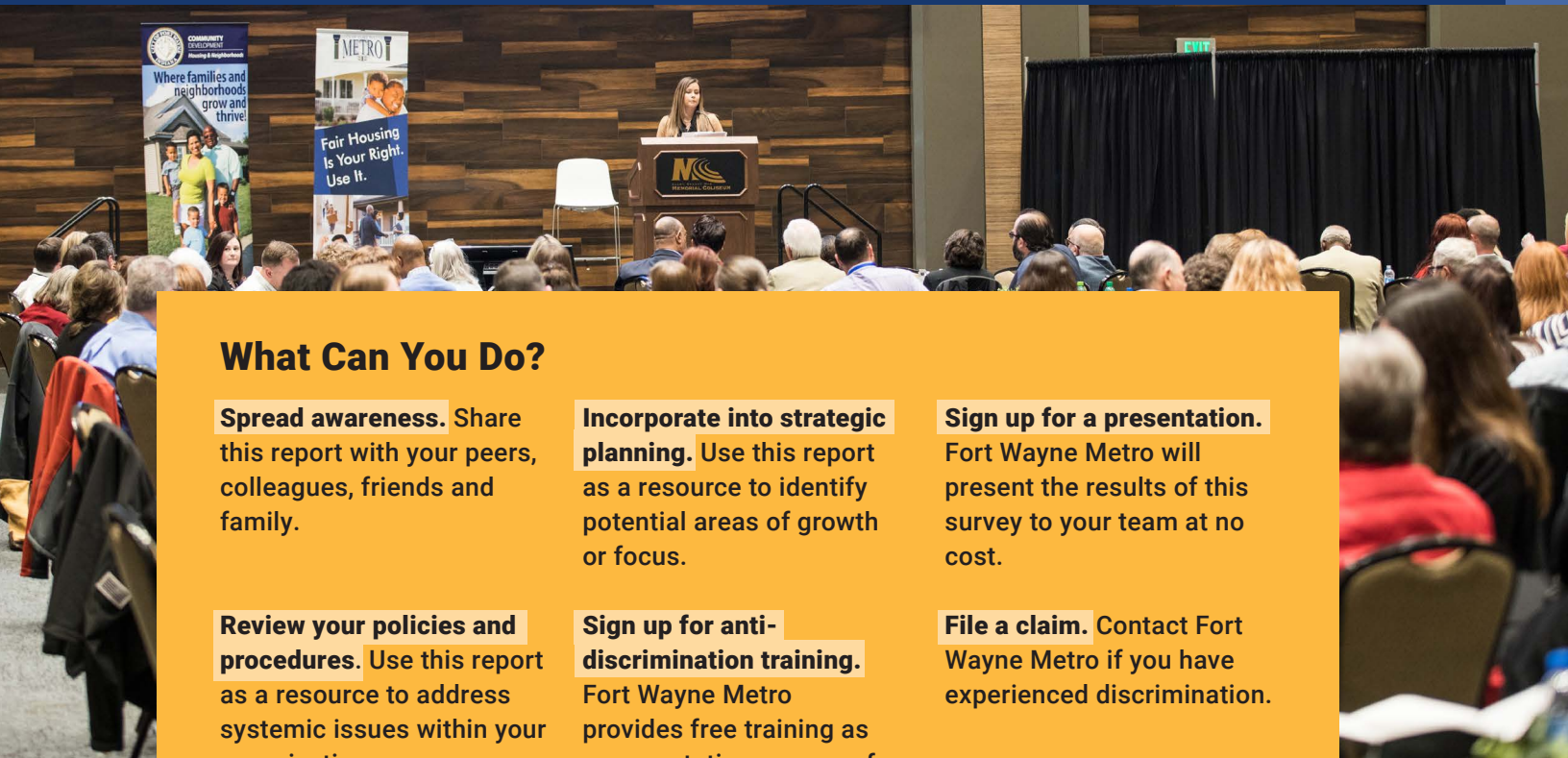
Causes of Unfair Stopping, Searching, Questioning or Threatening by Police

Data reflects survey respondents who indicated that they experienced an unfair event. Respondents checked all that applied.



Together, we can combat discrimination.

Our community's historically disadvantaged populations continue to be at risk. However, we can use the information in this report as a resource to combat discriminatory practices in employment, housing, public accommodation and education.



What Can You Do?

Spread awareness. Share this report with your peers, colleagues, friends and family.

Review your policies and procedures. Use this report as a resource to address systemic issues within your organization.

Incorporate into strategic planning. Use this report as a resource to identify potential areas of growth or focus.

Sign up for anti-discrimination training. Fort Wayne Metro provides free training as a preventative measure for organizations.

Sign up for a presentation. Fort Wayne Metro will present the results of this survey to your team at no cost.

File a claim. Contact Fort Wayne Metro if you have experienced discrimination.

About Fort Wayne Metropolitan Human Relations Commission

Fort Wayne Metro is the local civil rights agency, helping make Fort Wayne a welcoming city for all. Through discrimination investigation, education, outreach and training, Fort Wayne Metro empowers residents, giving them all equal opportunity to thrive and flourish.

To read the full report, visit FortWayneMetro.org.



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