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The EEOC Report: A Look Back at 2016

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Happy New Year! The EEOC has released its report for the year 2016, and along with its statistical data are a few very positive trends with regards to how charges are processed and received.

The Numbers from 2016

The EEOC recently released its annual report for 2016. The EEOC awarded approximately \$482 million in monetary awards, which is a decrease from last fiscal year's monetary awards of approximately \$525 million.

According to the EEOC Report, the \$482 million in monetary awards from 2016 was split as follows:

- \$347.9 million for employment discrimination in the private sector and state and local government workplaces through mediation, conciliation and settlements;
- \$52.2 million for those deemed harmed by discriminatory practices obtained through litigation; and
- \$82 million for federal employees.

As it relates to the agency's mediation program, the EEOC reported a 76 percent success rate with 97 percent of participants stating that they would use mediation in the future. As one might expect, however, conciliation was slightly less successful with a reported 44 percent success rate for the past two fiscal years after a finding of discrimination.

Litigation also observed a downward trend this fiscal year. The EEOC reported 165 cases on its active docket at the end of 2016 as opposed to the 218 active cases on its docket at the end of 2015.

The economy of a new presidency will undoubtedly factor into the resulting numbers for 2017; the direction of impact, however, is unknown at this point.

Online Charge Status System

In 2016, the EEOC also launched its Online Charge Status System. This online system provides a portal for employers to receive and upload documents and communicate with the EEOC. Employers are also able to access this online system to check the status of pending charges. The EEOC's Digital Charge System was implemented in an effort to streamline the charge system, ease the administrative burden on staff and reduce the use of paper submissions and files. Employers are finding these digital upgrades to save time and resources previously expended in transmitting, mailing and attempting to contact EEOC Investigators to ascertain the status of pending charges.

It is currently unknown whether the new digital charge system will result in the EEOC handling an increase in the number of charges or more quickly resolving charges. The new digital charge system's effects on charges will become more apparent as we move into 2017.

Source: What You Should Know: EEOC's Fiscal Year 2016 Highlights, eeoc.gov