



Raleigh Human Relations Commission FY20 Work Plan

The Raleigh's Human Relations Commission (RHRC) serves as an advisor to the City Council in the area of human services and human rights.



*Dignity, Justice,
Culture and Development
of Human Rights*



Raleigh
Community



Raleigh Human Relations Commission (RHRC)

2019-2020 Work Plan

Introduction

Theme: Dignity, Justice, Culture and Development of Human Rights

The City of Raleigh's Human Relations Commission (RHRC) serves as an advisor to the City Council in the area of human services and human relations. Human relations shall mean those activities which promote human dignity, equal opportunity, and harmony among the many different residents who make up the population of the City of Raleigh. This definition *shall* include those activities and programs classified as promoting the general well-being of citizens without regard to race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, or national origin in their daily activities.

The Commission's Work Plan for 2019-2020 sets forth the continuation of annual events, such as the Mayor's Unity Day, recognition of residents in a public forum, community events, the recommending of human service agencies for grant awards, and spells out opportunities for outreach by the Commission.

The Commission: Past and Present

At its inception, the Human Relations Commission was charged with evaluating human services and human relations within the city and making recommendations to City Council in areas where its action was required. Initially, these responsibilities carried with them the authority to receive complaints from citizens and to attempt to reconcile disputes within the community.

While the authority to mediate or reconcile complaints from citizens has been removed from the Commission, the supporting language for the Commission confirms an authority to make recommendations to the City Council in the area of human services and human relations. To that end, the Commission will invite speakers, including residents, to make presentations on issues, complaints or concerns generally involving questions of diversity and human dignity at its meetings, and will make recommendations to Council for their consideration.

Structure of the Commission

The Commission is staffed by Raleigh's Human Relations Unit. The Commission had successfully requested the City Manager consider the creation of a Human Relations Manager. Without additional staff support, the Commission was limited in the projects and scope of activities in which it was able to participate. In 2018, a Human Relations Director position was created, and its first person was hired to support the efforts of the Human Relations Commission in carrying out its mission. This position also supports three other boards and commissions.

The Commission operates its work within standing committees. The following provides a description, by committee, of the work in which the Commission proposes to be engaged.

Administration

Commission Planning Retreat

Commission members met for an annual planning meeting which was videotaped at the request of the Assistant City Manager on June 13, 2019 to plan activities for the coming year. The planning meeting was held from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Raleigh Pathways Center after its scheduled monthly meeting. In addition to Commission members and City staff, Gene Troy, Program Manager for the Civil Rights Division of the North Carolina Human Relations Commission was in attendance.

Conferences/Workshops

Throughout the year, several conferences and workshops are organized around issues of human relations and cultural diversity. For example, the North Carolina Human Relations Commission organizes an annual conference that addresses some of these topics as well as provides training for Human Relations Commissions across the State of North Carolina. Select members of Raleigh's Commission plan to attend up to two of these workshops throughout the year. Information gathered will be shared with the full Commission for education and training as well as forwarding the mission of the Commission. In addition, the Commission will endeavor in town hall type meetings on various issues with regard to its Themes of Focus.

In FY19, an Immigration Forum was held in which immigration attorneys and non-profits participated to provide insight into the issues facing Raleigh residents. The Forum provided information, in addition to Commission research, that culminated

in the Recommendation provided in Council's City Manager Report on June 21, 2019.

In addition, there were several speakers who presented before the Commission at their scheduled meetings surrounding the issues of unconscious bias and police oversight of the Raleigh Police Department. A recommendation was drafted by subcommittee and approved by the full Commission based on available statistics and public input. The Commission did not present the advice to Council at a meeting, but it was provided in written format to each Council member.

Themes of Focus for 2019-2020

The Commission will focus on three areas of human relations within the City of Raleigh in the 2019-2020 sessions. RHRC committee work and corresponding initiatives will focus on, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- 1. Racial Equity**
- 2. Unity/ Cultural Celebration**
- 3. Sexual Orientation- LGBTQ**

This year, the Commission needs to take a leading role on behalf of residents of Raleigh to protect all human rights as it deals with human relations in our City. According to the United Nations, "Human Rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or any other status. Everyone is entitled to these rights without discrimination." Economic, Social, Cultural, Civil and Political right are all inclusive in Human Rights.

Commission Committees

By-Laws Committee

The committee reviews the Bylaws that establish the structure, function, and operations of the RHRC. The City Council must approve bylaw changes. This year, the Commission will review and assess the current Bylaws for contemporary applicability.

Nominating Committee

Responsible for presenting a slate of candidates for officers of the RHRC to be voted on annually.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is responsible for all internal and external communications efforts put forth by the RHRC, including any Commission information to be included in newsletters and Commission publications and collateral.

The Communications Committee will continue to review and update its communication methods. A strong communications plan is critical to establish necessary public awareness of the RHRC and the role it serves in the Raleigh community. Communications issued by the RHRC will seek to educate Raleigh residents on the purpose of the Commission, its initiatives, and opportunities for public/citizen engagement. The City Council needs to provide the Commission with the necessary tools to effectuate this goal. In past years, communication has been narrowly focused due to restrictions placed upon Members to communicate on social media, which is the most prevalent and far-reaching methodology for current demographics.

The communications committee will focus on two key channels:

1. Outbound: The Commission looks to effectively communicate RHRC events, sponsorships, forums, initiatives and resources available to Raleigh residents.
 - City Website through digital banners and public service announcements
 - Print material (i.e., rack cards, business cards)
 - Social Media
 - City newsletters and mailings (ie-utility bills, Raleigh Register)
2. Inbound: The committee seeks to make it easier for residents to provide feedback on issues related to human relations by expanding and diversifying inbound communication channels. Currently, residents may express feedback or concerns using the following methods:
 - Email to the RHRC Chairperson and City Staff who will report all to the Commission for review.
 - Present before an RHRC meeting at regularly scheduled times.

The Commission will employ the following tactics on both channels:

- Strengthen its existing website page and evaluate current RHRC marketing materials.
- Consider outreach channels such as the Raleigh Television Network (RTN), blogs, and social outlets such as Facebook and Twitter.

- Gain valuable input and feedback from the residents of Raleigh including, but not limited to, the use of surveys, social networking sites, and other forms of engagement.
- Build relationships with local nonprofits and partner in media opportunities such as press releases and public service announcements.
- Create an Annual Report highlighting the year's accomplishments and activities.

Community Relations & Celebrations Committee

Sponsorships:

The committee recommends sponsorships that promote and celebrate all citizens of Raleigh. The Commission and its members will actively participate in local cultural events that *may include but are not limited to* Out! Raleigh, the Raleigh-Apex NAACP Banquet, the International Festival, the African American Cultural Festival, Mosque Open House, and the Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast and other events that align with the 2019-2020 Themes of Focus. Where appropriate, the Commission will sponsor events or set up tables to promote outreach that parallels with the Commission's mission for this year.

Human Relations Awards Banquet:

Every year, during Human Relations Month which is in February, the Commission has hosted a banquet recognizing members of our community who have made outstanding contributions in building human dignity and harmony in our city. Individuals from diverse backgrounds, including students, are invited to participate in the banquet program. Awards are presented to an individual, business entity, non-profit organization, and a youth. The 2019 year marked the 30th Anniversary of the Human Relations Awards Banquet and it was attended by a large and diverse group of local and state elected officials (Attorney General Josh Stein was one of the keynote speakers), non-profit directors, human services individuals, business leaders and many others who share the current mission of the Commission.

This year, the Commission has opted to cease the awards banquet and hold a larger event in coordination with other Commissions that includes a recognition component in which all will participate.

Grants Committee

Human Services Grants:

In 1989, the City Council charged the Commission with reviewing requests for human services funding and making recommendations to the Council. As such, the Human Relations Commission received \$549,300 to be awarded to human service agencies in 2018-2019 fiscal year. As a note of interest, the requested amounts from the agencies were in the amount of \$1,610,829, almost two-thirds more than the allocation. This funding provides important human services. The Commission looks to the Council for the allocation for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Funds received help meet unmet needs in targeted service areas for the elderly, youth, handicapped, immigrants, substance users and the homeless.

The Grants committee convenes in January or February of each year consisting of five commission members; one member of the Substance Use Advisory Commission; one representative from Wake County Human Services; one representative of a nonprofit community; and one representative of Triangle United Way. The subcommittee reviews grant applications from human service agencies in February and recommend proposed funding levels to the full Commission at its meeting in March. After that, the full Commission forwards their recommendations to the Council before the budget deliberation process.

The Commission uses fair and equitable criteria and performance measurement standards to determine grant allocation in a way that maximizes outcomes and objectivity.

To better understand the services provided by the human service agencies who receive grants from the City of Raleigh and to monitor their work, members of the Commission will seek to make site visits to various agencies.

Agency Reporting Requirements

- Human service agencies provide quarterly performance reports which are due when the agency submits their invoice for payment.
- Site visits/monitoring

Goals - Goals of site visits and monitoring include:

- Confirming the funded programming or project is following the grant agreement (scope of services, performance measures).

- Confirming the grantee complies with administrative contract requirements (ex. Bookkeeping checklist, internal controls)
- Building relationships and identifying technical contacts

Public Safety Committee

The Public Safety Committee seeks ways to promote and support public safety in the city of Raleigh. Primarily, the Committee collaborates with Fire and Police Departments to strengthen relations within the community through educational and activity-driven events. The RHRC also arranges public safety updates at Commission meetings, including reports on criminal activity and other crime trends within the City.

The Public Safety committee will focus on, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- Promoting outreach to improve communications and transparency between law enforcement and communities, familiarity and trust building activities (coffee with cops, neighborhood-specific events, school events, etc.),
- **Host a Public Safety Community Engagement Forum** to host a conversation between law enforcement, public safety personnel, community members and the city on ways we can better collaborate and support each other from a human relation lens.

Diversity Relations Committee

The Diversity Relations Committee serves as a conduit for civil rights discrimination concerns of Raleigh citizens and residents. The committee will organize the annual Mayor's Unity Celebration and any forums and presentations related to race and ethnic relations.

Human Relations Diversity Forum (Mayor's Unity Day):

The purpose of the Mayor's Unity Day is to celebrate the human diversity of the Triangle. This breakfast is to create opportunities to learn about the diversity of the Triangle area, promote dialogue among all its citizens, share insights, experiences and lessons learned and build a community that is open and inviting to all people.

Below is a list of forums that the Raleigh Human Relations Commission may host in the 2019-2020 session. Following all community forums, the Commission will contact participants with relevant follow-up information and participation surveys. By collecting contact information of citizens attending these forums, the RHRC will re-engage the community in all follow up activities that result from the forums.

- **LGBTQ Town Hall type event** to provide a forum for the LGBTQ community to bring forth concerns and ideas to community and business leaders, especially for youth and transgendered youth. They can garner support on the difficulties and issues they face.
- **Host Equity discussions** and collaborate with City, civic and business leaders, which includes unity and cultural celebrations. The public and private sectors are integral in accomplishing the goal of ignoring racial, gender and other status to give everyone in Raleigh legal, moral, social, economic and political equality.

