

EEOC Data Highlight

April 2022 No. 2



Sexual Harassment in Our Nation's Workplaces

April is National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.¹ The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits discrimination based on sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity). Sexual harassment or sexual assault in the workplace is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII.

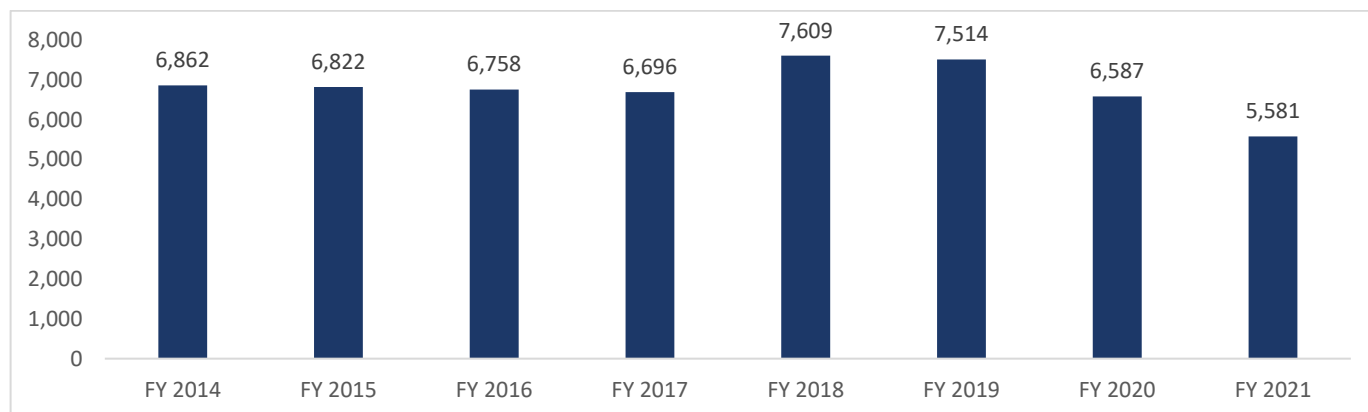
Preventing and remedying harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment, has long been a top agency priority. This EEOC data highlight focuses on charges alleging sexual harassment under Title VII filed with the agency beginning in FY 2018, when the #MeToo movement went viral and received international attention, through FY 2021. The data profiled below also includes other allegations of discrimination, including on the bases of race, retaliation, and national origin, filed concurrently with allegations of sexual harassment between FY 2018 and FY 2021.

These data do not tell the full story of sexual harassment in our nation's workplaces. In June 2016, the EEOC released a report on the study of harassment in the workplace which noted that workplace harassment often goes unreported.² For example, one study cited in the report found that 90% of individuals who say they have experienced harassment never take formal action against the harassment, such as filing a charge or a complaint.³

EEOC Charge Data (FY 2018 – FY 2021)

Between FY 2018 and FY 2021, the EEOC received a total of 98,411 charges alleging harassment under any basis and 27,291 charges alleging sexual harassment. Of significant note is the increased number of sexual harassment charges received by the EEOC in the two years following #MeToo going viral in October 2017 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Sexual Harassment Charge Receipts, FY 2014 – FY 2021



SOURCE: U.S. EEOC, Integrated Mission System, Charge Data, FY 2014 – FY 2021.

¹ "A Proclamation on National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, 2022," The White House, March 31, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/03/31/a-proclamation-on-national-sexual-assault-awareness-and-prevention-month-2022/>.

² See Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace, Report of Co-Chairs Chai R. Feldblum & Victoria A. Lipnic, June 2016 at https://www.eeoc.gov/select-task-force-study-harassment-workplace#_Toc453686298.

³ *Id.* citing Lilia M. Cortina and Jennifer L. Berdahl, *Sexual Harassment in Organizations: A Decade of Research in Review*, 1 The Sage Handbook of Organizational Behavior 469, 469-96 (J. Barling & C. L. Cooper eds., 2008).

In FY 2018, the EEOC received 7,609 sexual harassment charges compared to 6,696 in FY 2017 – an increase of 13.6%. Additionally, sexual harassment charges as a percentage of all harassment charges began increasing in FY 2018. Between FY 2018 and FY 2021, sexual harassment charges accounted for 27.7% of all harassment charges compared to 24.7% of all harassment charges between FY 2014 and FY 2017. Sexual harassment charges also accounted for a greater percentage of the total charges under all statutes received by the EEOC between FY 2018 and FY 2021 (9.8%) compared to between FY 2014 and FY 2017 (7.7%). Also, between FY 2018 and FY 2021, harassment charges made up 35.4% of the total charges (277,872) received by the EEOC.

Women also continue to file a disproportionate number of the charges filed with the EEOC alleging sexual harassment. Women filed 78.2% of the 27,291 sexual harassment charges received between FY 2018 and FY 2021 (see Figure 2). Additionally, women filed 62.2% of the 98,411 total harassment charges alleging any bases (e.g., race, national origin) received between FY 2018 and FY 2021 (see Figure 3).

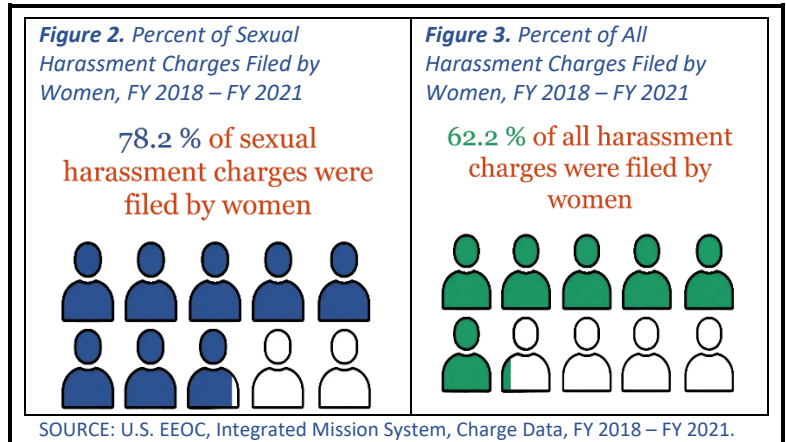
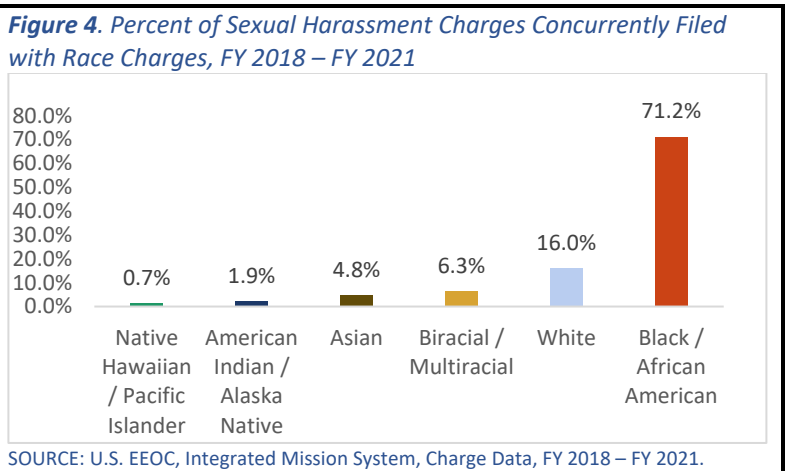
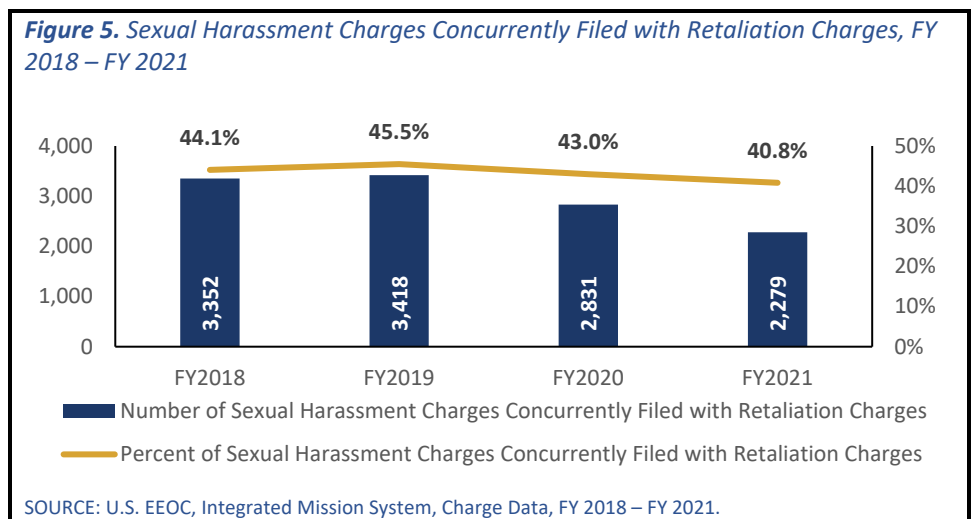


Figure 4 provides the percent of total sexual harassment charges concurrently filed with a charge of race discrimination between FY 2018 and FY 2021. Of the 1,945 sexual harassment charges filed concurrently with a race charge, 71.2% designated Black/African American as the relevant race.



Additionally, of the 797 sexual harassment charges filed concurrently with a national origin charge between FY 2018 and FY 2021, 37.6% of the charges designated Hispanic and 15.7% designated Mexican national origin.

Charges alleging sexual harassment and retaliation are often linked. Figure 5 provides the percent of total sexual harassment charges concurrently filed with a charge of retaliation between FY 2018 and FY 2021. Of the 27,291 sexual harassment charges filed, 43.5% were concurrently filed with a retaliation charge.



Between FY 2018 and FY 2021, the most common issues alleged with sexual harassment charges received

by the EEOC were those involving Discharge, Harassment (non-sexual), and Terms and Conditions (see Figure 6).

As expected, the states with the most sexual harassment charges generally correspond with the states with the largest populations. Examining the number of charges per 10,000 people, ages 16 and older, provides a better comparison of the states with the most sexual harassment charges standardized by population. (See Figures 7 and 8). The top 10 states account for 24.5% of all sexual harassment charge receipts in the United States.

Figure 6. Five Most Common Issues, Sexual Harassment Charges, FY 2018 – FY 2021

| Issue | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Discharge | 48.3% |
| Harassment (non-sexual) | 33.2% |
| Terms/Conditions | 32.5% |
| Constructive Discharge | 20.9% |
| Discipline | 10.3% |

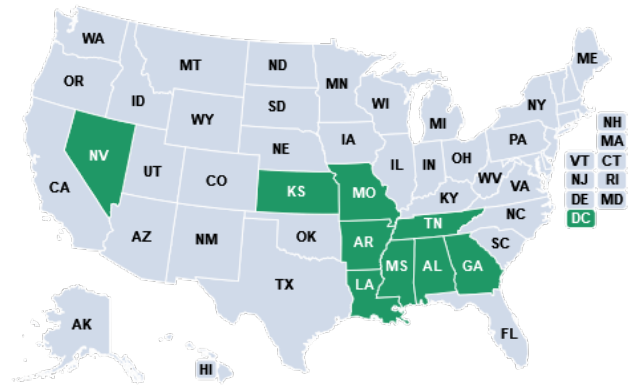
SOURCE: U.S. EEOC, Integrated Mission System, Charge Data, FY 2018 - FY 2021.

Figure 8. Top 10 States with the Most Sexual Harassment Charges per 10,000 Population Ages 16 Years and Older, FY 2018 – FY 2021

| Number of Charges per 10,000 Population | | | |
|---|------|----------------------|------|
| Alabama | 1.00 | Arkansas | 0.75 |
| Mississippi | 0.93 | Missouri | 0.74 |
| Georgia | 0.83 | Nevada | 0.72 |
| Kansas | 0.80 | District of Columbia | 0.72 |
| Tennessee | 0.76 | Louisiana | 0.72 |

SOURCES: U.S. EEOC, Integrated Mission System, Charge Data, FY 2018 – FY 2021. 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 16 Years and Older, Civilian Labor Force.

Figure 7. Top 10 States with the Most Sexual Harassment Charges per 10,000 Population Ages 16 Years and Older, FY 2018 – FY 2021



SOURCES: U.S. EEOC, Integrated Mission System, Charge Data, FY 2018 – FY 2021. 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 16 Years and Older, Civilian Labor Force.

Combatting Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

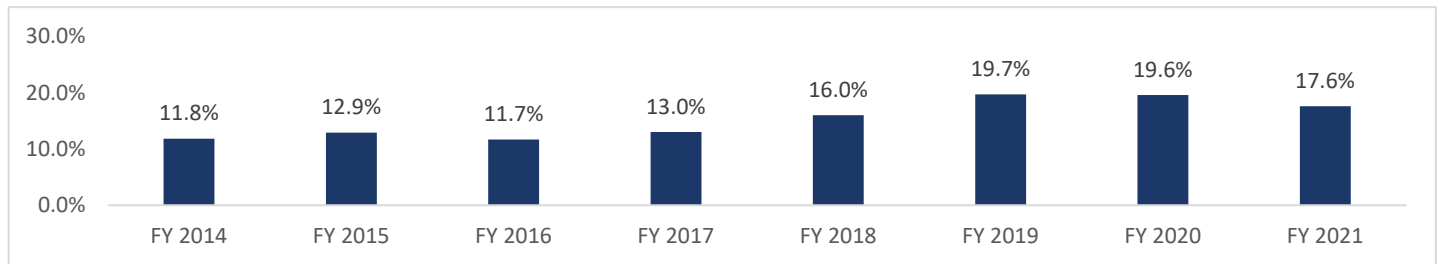
The EEOC will continue to use all available tools, including outreach and education, enforcement, and litigation to prevent and remedy sexual harassment in the workplace.

Between FY 2018 and FY 2021, the EEOC recovered nearly \$300 million for individuals with sexual harassment claims through resolved charge receipts and in litigation. In FY 2021, EEOC resolutions that included a claim for sexual harassment increased to 10%, 1.2 percentage points higher than in FY 2018 (8.8%), and, in FY 2021, 28.6% of sexual harassment resolutions were resolved favorably to the worker. Additionally, between FY 2018 and FY 2021:

- 18.2% of total monetary benefits recovered by the EEOC included a claim for sexual harassment compared to 12.4% between FY 2014 and FY 2017. Figure 9 provides these percentages for each fiscal year between FY 2014 and FY 2021.
- The EEOC recovered \$299.8 million for individuals with sexual harassment claims through resolved charge receipts and in litigation, benefiting 8,147 people (see Figure 10).

- The EEOC recovered nearly \$104 million more for individuals with sexual harassment claims than in the period between FY 2014 and FY 2017--\$83.8 million more through resolved charge receipts and an additional \$20 million in litigation (see Figure 11).

Figure 9. Percentage of Sexual Harassment Monetary Benefits, FY 2014 – FY 2021*



*Excludes additional monetary benefits recovered by the EEOC through litigation.

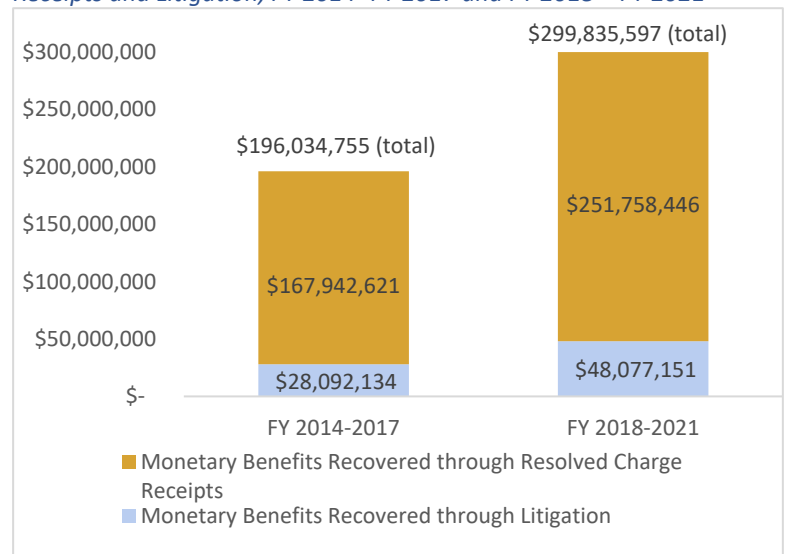
SOURCE: U.S. EEOC, Integrated Mission System, Charge Data, FY 2014 – FY 2021.

Figure 10. Monetary Benefits from Resolved Sexual Harassment Charge Receipts and Litigation, FY 2018 – FY 2021

\$299.8 million recovered
8,147 people benefited

SOURCE: U.S. EEOC, Integrated Mission System, Charge Data, FY 2018 – FY 2021.

Figure 11. Monetary Benefits from Resolved Sexual Harassment Charge Receipts and Litigation, FY 2014 -FY 2017 and FY 2018 – FY 2021



SOURCE: U.S. EEOC, Integrated Mission System, Charge Data, FY 2014 – FY 2021.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov.

Data Notes

The charge data included in this Data Highlight include all charges filed by individuals in the private sector and state and local government workplaces. These data do not include discrimination complaints filed in the federal sector.

Suggested Citation

Sexual Harassment in Our Nation’s Workplaces. Office of Enterprise Data and Analytics (OEDA) Data Highlight No. 2. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Washington, DC, April 2022.