

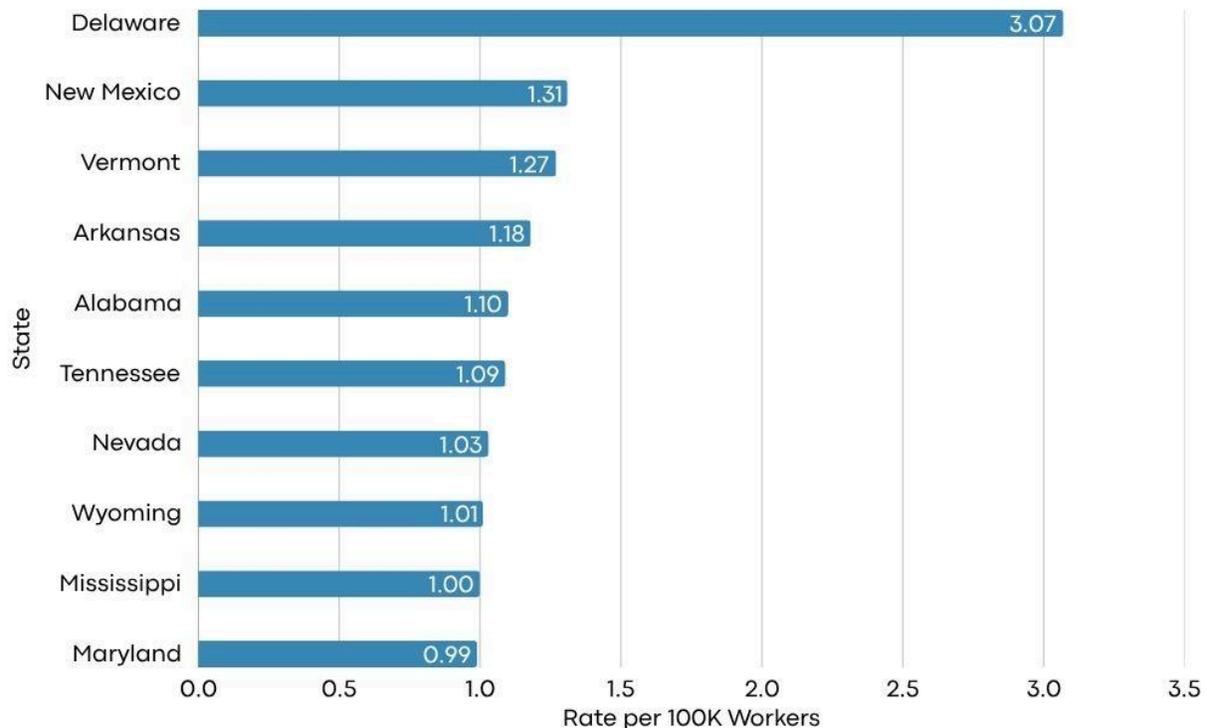
Tennessee at Center of National Pay Discrimination Hotspot, Averaging 36 Complaints Annually with 3.34M Workforce

Key Highlights

- Tennessee ranks 6th in the nation for Equal Pay Act complaints per capita, with a rate of 1.09 per 100,000 workers, 1.42 times the national median rate of 0.77, based on a three-year analysis of EEOC filings (2022-2024).
- Tennessee is the largest state by workforce among the nine states that meet or exceed the 1.00 per 100,000 threshold, averaging 36.33 EPA filings per year from 2022 to 2024, the highest raw volume of any state in the national top 10 by rate.
- Five of Tennessee's eight bordering states also rank in the national top 15 for EPA complaint rates, Arkansas (1.18), Alabama (1.10), Mississippi (1.00), Georgia (0.95), and North Carolina (0.90), placing Tennessee at the center of the most concentrated regional cluster of pay discrimination activity in the country.

Where Pay Discrimination Complaints Are Highest in the U.S.

Top 10 states with the highest EPA complaint rates per 100,000 workers



Data Sources: Madaia Law analysis of EEOC enforcement data (FY 2022–2024), normalized using U.S. Census workforce figures

Tennessee’s economy may be booming, but federal data reveals a persistent undercurrent: the Volunteer State’s workers are filing Equal Pay Act complaints at one of the highest rates in the nation. With over 3.3 million employed, Tennessee is the largest state in America’s top tier for pay discrimination filings.

An analysis by [Madia Law](#), examined Equal Pay Act discrimination receipts filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) across all 50 states over a three-year period (FY 2022–FY 2024). Complaint volumes were normalized per 100,000 employed workers using U.S. Census workforce data. The findings place Tennessee 6th in the nation and at the geographic heart of the country’s most concentrated corridor of elevated EPA complaint activity.

Tennessee Ranks 6th Nationally with 1.09 EPA Complaints per 100,000 Workers

Rank	State	Workforce 2024	Avg. EPA Complaints (2022–2024)	Rate per 100K Workers
1	Delaware	489,100	15.00	3.07
2	New Mexico	893,700	11.67	1.31
3	Vermont	314,400	4.00	1.27
4	Arkansas	1,379,800	16.33	1.18
5	Alabama	2,220,500	24.33	1.10
6	Tennessee	3,343,200	36.33	1.09
7	Nevada	1,582,400	16.33	1.03
8	Wyoming	297,300	3.00	1.01
9	Mississippi	1,195,300	12.00	1.00
10	Maryland	2,773,800	27.33	0.99

Tennessee’s complaint rate of 1.09 per 100,000 workers places it 6th nationally, barely behind neighboring Alabama (1.10) by just 0.01 points. At 3,343,200 workers, Tennessee is by far the largest state in the top 10 by workforce size and also leads this group in raw complaint volume with an annual average of 36.33 filings.

Looking at the study, Ashwin Madia, Trial Lawyer from Madia Law commented.

“Tennessee’s data stands out not just because of its top-six ranking, but because of what it represents at scale. This is a state with over 3.3 million workers, the largest workforce of any state exceeding the 1.00 complaint threshold. That tells you this isn’t a small-sample anomaly. Workers across Tennessee are consistently raising concerns about unequal pay, and the trend has held steady over three years.”

Five of Tennessee's Eight Border States Also Rank in the National Top 15

National Rank	State	Workforce 2024	Avg. EPA Complaints (2022–2024)	Rate per 100K Workers
4	Arkansas	1,379,800	16.33	1.18
5	Alabama	2,220,500	24.33	1.10
6	Tennessee	3,343,200	36.33	1.09
9	Mississippi	1,195,300	12.00	1.00
14	Georgia	4,994,900	47.67	0.95
15	North Carolina	5,050,700	45.67	0.90
17	Virginia	4,268,200	35.33	0.83
21	Missouri	3,085,300	24.00	0.78
38	Kentucky	2,051,900	7.00	0.34

Tennessee borders eight states, more than almost any other state in the union, and the EPA data across this cluster is remarkable. Five of the eight border states rank in the national top 15: Arkansas (rank 4, rate 1.18), Alabama (rank 5, rate 1.10), Mississippi (rank 9, rate 1.00), Georgia (rank 14, rate 0.95), and North Carolina (rank 15, rate 0.90).

Tennessee Ranks 3rd Among All Southern States for EPA Complaint Rates

National Rank	State	Workforce 2024	Avg. EPA Complaints (2022–2024)	Rate per 100K Workers
4	Arkansas	1,379,800	16.33	1.18
5	Alabama	2,220,500	24.33	1.10
6	Tennessee	3,343,200	36.33	1.09
9	Mississippi	1,195,300	12.00	1.00
14	Georgia	4,994,900	47.67	0.95
15	North Carolina	5,050,700	45.67	0.90
17	Virginia	4,268,200	35.33	0.83
29	Louisiana	1,971,400	12.67	0.64
36	Florida	10,013,700	36.67	0.37
38	Kentucky	2,051,900	7.00	0.34
42	South Carolina	2,401,000	7.33	0.31

Within the broader South, Tennessee ranks 3rd behind Arkansas (1.18) and Alabama (1.10), and just ahead of Mississippi (1.00). The top four Southern states by rate, Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi, all exceed the 1.00 threshold, a benchmark reached by only nine states nationwide.

Among Mid-Sized States, Tennessee’s EPA Rate Is in a League of Its Own

National Rank	State	Workforce 2024	Avg. EPA Complaints (2022–2024)	Rate per 100K Workers
6	Tennessee	3,343,200	36.33	1.09
10	Maryland	2,773,800	27.33	0.99
18	Colorado	3,010,000	24.67	0.82
21	Missouri	3,085,300	24.00	0.78
23	Washington	3,678,500	28.33	0.77
25	Indiana	3,308,400	22.67	0.69
26	Arizona	3,283,500	21.67	0.66
32	Minnesota	3,039,600	16.00	0.53
43	Wisconsin	3,042,100	9.00	0.30

Among states with workforces between 2.7 million and 3.7 million, Tennessee’s rate of 1.09 is the highest by a clear margin. Maryland (0.99) is the only other state in this cohort that approaches the 1.00 threshold. Tennessee’s rate is 1.33 times that of Colorado (0.82), 1.40 times Missouri (0.78), and 1.58 times Indiana (0.69).

How Tennessee Compares to National Benchmarks

Benchmark	Workforce 2024	Avg. EPA Complaints (2022–2024)	Rate per 100K Workers
Tennessee (Rank #6)	3,343,200	36.33	1.09
#1 State: Delaware	489,100	15.00	3.07
National Median: Washington (Rank #23)	3,678,500	28.33	0.77
Lowest-Ranked State: Utah (Rank #45)	1,782,700	4.33	0.24
Largest State: California (Rank #37)	18,129,400	62.67	0.35
Second-Largest State: Texas (Rank #24)	14,318,700	98.67	0.69

Tennessee's rate of 1.09 is 1.42 times the national median of 0.77, represented by Washington at rank 23. It is 4.54 times the rate of the lowest-ranked state, Utah (0.24), and 3.11 times the rate of California (0.35), the nation's largest workforce.

Complete State-by-State Ranking: Equal Pay Act Complaint Rates Across All 50 States

Rank	State	Workforce 2024	Avg. EPA Complaints (2022–2024)	Rate per 100K Workers
1	Delaware	489,100	15.00	3.07
2	New Mexico	893,700	11.67	1.31
3	Vermont	314,400	4.00	1.27
4	Arkansas	1,379,800	16.33	1.18
5	Alabama	2,220,500	24.33	1.10
6	Tennessee	3,343,200	36.33	1.09
7	Nevada	1,582,400	16.33	1.03
8	Wyoming	297,300	3.00	1.01
9	Mississippi	1,195,300	12.00	1.00
10	Maryland	2,773,800	27.33	0.99
11	Pennsylvania	6,229,800	60.67	0.97
12	West Virginia	720,400	7.00	0.97
13	South Dakota	468,600	4.50	0.96
14	Georgia	4,994,900	47.67	0.95
15	North Carolina	5,050,700	45.67	0.90
16	Illinois	6,156,600	51.00	0.83
17	Virginia	4,268,200	35.33	0.83
18	Colorado	3,010,000	24.67	0.82
19	New York	9,895,500	81.00	0.82
20	Ohio	5,691,500	45.00	0.79
21	Missouri	3,085,300	24.00	0.78
22	North Dakota	451,900	3.50	0.77
23	Washington	3,678,500	28.33	0.77
24	Texas	14,318,700	98.67	0.69
25	Indiana	3,308,400	22.67	0.69
26	Arizona	3,283,500	21.67	0.66
27	Kansas	1,468,000	9.67	0.66
28	Montana	536,600	3.50	0.65

29	Louisiana	1,971,400	12.67	0.64
30	Nebraska	1,078,500	6.50	0.60
31	Michigan	4,508,800	25.33	0.56
32	Minnesota	3,039,600	16.00	0.53
33	New Jersey	4,396,600	19.33	0.44
34	Oklahoma	1,800,500	7.33	0.41
35	Oregon	1,993,100	7.50	0.38
36	Florida	10,013,700	36.67	0.37
37	California	18,129,400	62.67	0.35
38	Kentucky	2,051,900	7.00	0.34
39	Idaho	886,600	3.00	0.34
40	Iowa	1,606,200	5.00	0.31
41	Connecticut	1,715,900	5.33	0.31
42	South Carolina	2,401,000	7.33	0.31
43	Wisconsin	3,042,100	9.00	0.30
44	Massachusetts	3,747,300	9.67	0.26
45	Utah	1,782,700	4.33	0.24
46	Alaska	341,700	N/A	N/A
47	Hawaii	643,900	N/A	N/A
48	Maine	656,100	N/A	N/A
49	New Hampshire	719,000	N/A	N/A
50	Rhode Island	514,200	N/A	N/A

The complete 50-state ranking places Tennessee's complaint rate in full national context. At 1.09 per 100,000 workers, it is one of only nine states exceeding the 1.00 threshold and the largest state by workforce in that elite group. The national range spans from Delaware's 3.07 down to Utah's 0.24, with Tennessee anchored in the upper tier.

Methodology

This analysis examined Equal Pay Act (EPA) discrimination receipts filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) across all 50 U.S. states over a three-year period (FY 2022–FY 2024) to identify long-term pay equity patterns rather than short-term spikes. State-level EPA receipt totals were collected for each fiscal year from 2022 through 2024. Three-year cumulative totals and annual averages were calculated for every state. Complaint volumes were then normalized per 100,000 employed workers using U.S. Census workforce data to ensure fair state-to-state comparisons.

Data Sources

- **EEOC Enforcement and Litigation Statistics:**
<https://www.eeoc.gov/data/enforcement-and-litigation-statistics-0>
- **Research Dataset:**
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KAtlyJIEbc36FtZ2yxVjnaASCe2amRiaKBv11g0kkMw/edit?gid=0#gid=0>
- **Research by:** <https://madialaw.com/>

About Madia Law

The study was conducted by Madia Law, a Minnesota-based trial law firm focused on employment litigation, civil rights claims, and catastrophic injury cases. The firm represents high-earning professionals facing wrongful termination or workplace discrimination, as well as families impacted by police misconduct or medical malpractice. Preparing every case for trial from day one, Madia Law advocates aggressively to secure meaningful results for its clients.