



Raleigh Human Relations Commission FY21 Workplan

Raleigh's Human Relations Commission 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)

October 2020 to June 2021 Work Plan

Introduction

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 human services and human relations. Human relations shall mean those activities that promote human dignity, equal opportunity, and harmony among the many different residents who make up the City of Raleigh population. This definition *shall* include those activities and programs classified as promoting residents' general well-being without regard to race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, or national origin in their daily activities.

Unify Raleigh is the Commission's theme for the remainder of FY 2021. In the activities planned to support our three focus areas, we will collaborate with other boards and commissions and other community partners.

The Commission Functions & Duties

The Human Relations Commission may evaluate socio-economic human service needs, review and comment on plans and analysis developed by the Office of Equity and Inclusion for human service needs, monitor Raleigh's trend and activities in human relations, and advise the City Council concerning the establishment of human relations goals and policies. Additionally, the Commission receives, investigates, and attempts to conciliate and otherwise process complaints and inquiries concerning human relations and human rights.

Structure of the Commission

The RHRC fourteen members are residents appointed by the City Council that volunteer their time and contribute their expertise. On October 6, 2020, City Council changed the RHRC member structure by adding two alternate seats. The Commission is supported by the Office of Equity and Inclusion staff. The Commission executes its work within standing committees. The following provides a description, by committee, of the work the Commission proposes to be engaged.

Administration

Commission Planning Retreat

Due to Covid-19 and the member restructuring, the annual planning meeting to plan activities for the coming year was pushed out. The virtual planning meeting was held on November 7, 2020, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. In attendance were Commission members and City staff.

Prior Year Accomplishments

Before the Covid-19 restrictions, the RHRC directed, sponsored, and participated in the Mayor's Unity Day celebrating African American History in Raleigh on February 29, 2020. The event brought together nearly 300 residents to experience and celebrate African American culture in Raleigh. This free family event was held at the Raleigh Convention Center and filled the halls with history, food, music, and dance.

The event featured many facets of African American culture such as spoken word, African drumming, art, ballet dance, and songs performed by Southeast Raleigh HS Chorus and NC State University Gospel Choir. The event concluded with a Cantata of negro spirituals performed by a combined Shaw and Saint Augustine's University choir. Multiple community partners participated and shared their talents, which was a gift for all that attended.

Other activities

RHRC partnered with Equity and Inclusion staff to promote and support the Social Equity Book Club. Some attendees of the book club discussion were Raleigh residents that had not attended or participated in an RHRC event or activity in the past. A Commissioner representing the RHRC attended the quarterly NC statewide Human Relation Commissions meetings. In July, the Commission documented a statement to acknowledge the City Council's creation of a Police Advisory Board and communicate our outrage over the continued police violence.

Focus Areas for the Remainder of FY 2021

The Commission will focus on three areas of human relations within the City of Raleigh for the remainder of FY 2021. RHRC committee work and corresponding initiatives will focus on, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- 1. Civil and Human Rights**
- 2. Equity and Inclusion**
- 3. Cultural Celebrations/ Unity**

Commission Committees & Activities

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. Before the end of June 2021, the Commission will review and assess the current Bylaws.

Nominating Committee:

Responsible for presenting a slate of candidates for officers of the RHRC to be voted on by Commission members. This year the committee presented a slate in October 2020 and will present a slate of executive officers in June 2021.

Communications Committee:

The Communications Committee is responsible for all internal and external communications efforts put forth by the RHRC. The committee will develop a communications plan to establish public awareness of the RHRC and its role in the Raleigh community. To also uplift local nonprofits and partner in media opportunities such as press releases and public service announcements. The committee will work with Equity and Inclusion staff to determine the appropriate social media tools allowed by the City of Raleigh.

The committee seeks to make it easier for residents to provide feedback on human relations issues 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.
- Schedule an appearance before the RHRC at one of their monthly meeting.

Diversity Relations Committee:

The Diversity Relations Committee serves as a conduit for civil and human rights discrimination concerns of Raleigh residents. The committee will review the City of Raleigh policies and procedures, received guidance from the NCHRC, and gather actual experiences through community dialogue. After this effort, the Commission will hold events to educate Raleigh's residents on civil and human rights policies and procedures. The Commission will report to City Council with any feedback and recommendations.

Community Relations & Celebrations Committee:

The committee identifies then recommends participation and partnerships that promote and celebrate all residents of Raleigh. The Commission and its members will actively participate in local cultural events. Due to Covid-19, events that were normally held in Raleigh may look differently or take on different forms over these next six months. The Commission will support activities and events that align with our three focus areas during the remainder of FY 2021.

This committee is tasked to find creative ways to promote Human Relations Month, which is in February. They will spotlight individuals, business entities, non-profit organizations, and youth in the City of Raleigh that make a difference within our stated focus areas. Design the Mayor's Unity Day to celebrate human diversity by sharing insights, experiences and to build a community that is open and inviting to all people.

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. The Human Relations Commission received \$554,793 to be awarded to human service agencies in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. As a note of interest, the agencies' requested amounts were \$1,743,599, more than two-thirds more than the allocation. This funding provides essential human services. The City Council has allocated \$565,876 for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Funds received help meet unmet needs in targeted service areas for the elderly, youth, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, substance users, and the homeless.

The Grants committee convenes in January or February each year and consists of five Commission members; one member of the Substance Use Advisory Commission, one representative from Wake County Human Services; one representative from the nonprofit community, and one representative from a nonprofit funding agency. The committee 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. Human service agencies must provide quarterly performance reports, which are due when the agency submits their invoice for payment.

To better understand the services provided by the human service agencies who receive grants from the City of Raleigh and monitor their work, members of the Commission will make site visits during the Spring/Summer to various agencies. Site visits to confirm the funded programming or project follow the grant agreement (scope of services, performance measures) and help the commissioner a complete picture of the organization.

Public Safety Committee:

The Public Safety Committee seeks ways to promote and support public safety in the City of Raleigh. The Committee primarily collaborates with Fire and Police Departments to strengthen community relations through educational and activity-driven events.

The activities the Public Safety Committee will focus on for the remainder of FY 2021:

- Invite the new Raleigh Fire Chief to give an update on the Fire Department, especially with regard to the Department's activities around Department diversity
- Coordinate with the new Police Advisory Board on issues of public safety
- Coordinate with the Environmental Advisory Board on issues of environmental justice
- Forward any public safety issues that citizens bring to the Commission to the attention of City Council
- Collaborate with other Raleigh Boards and Commission under the Equity and Inclusion umbrella to educate and support initiatives that keep Raleigh residents safe.