

ANNUAL WORK PLAN

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

FY 2025-2026

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Mission Statement

The City of Raleigh's Human Relations Commission (RHRC) serves as an advisor to City Council with respect to human services. RHRC is charged with creating and promoting an environment within the city in which all persons can enjoy human dignity, equal opportunity, well-being, and harmony among the many different citizens regardless of race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, or national origin.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The City of Raleigh's Strategic Plan outlines the City's key priorities and sets a clear path for future goals and actions. The Human Relations Commission and its initiatives are aligned with the following strategic objectives:

- Community Safety
- Quality of Life
- Economic Development & Innovation
- Organizational Excellence
- Strategic Alignment

FY 2025-26 FOCUS AREAS

As part of the restructuring of boards and commissions, this workplan also includes the functions, focus areas, and committees of the now dissolved Hispanic and Immigrant Affairs Board and the now dissolved African American Affairs Board.

Focus Area	Action	Strategic Alignment
PROMOTE COMMUNITY COHESION	Partner with local community organizations to strengthen unity, foster mutual understanding, and address challenges that impact the well-being and safety of all members of the community.	Quality of Life, Community Safety
	Develop policy recommendations or educational materials for the City Council to promote a sense of belonging and social cohesion.	Quality of Life, Organizational Excellence
ENHANCING COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AND SECURITY	Engage directly with community members at events by distributing educational materials, gathering feedback on programs and services, and promoting upcoming HRC initiatives.	Community Safety, Quality of Life

	Identify and provide recommendations to address barriers to safety and access to resources for impacted communities through targeted outreach and advocacy.	Community Safety, Quality of Life
PROMOTE ECONOMIC MOBILITY	Promote initiatives for small, emerging, growing, and undercapitalized businesses, employees, and business owners including hosting an Economic Development panel.	Economic Development & Innovation
	Support collaborative efforts addressing workforce development and training programs that enhance career opportunities for impacted communities.	Economic Development & Innovation
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND POLICY	Offer in-kind or financial sponsorship to community-led events that align with the HRC’s mission of creating and promoting an environment within the city in which all persons can enjoy human dignity, equal opportunity, well-being, and harmony, strengthening partnerships with grassroots organizations.	Quality of Life
	Collaborate with other City Boards and Commissions to co-host activities or panels at community celebrations, ensuring diverse representation and cross-promotion of City resources.	Quality of Life, Organizational Excellence
	Expand participation to new events that reflect the city’s diverse communities, ensuring broad representation and visibility across neighborhoods and demographic groups.	Quality of Life
	Create new bylaws by implementing and adapting the City’s standardized template to ensure clear governance, defined roles, and consistent operating procedures. This effort will include benchmarking comparable commissions, engaging stakeholders for input, and ensuring alignment with applicable statutory and municipal requirements. The resulting bylaws will provide a clear and consistent foundation for effective decision-making and long-term organizational sustainability.	Organizational Excellence, Strategic Alignment
COMMITTEES		
GRANTS COMMITTEE	Oversee commission participation in the Human Services Grants review process and provides recommendations to Council for final approval. Ensures fair and impactful distribution of funds to local non-profit communities, by utilizing and applying a fair, transparent criteria and performance-based metrics to grant evaluations.	Quality of Life, Community Safety, Organizational Excellence

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE	Develop and implement a consistent outreach strategy through the HRC’s website, social media, and other channels to inform, engage, and connect with the public. Include committees that have been added on bylaws.	Quality of Life, Organizational Excellence
	Maintain a public-facing calendar highlighting HRC-led and sponsored events, celebrations, and community engagement activities to increase visibility and participation.	Quality of Life
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Support programs that focus on job creation, economic development, finance issues, access to capital, and small business promotion.	Economic Development & Innovation
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE	Establish and maintain relationships with organizations, associations, cultural groups, and residents of the City with a focus on civil rights, housing, rapid response, and environmental resilience.	Quality of Life, Organizational Excellence

**SPOTLIGHT
GRANTS COMMITTEE**

Since 1989, the Human Relations Commission (HRC) has been entrusted with reviewing the Human Services Grant applications on behalf of the City of Raleigh. The City Council allocates funding through these grants to address unmet needs in priority populations, including older adults, youth, individuals with disabilities, those with substance use disorders, and people experiencing homelessness.

The HRC Grants Review Panel—comprising of all HRC Commissioners and selected representatives from other City Advisory Commissions—plays a critical role in ensuring equitable, impactful funding decisions. This process is considered the HRC’s flagship initiative, as its outcomes are felt across the entire city. Broad participation ensures collective responsibility and accountability in evaluating and recommending fund allocation.

Diversity is a hallmark of the HRC, and the varied perspectives and lived experiences of its members enrich the grant review process. Decisions are guided by fair, transparent criteria and performance-based metrics to ensure funding is allocated in a way that maximizes community impact and advances social advancement and community cohesion.

ANNUAL EVENTS

- National Day of Racial Healing – January 2026
 - Tools for School Program – Fall 2025
 - Economic Development Panel – Spring & Summer 2026
 - Impact Award Dinner – Spring 2026
 - Community Sponsorships and Multicultural Celebrations – Ongoing
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COMMISSION MEMBERS

LEADERSHIP

Jaime Robinson, Chair

Vacant, Vice Chair

Robert Courts, Secretary

Alecia S Taylor, Vice Secretary

MEMBERS

Cristina España

Kathy G. Monteiro

Sara Palacio

Matthew Potts

Helen Sporkin

Brendie M. Vega

Shannon Gessner

Tulia Finucci

Kunal Choksi

Khodr Zaarour

Torrey Dixon

Anne (Sophie) Mukua Kioko

Dr. Manzoor Cheema

Ann Robertson

Rachael Boone

Elke Weil-Millan

Dr. Maryellen S. Kelly

Catherine Rivera

Daphne Moore

Anna Rios

Rev. Dr. Portia Rochelle

Carlos Liriano

Stacey Lenn Webb

Tammy Loza

Kimberly Tyson

Sana Siddiqui

Jorge Santana

LIAISONS

Sophia Lindo

Mayor Janet Cowell

Special Thanks:

Mayor Pro Tem Jane Harrison

City Staff Aracelys Torres

