



OFFICE OF INCLUSION

Annual Report

Letter from the Chair



Dear Fellow New Yorkers,

As the new Taxi and Limousine Commissioner completing my first year on the job, I'm eager to share the fourth Office of Inclusion (OOI) Report, which showcases the important efforts that our agency is accomplishing to ensure that both drivers and passengers are respected as they travel around our great city!

This year we made important inroads in our goal to ensure universal accessibility in the taxi and for-hire vehicle industries. Early on, I met with disability advocates from across the five boroughs to engage collaboratively in ways that we can work together to ensure that this segment of the transportation industry is accessible to all members of the riding public. As a result of these conversations, my team prioritized the development of a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) securement decal, which will be available to all drivers. This informational graphic will be a resource for drivers to refresh their memory of the securement process and will enhance the skills they have learned in their 24-hour licensing course and triennial renewal course.

During my tenure, the agency has also increased the amount of funding going into the Taxi Improvement Fund (TIF) and Street Hail Livery Improvement Fund (SHLIF) through our rulemaking process. The TIF surcharge paid by passengers increased from .30¢ to \$1. This important fund will continue to ensure that medallion owners and drivers are putting accessible vehicles on the road.

I recognize that the OOI's mission begins with education, and I'm proud of the great strides we have made over the past year connecting with our licensees, the riding public, and our partners in government and the non-profit sector. OOI has been across the five boroughs working hard to create new opportunities for people to connect with the agency and facilitate mutual respect and understanding between the many groups and individuals involved in the taxi and for-hire vehicle sectors of the transportation industry. Our team has been implementing this in innovative ways, including through a first-of-its-kind mixer event, which you can read more about in the report, where licensees and passengers were able to openly discuss bias, discrimination, and service refusals in a safe environment. OOI is also looking forward to building on these efforts this coming year and will join our new mobile outreach office as it travels across the city.

I am excited to continue the important work of the OOI as we create a more inclusive and accessible future for all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

David Do
Commissioner & Chair

Local Law 219

The Taxi and Limousine Commission’s (TLC) Office of Inclusion (OOI) was created by the New York City Council to ensure that the riding public receives equal and courteous service from drivers of taxis and for-hire vehicles (FHV). Our mission is to reduce and ultimately eliminate service refusals, as well as to ensure that no one is discriminated against by a TLC-licensed driver. A driver should not decline to pick up a passenger or complete a trip based on the passenger’s drop-off destination, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, immigration status, national origin, religion/creed, color, marital and partnership status, and/or pregnancy.

OOI recognizes that New York City’s greatest attribute is its diversity, among residents and visitors alike. Anyone who believes they have been subject to discrimination from a TLC driver is encouraged to file a 311 complaint. To report a service refusal, contact 311 by phone, through the NYC 311 app, or online at nyc.gov/311. For more information, please email Yesenia Torres, TLC’s Accessibility Outreach Coordinator, at TorresYe@tlc.nyc.gov.

OOI Initiatives

1. Adoption of accessibility rules requiring all car services doing business in NYC, including high-volume for hire vehicle (HVFHV) bases and regular for hire vehicle (FHV) bases, to provide wheelchair accessible service.
2. Implementation of Accessible Dispatch. This is a TLC program that provides accessible taxicab service throughout the five boroughs. Passengers pay the standard metered fare with no additional fees. There are several ways to book an accessible ride:
 - Call a dispatcher directly at 646-599-9999, 311, or NY Relay: 711
 - Download the mobile app (Accessible Dispatch NYC) in the App Store or Google Play Store
 - Book online at www.accessibledispatch.com
3. Execution of the Service Refusal Campaign. This multimedia campaign informs passengers about their rights, how to file a complaint, and what they can do if a driver refuses their ride. Our outreach has been targeted at multiple communities of passengers and drivers, including the disability community, to expand awareness about this serious issue.
4. Selection of an Anti-Discrimination Vendor. The TLC is happy to announce that after a comprehensive interview process, a vendor has been chosen to develop Anti-Discrimination training for our licensed drivers. In collaboration with the vendor, TLC is dedicated to creating content that will help educate drivers about bias and discrimination within the for-hire vehicle industry.



Street Team Outreach

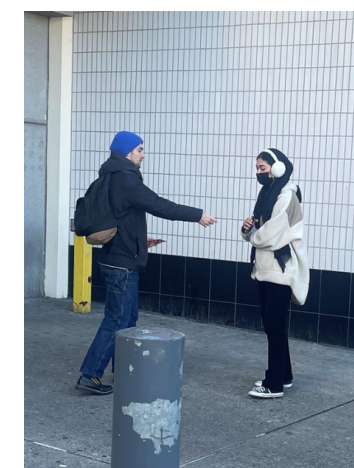


Driver Outreach

Throughout 2022 the Office of Inclusion (OOI) conducted multi-borough driver outreach in the form of field work called Street Team. OOI informed drivers at transportation hubs throughout New York City of TLC and Vision Zero initiatives and received invaluable feedback related to policy, current events, and industry concerns. OOI also provided instructions on how to download and use TLC Up, contact to our External Affairs team and assisted drivers with general troubleshooting and inquiries on-site.

Passenger Outreach

Street Team staff provided information and educational content related to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) service, anti-discrimination, safety, and more. Over the course of 2022, OOI led passenger-facing Street Team visits to mass transit hubs. During this outreach, diverse passenger groups learned how to file complaints with 311; reserve a WAV; recognize licensed vehicles; as well as learn about the agency and its policies.



Accessibility

In 2023, OOI continued interaction with passengers, drivers, stakeholders, and the disability community through new initiatives, programs, and educational resources that included outreach, in-person meetings, and virtual meetings. Our accessibility outreach coordinator is focused on ensuring that the agency is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title I and Title II.

Our goal is to keep building new relationships with community stakeholder groups and enhancing our customer service experience.

Key Events

Disability Etiquette and Awareness in the Workplace

This training continues to be mandatory for new hires and staff. It is designed to help people understand the perspectives of the disability community, provide a better understanding of the proper language to use when addressing people with disabilities, and address etiquette considerations.

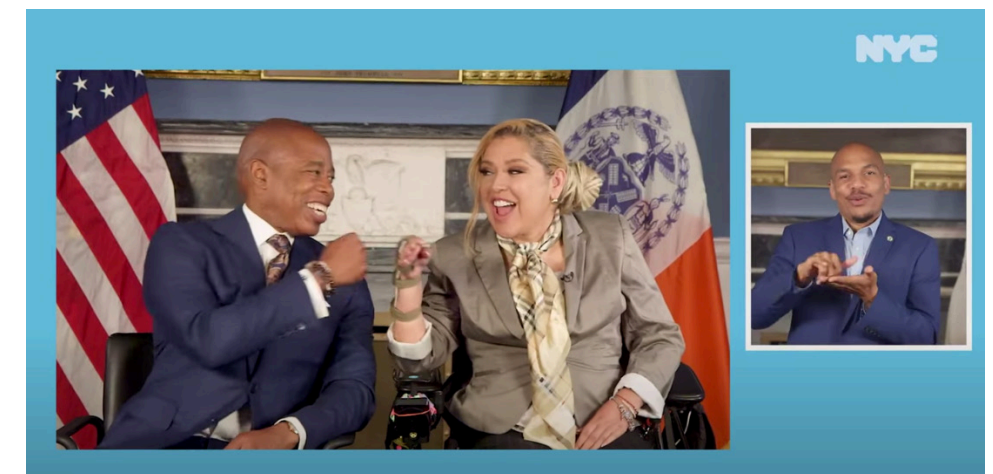


Sapolin Accessibility Awards

TLC Commissioner David Do and the Office of Inclusion were present at the annual Sapolin Awards, which support organizations that are actively working toward inclusion and wellness for people with disabilities in the areas of public accommodation, public service, communication and technology, and employment.

City Hall PSA: Celebrating Disability Month

In commemoration of the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Office of Inclusion invited NYC Mayor Adams, and the NYC Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities to collaborate in a public service advertisement informing the disability community about their rights when accessing TLC-licensed vehicles.





Advocates Meet with Commissioner Do

The Taxi and Limousine Commission’s Office of Inclusion organized a meet-and-greet with advocates and disability groups to meet with Commissioner David Do. The event was focused on bringing the concerns of New York’s disability community to the attention of the Commissioner and providing updates on our city’s taxi service.



OOI Anti-Discrimination Mixer

The Taxi and Limousine Commission’s (TLC) Office of Inclusion (OOI) organized a mixer event focused on addressing discrimination in the taxi and for-hire vehicle industries. Drivers and passengers participated in a roundtable discussion, voicing their concerns about service refusals, harassment, and violence that occurs during operations. Our agency hopes to cultivate a conversation within the industry that will lead to a culture of mutual respect and positivity for all the parties involved in this industry.



Crime Response & Victim Support

The Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) considers the safety of TLC-licensed drivers a top priority for our agency. We work closely with the New York City Police Department (NYPD) to ensure that anyone who physically or verbally assaults a TLC licensee is brought to justice, and that the victims of a crime receive the assistance they deserve. Pursuant to its Crime Response Protocol, the Office of Inclusion (OOI), along with the External Affairs Department, provides drivers with instructions on reporting physical and verbal assaults to the NYPD. Licensees also receive information about how to report instances of discrimination to the New York City Commission on Human Rights (NYCCHR).

When notified of a crime against a TLC licensee, OOI staff contacts the licensee to get more details regarding the incident. OOI staff then connects the licensee to New York State’s Office of Victim Services (OVS), which provides help with medical bills, lost wages, and other appropriate resources.

Our staff proactively assists drivers who have difficulty accessing vital resources to ensure they can complete all necessary applications. In 2022, OOI assisted 42 licensees who suffered physical assault, verbal assault, or property crimes.

Anti-Discrimination Training

The Office of Inclusion (OOI) and the Taxi and Limousine Commission’s (TLC) Education Services Unit have selected a vendor to integrate anti-discrimination content into TLC’s licensure and renewal courses. The goal of this added content is to provide professional development, educate TLC-licensed drivers about discriminatory treatment in the for-hire industry, and deter service refusals. Anti-discrimination training will further develop our licensee’s understanding of how race, ethnicity, cultural background, disability, gender, or sexual orientation impacts the riding experiences. Drivers will learn about implicit biases, explore their own biases, and incorporate tools to help mitigate bias-based actions that may lead to discrimination in the provision of for hire services.

The course will also honor the tremendous diversity of professional drivers in New York City, as well as provide them with the tools they need to address discrimination they may face while on duty. Consulting with TLC’s selected vendor, OOI will measure driver attitudes and biases on race through surveys and focus groups. The final deliverable by the vendor will include:

- **Universal & trauma-informed content**
- **Self-assessments for students during & after the course**
- **Background on the history of race in America**
- **Tools for recognizing and acknowledging implicit & explicit biases**
- **Materials for ongoing & continuing education & outreach beyond the required course participation**
- **Tools for mitigating bias-based behaviors**

Outreach Events

Myrtle Ave Street Fair, Queens
 Disability Unite Festival
 Colombian Independence Day Flag Raising, Manhattan
 Disability Advocate Meet and Greet with Commissioner Do, Manhattan
 Amsterdam Houses 75th Anniversary Event, Manhattan
 10th Pct National Night Out, SGPO National Night Out, Manhattan
 Port Authority Bus Terminal Immigrant Arrivals, Manhattan
 Stop Asian Hate Event, Queens
 FDNY Block Party at Engine 153 / Ladder 77, Staten Island
 Independent Drivers Guild’s Family Day, Queens
 NYC Commission on Human Rights -College Student Campaign, Bronx
 ROAR Resource Fair, Manhattan
 NYC Commission on Human Rights
 Fordham University Outreach Campaign, Bronx
 Astoria Labor Day Festival, Queens
 Arthur Avenue Health Fair, Bronx
 NYC Office of Emergency Management’s Pet & Service Animal Fair, Manhattan
 Mexican Independence Day Festival, Manhattan
 Myrtle Avenue Festival, Queens
 TLC in Your Borough, Queens
 LaGuardia Community Run Resource Plaza, Queens
 Office of Inclusion Industry Mixer, Manhattan
 Queens CB3 Immigrant Resource Fair, Queens

Awareness Campaign

Licensee Leaders (Digital Media Campaign)

In 2022, the Office of Inclusion (OOI) created and launched an awareness campaign in the form of a digital media project called “Licensee Leaders.” This series of interviews spotlights industry stakeholders such as TLC licensed drivers, licensed bases, and licensed education providers and asks questions about important issues that include wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs), the future of the NYC taxi and FHV industry, anti-discrimination, the driver-passenger relationship, electrification, driver education, and safe driving practices. Interviews are disseminated across the agency’s social and digital media channels, and the program has allowed the Office of Inclusion to provide a reliable platform for its licensees. This specialized form of outreach and licensee engagement has proven to be a vital tool in showcasing industry perspectives and demonstrating a commitment to building respect and trust among the driver community.

Mixer (Live Event)

The Office of Inclusion conducted an industry mixer on November 16th at El Barrio Art Space in Harlem. OOI created an inclusive public forum to facilitate dialogue and trust among TLC-licensed drivers, the riding public, and communities across the five boroughs. Roundtable discussions and interactive programming ensure that diverse experiences within the for-hire vehicle industry are heard.

The Office of Inclusion encouraged individuals from person-first disability advocacy groups, driver-led disability advocacy groups, community non-profit organizations, TLC’s Enforcement Division, and the agency’s diverse community of licensees to speak about accessibility, anti-discrimination, the driver-passenger relationship, and public safety.



Education

The Taxi and Limousine Commission’s (TLC) Education Services Unit, the Office of Inclusion (OOI), and Public Affairs work collaboratively to further agency initiatives. These units designed a new wheelchair accessible vehicle decal with feedback from disability advocates, taxi fleets, and for-hire vehicle owners that will be distributed in 2023. Education staff audited approximately 60 classes to provide oversight and feedback to instructors and education providers, including auditing instruction on wheelchair securement in accessible vehicles, how to provide great customer service to passengers with different types of disabilities, and preventing service refusals.

This year, the Education Services Unit and OOI conducted 18 customer service and wheelchair accessible vehicle securement presentations at taxi fleets and bases. The content of these presentations raised awareness of base, fleet, and driver responsibilities, including all required securement equipment and leasing vehicles with clean and functional equipment. Managers reinforced this information by distributing WAV securement pamphlets and playing the securement videos for the Nissan NV200 and Toyota Sienna in their break rooms.



Language Access

In 2022, the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) continued ongoing efforts to make the licensing process more inclusive and accessible for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). TLC continued to translate all industry notices, newsletters, and licensee-wide general outreach emails notifying licensees about TLC events and resources into the city’s 10 designated languages, in addition to Hindi and Punjabi. Furthermore, phone interpretation services were provided by all units within the agency, and interpreters were made available during public hearings to accommodate the needs of our diverse licensee population, ensuring an inclusive environment where all voices are not only heard but amplified.

In 2022, the TLC translated a total of 112 projects and provided phone interpretation services for 13,948 incoming calls.

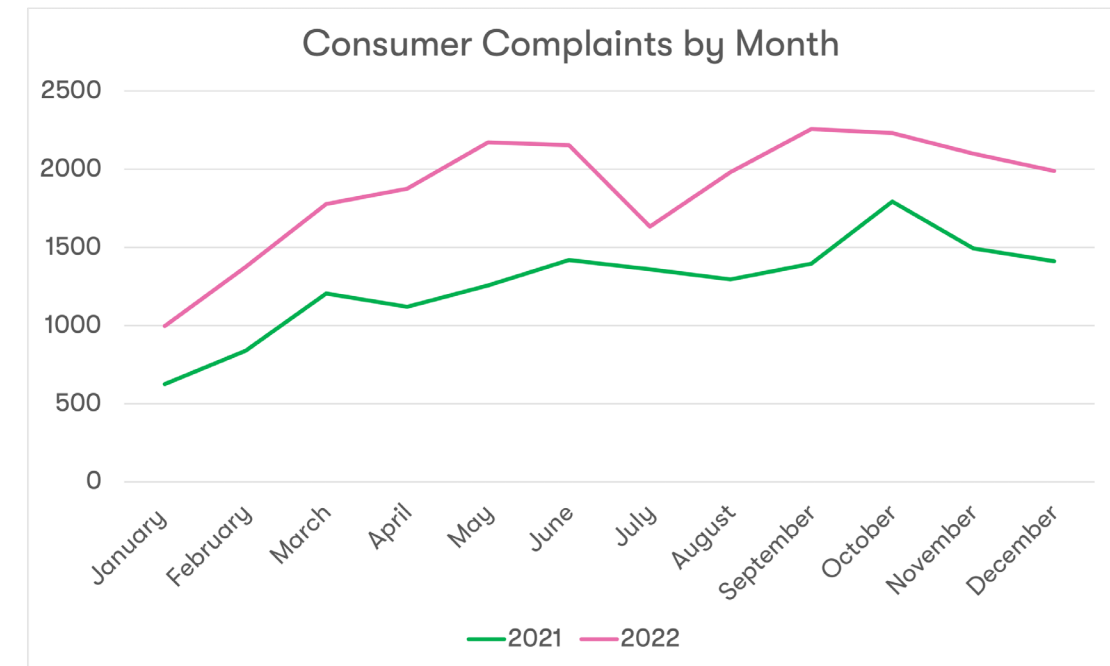
Phone Interpretation	
Languages	Calls
Albanian	2
Arabic	55
Belorussian	1
Bengali	144
Brazilian Portuguese	1
Burmese	5
Cantonese	18
Egyptian Arabic	2
Farsi (Persian)	1
French	22
Fulani	1
Fuzhou	1
Georgian	10
German	1
Greek	2
Haitian Creole	45
Hindi	16
Indonesian	1
Korean	14
Mandarin	282
Nepali	12
Persian	1
Punjabi	60
Russian	214
Sindhi	1
Somali	1
Spanish	12965
Tagalog	1
Tibetan	2
Turkish	20
Urdu	33
Uzbek	14
13948	

Complaint Statistics

Office of Inclusion – Prosecution 2022

The Office of Inclusion (OOI) and the Taxi and Limousine Commission’s (TLC) Prosecution Unit have worked diligently to continue to provide quality investigation and prosecution (and, where applicable, declination of prosecution) of TLC violations regarding protected classes, discrimination, refusals, courtesy, and “other” violations. Although taxi drivers were deemed an essential service provider and allowed to drive during the height of the pandemic, ridership was down between 2020 and 2021. In late 2021, New York City reopened, and 2022 saw the reemergence of the booming NYC taxicab industry. There was also a reemergence of complaints that fall under the purview of OOI. It should be noted that on September 7, 2022, the TLC officially lifted its mask mandate in all TLC vehicles (masks are now optional). On October 24, 2022, TLC reinstated the right of passengers to ride in the front seat of vehicles when riding in the back is impractical. Finally, on December 19, 2022, the TLC raised the fares of metered taxicabs for the first time in 10 years! We thank the public for trusting us with your grievances and your patience as we weathered a world-wide pandemic as a society. We thank those licensed to provide for-hire taxicab services for coming to OOI events, answering surveys on licensee worries, and bringing concerns to us through various methods to ensure that your voices were heard.

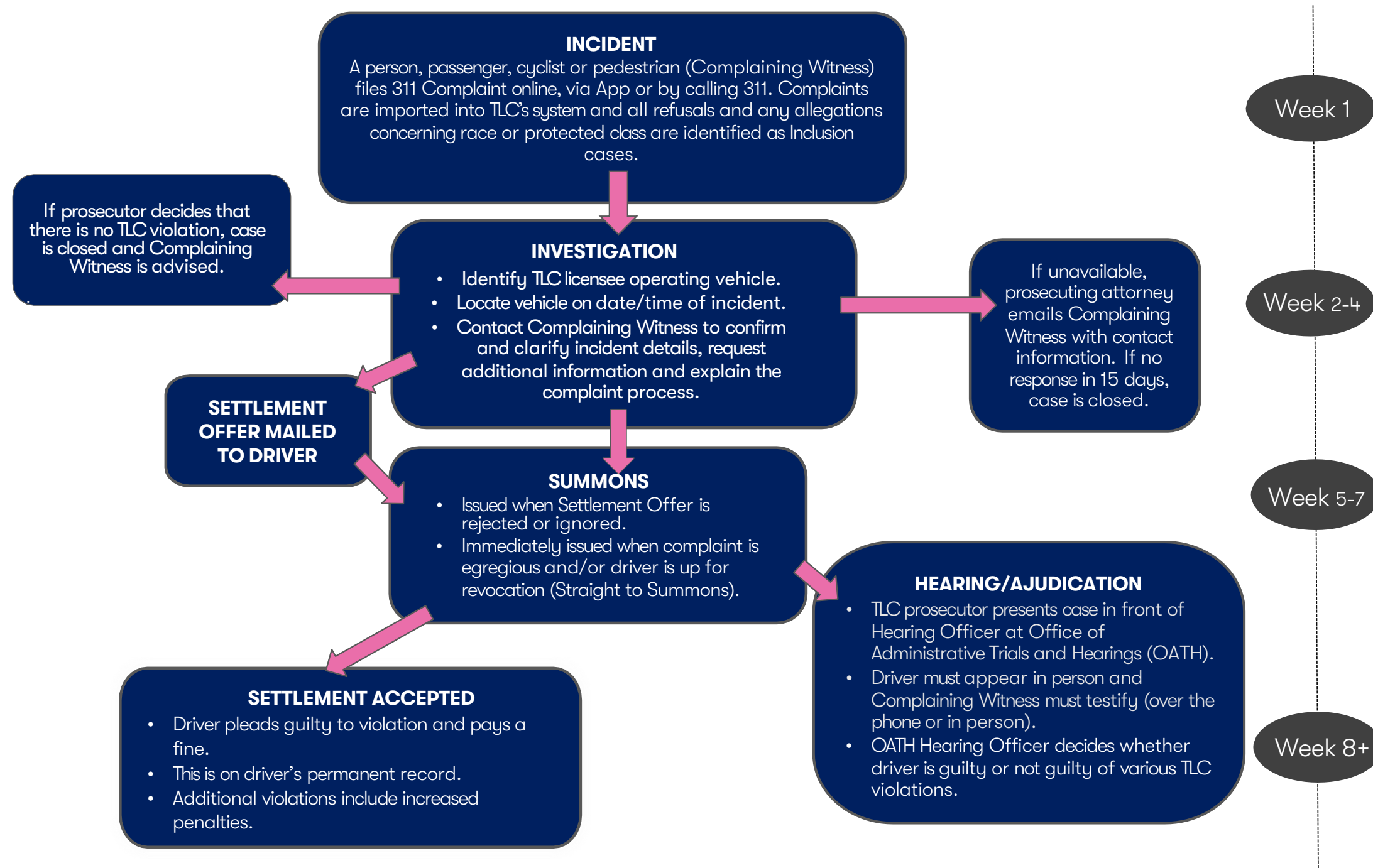
Overall Consumer Complaint Comparison 2021 to 2022



The Consumer Complaints Unit is a division of the Prosecution Unit at the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC). The unit is staffed by prosecutors who process complaints from consumers (pedestrians, passengers, and occasionally taxicab drivers). The prosecutors interview consumers via telephone to identify the facts of the case, spot case issues, and determine what, if any, TLC violations have been violated. The prosecutor drafts the complaint or settlement offer, as seen in the Consumer Complaint Process graphic. That settlement offer, if not accepted by the licensee, becomes a summons with a scheduled hearing date, allowing the licensee to defend themselves in a hearing before the Hearing Officers of the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH).

The chart above shows that overall complaints increased in 2022, the TLC’s first full year open since the height of the pandemic. It is from the consumer complaints filed through the 311 portal or app that the Office of Inclusion derives the inclusion complaints used to identify focus areas for training and outreach.

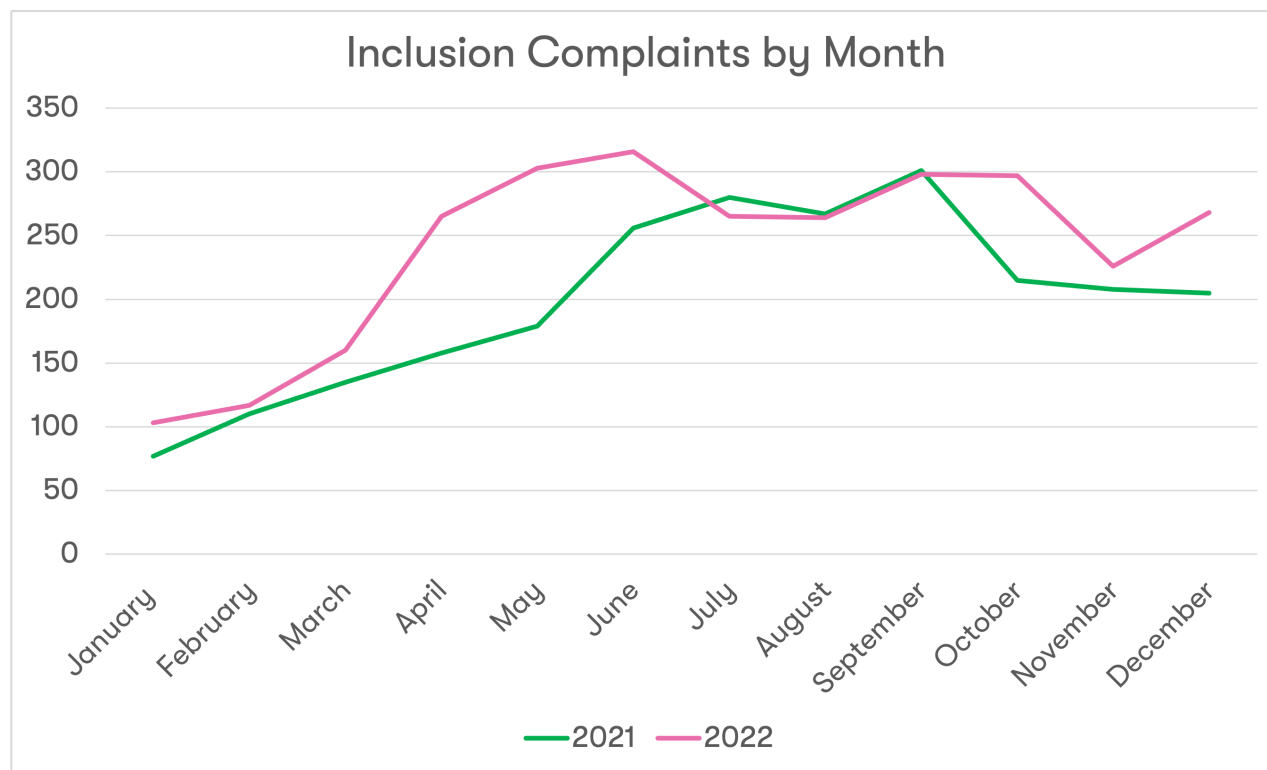
The Office of Inclusion Complaint Process



The Consumer Complaint Process

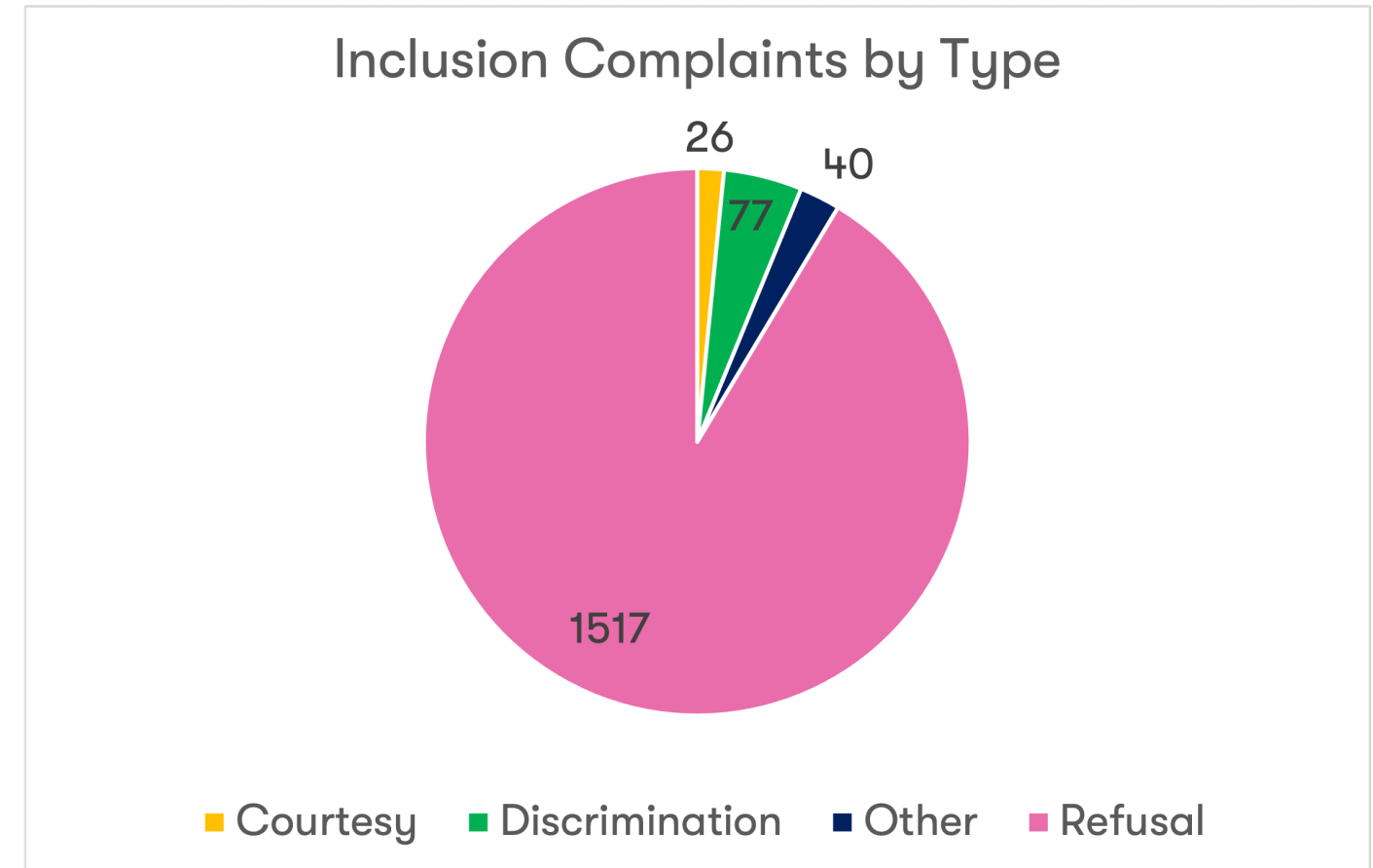
The OOI compliant process mirrors that of the Consumer Complaint process, the only difference is that consumer complaints are further categorized.

Overall Inclusion Complaint Comparison 2021 to 2022



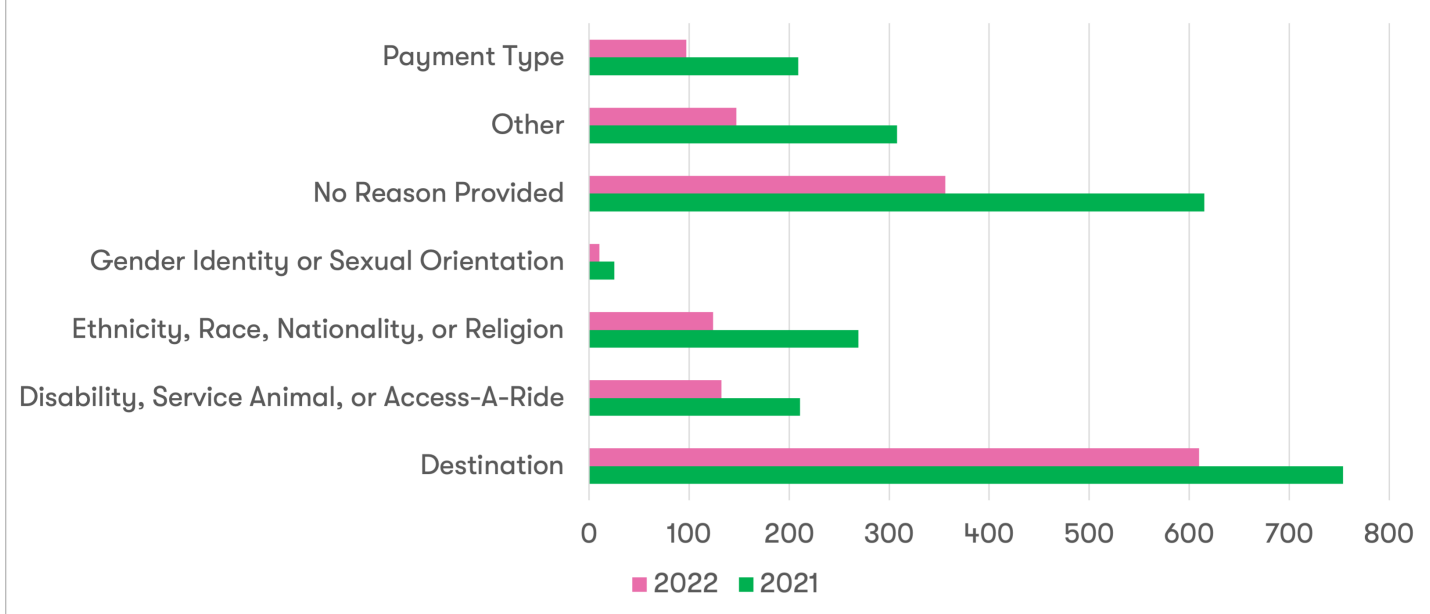
The Office of Inclusion (OOI) divides complaints into four categories: courtesy, THA (threats harassment abuse), discrimination, other, and refusal. As the previous figure indicates, the Office of Inclusion received nearly 3,000 inclusion complaints. Diligent efforts are being made to investigate and process all complaints. Many complaints remain in the investigatory stage or are classified as pending.

Inclusion Complaints by Type



The figure shows that complaints sorted into the main inclusion categories are trending downwards. This infers that the outreach done by the OOI has helped to educate for-hire taxicab licensees as well as the public on what is considered unacceptable behavior by a licensee. It should be noted that there are two public interest complaints (masks) from the beginning of the year and 1,220 complaints pending classification. Those complaints are still being investigated and will be categorized upon interview with the witness and included in the next report with 2022 final numbers.

Service Refusals by Reported Reason Category



OOI further categorizes complaints in an effort to find the most common reasons for violation of TLC inclusion rules. Those categories are: destination; disability, service animal, security, or access-a-ride; ethnicity, race, or religion; gender identity or sexual orientation; no reason provided; other; and payment type. Complaints that are still being investigated have been labeled as “classification pending.” Many inclusion complaints are from service refusals. Service refusals are when a consumer is denied a ride at any point of the transaction. Service refusals are subdivided into seven categories. Below are 2021 and 2022 service refusal complaints categorized by initial reason type. Initial reason type is derived from the original 311 report without interview from a CCU prosecutor. Once the case is processed, the reason for the complaint may change depending on the results of the prosecutor’s interview with the witness.

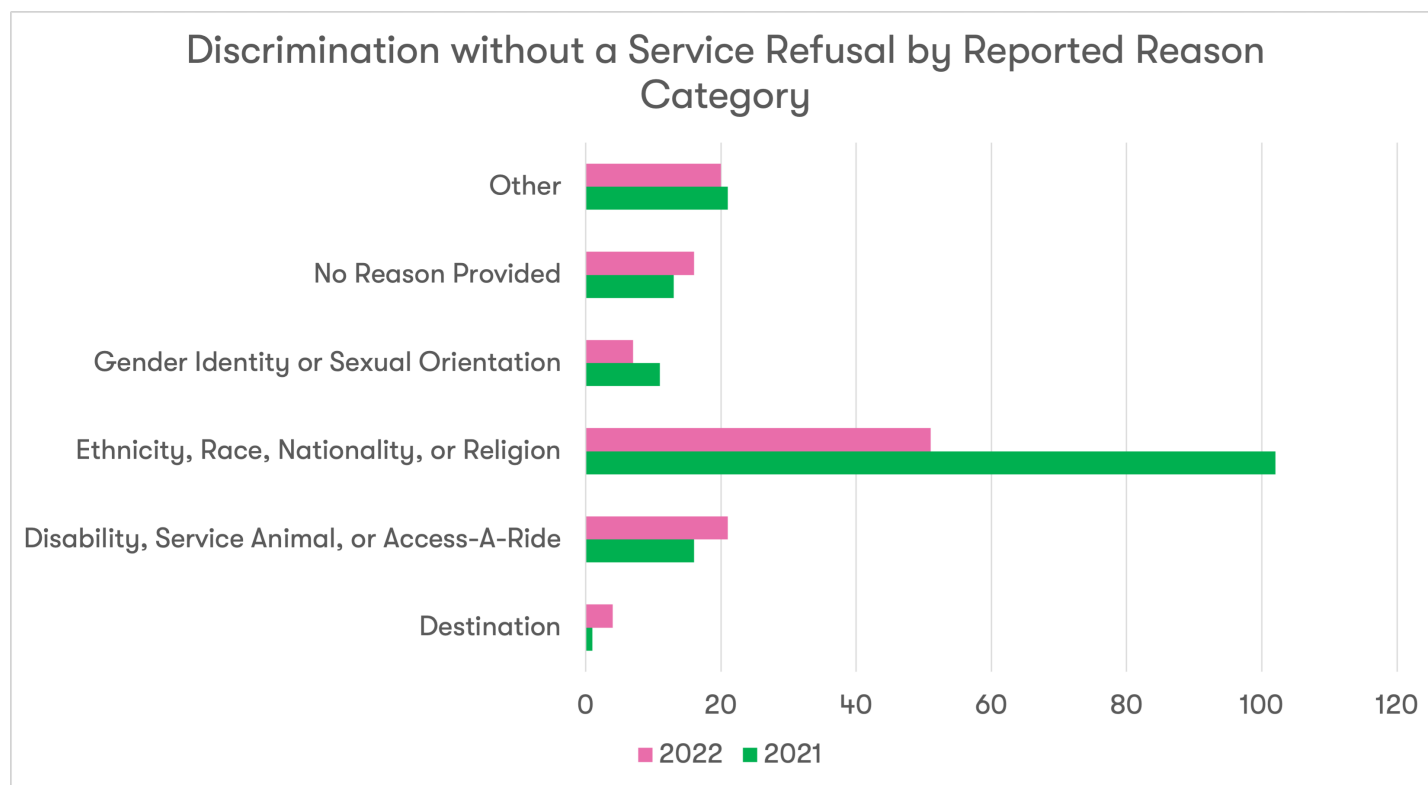
OOI also looked at the destinations within the five boroughs in which licensed drivers were refusing to serve consumers. Below is a chart that shows the difference from 2021 to 2022 regarding service refusals by destination borough.

Reported Refusals by Destination Borough



The above chart shows that service refusals by borough are mostly trending down, though there was a sharp uptick in refusals to Queens in 2022.

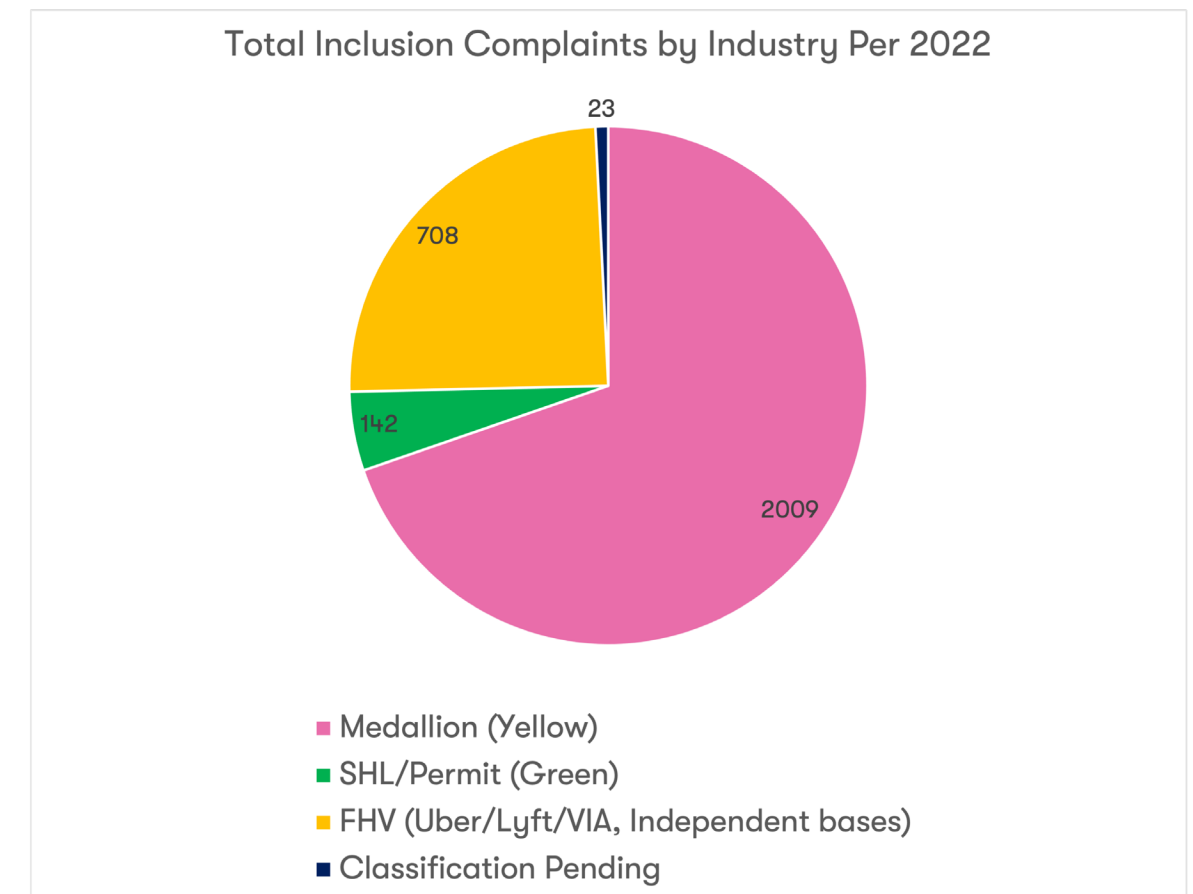
The majority of discrimination occurs with a service refusal; however, OOI also tracks when discrimination occurs outside of a service refusal. Below is a chart to show the variation between 2021 and 2022.



The above is based on discrimination that occurs in other categories like courtesies (rude behavior), THA/discrimination, other, and public interest.

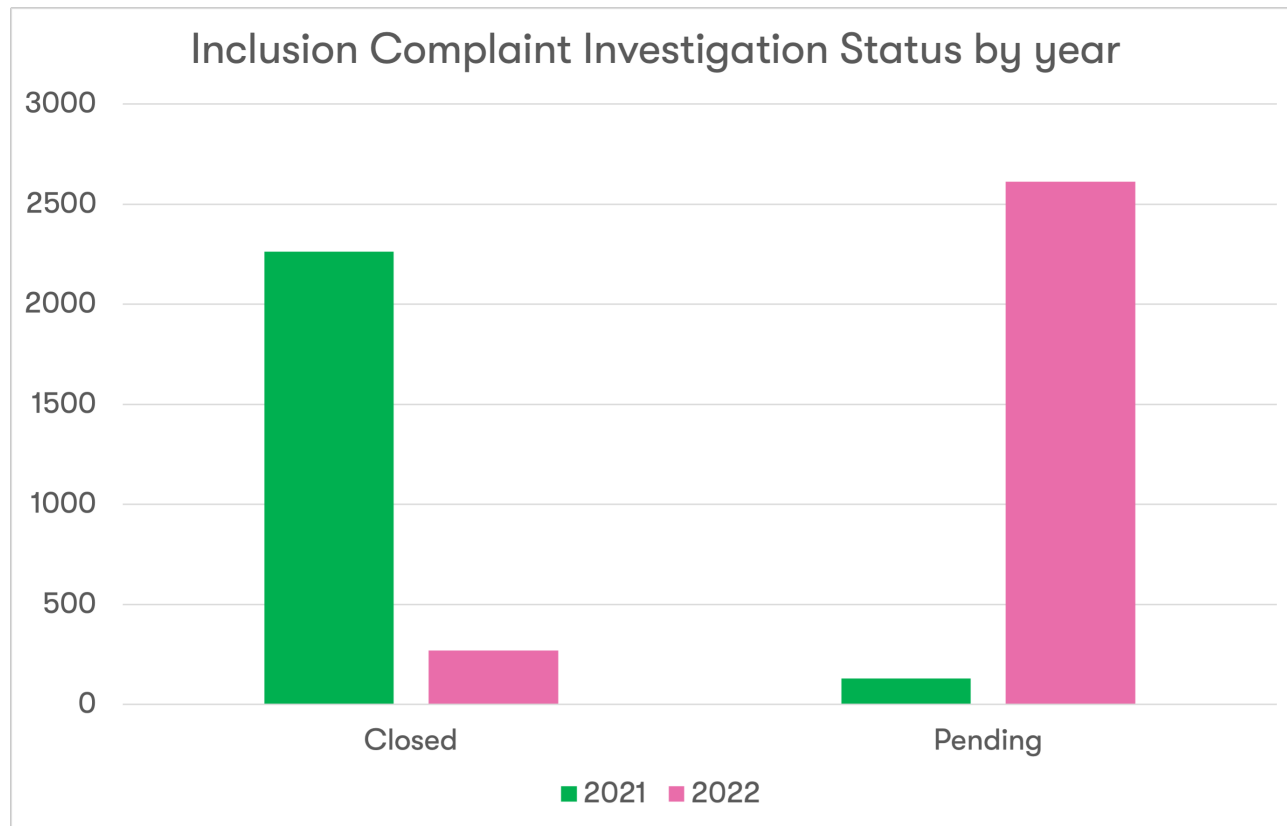
Finally, OOI looks at complaints based on industry. Therefore, inclusion looks at medallions (yellow cabs), SHL permit holders (green cabs), and FHV (Lyft, Uber, and independent bases). These industry comparisons inform Inclusion where to aim their educational outreach.

The chart below indicates that Medallion taxicabs have the most inclusion complaints in the industry. While alarming, this number is not surprising because, unlike FHV, the only way to complain about most Medallion taxicab interactions is directly to the TLC via 311. FHV have an internal complaint process. The TLC encourages complaints about FHV to be made to the TLC and to the specific base whenever possible, as different disciplinary methods are available with each option.

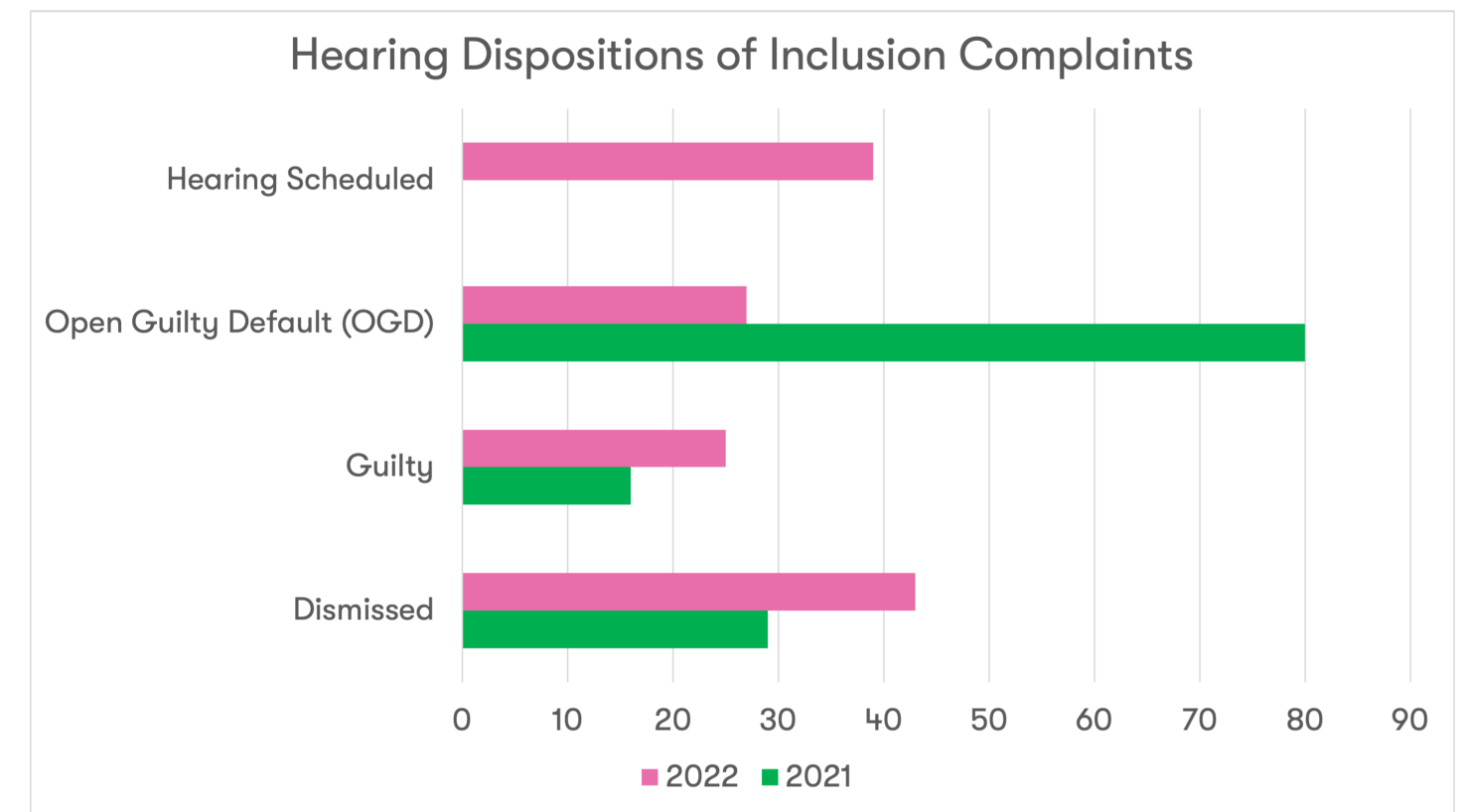


Adjudicated Complaints

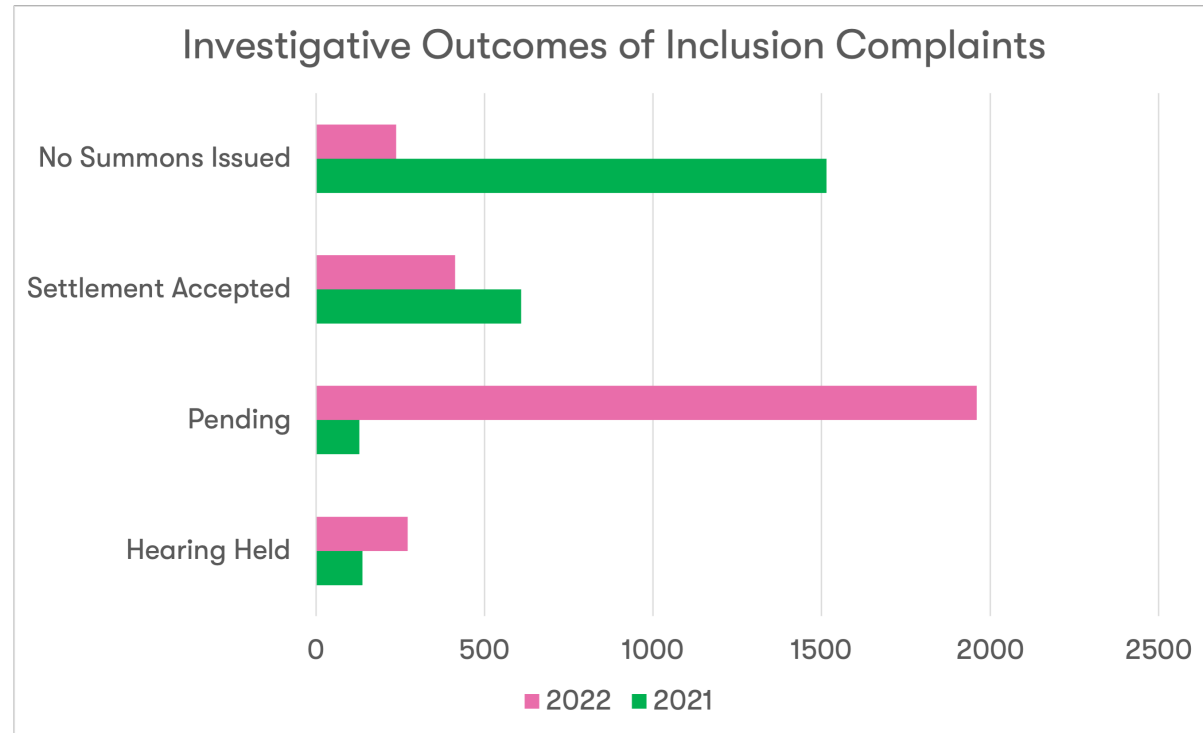
As previously seen in the Consumer Complaint Process graphic, after the investigation and charges phase; the licensee can either accept the settlement offer or go forward with a hearing. The majority of TLC consumer complaints are brought before the Hearings Division of OATH. Below are charts indicating the status of inclusion complaints for 2021 and 2022. The status of “closed” indicates that the complaint has reached its conclusion through declination to prosecute, settlement, or adjudication. The status of “pending” indicates that the complaint remains open and is in the process of being prosecuted, settled, or adjudicated.



Below are the hearing dispositions for inclusion complaints for 2021 and 2022. Dismissed means that a hearing officer from OATH found that the complaint was not substantiated. “Guilty” indicates that the licensee was found guilty at a hearing or accepted the settlement offer. An “open guilty default” indicates the licensee missed the hearing and was found guilty in their absence; please note these cases can be reopened. “Withdrawn” indicates that the TLC chose to decline to prosecute a matter. “Hearing scheduled” indicates a hearing is scheduled for 2023.



The table below represents the investigative outcomes of inclusion complaints; these include hearings that were held, pending, settlements accepted, and when there was no summons issued (the TLC declined to prosecute).



Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Complaints

OOI through the Prosecution Unit, made a conscious effort starting in the spring of 2022 to track WAV complaints. WAV complaints include all complaints within the accessible community. It should be noted that while the complaints are labeled “WAV,” they are not all about offenses against those in wheelchairs. WAV complaints include, but are not limited to, complaints regarding the usual OOI categories in addition to securements, AAR rides, or courtesy. The chart on the next page shows the current status of WAV complaints.

Adjudicated WAV Complaints for 2022		
Total WAV complaints heard at OATH	Guilty at hearing	Dismissed
9	7	2

The above chart shows that 9 cases were brought before OATH for hearings with violations impacting the WAV community. Of those 9 cases, 7 were found guilty of those violations at trial, and 2 were found to be unsubstantiated and were dismissed by an OATH Hearing Officer.

Overall Tracked WAV Complaints 2022		
Closed	Settled	Pending Adjudication
14	30	88

The above chart indicates that OOI received 132 WAV complaints in 2022. Please note that some complaints are still in classification-pending status, as noted in previous charts, and that increase will be reflected in next year’s report. All cases marked “pending adjudication” can either be resolved through a settlement or through a trial at OATH hearings.

OOI encourages those in the WAV community to make complaints using the 311 app or by calling 311 so we can get a clear picture of where to focus our efforts.

Driver Statistics

