

Raleigh Human Relations Commission FY22 Workplan

Raleigh's Human Relations Commission serves as an advisor to the City Council concerning human services and human rights.



Dignity, Justice, Culture and Development of Human Rights

Raleigh Human Relations Commission (RHRC)

October 2021 to June 2022 Work Plan

Introduction

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 includes those activities and programs that promote residents' general well-being without regard to race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, or national origin in their daily activities.

The Commission Functions & Duties

The RHRC may evaluate socio-economic human service needs, review and comment on plans and analyses developed by the Raleigh Department of Equity and Inclusion, monitor Raleigh's trends and activities in human relations, and advise the City Council concerning establishing 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 has fourteen members and two alternate members who are residents appointed by the City Council who volunteer their time and contribute their expertise. The Commission is supported by the City of Raleigh's Department of Equity and Inclusion staff. The RHRC executes its work within standing committees.

Administration

Commission Planning Retreat

Due to COVID-19, the annual planning meeting was held virtually on Saturday, June 26, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. In attendance were Commission members and City staff.

Prior Year Accomplishments

In December of 2020, RHRC hosted the quarterly statewide NC Local Human Relations Commissions/Councils/Committees (Local HRCs) and Local Human Relations Departments (Local HRDs)

In February of 2021, RHRC led Unify Raleigh events in partnership with other boards and commissions under the Raleigh Department of Equity and Inclusion umbrella. Working with the Inter-faith Food Shuttle, RHRC distributed food and PPE at Southeast Raleigh High School. RHRC also distributed PPE to organizations that support people without permanent housing (South Wilmington Street Center, Family Promise of Wake County, Oak City Cares, Helen Wright Women's Center, Salvation Army, Haven House Services).

In recognition of Black History Month, RHRC commissioners attended the celebration of the all-black volunteer Victory Fire Company, which served the city for over 40 years, starting in 1870. On the same day, commissioners participated in a walking tour of the history of Oberlin Village and Cemetery offered by the Friends of Oberlin. Founded in the late 1860s by formerly enslaved persons, Oberlin Village is the largest Reconstruction-era black settlement in Wake County.

The Grants Committee completed a review of City of Raleigh human services grants. City Council approved the presented grants recommendation totaling \$565,876 and requested an increase in grant funding by 10% for the next five years.

In recognition of Asian American and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month, RHRC commissioners attended the Uplifting Asian Voices events.

RHRC sent City Council a recommendation to adopt an ordinance prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in employment, public accommodations, and housing within the City of Raleigh.

RHRC participated in the interview process of the Raleigh Police Chief and the Community Engagement Director.

RHRC tabled at two Juneteenth community celebrations at Chavis Park and the Pope House. The commissioners were able to talk with various Raleigh residents.

RHRC hosted and back-to-school giveaway and provided supplies and materials to over 150 Raleigh students at Roberts Community Center.

Other activities

- Guest that attended an RHRC Meeting:
 - April 2021, Chief Herbert Griffin, Raleigh Fire Chief
 - May 2021, David Ellis, Wake County Manager
- RHRC continued our partnership with Equity and Inclusion staff to promote and facilitate the Social Equity Book Club discussion.
- Attended the Fair Housing Conference.
- RHRC participated in a Courageous Community Partnership advisory committee meeting and attended Courageous Community Conversation events.
- Attended training by NCHRC on the role of the Local Human Relations Commission.

Focus Areas for the Remainder of FY 2022

The Commission will focus on four areas of human relations within the City of Raleigh for FY 2022. RHRC committee work and corresponding initiatives will focus on, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- 1. Racial Healing Initiative**
- 2. Persons without Permanent Housing**
- 3. LGBTQIIA+**
- 4. Mental Health**

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 bylaws changes. Before the end of June 2022, the commission will review and assess the current Bylaws.

Nominating Committee:

The committee is 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 June 2021 and will offer a slate in June 2022.

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. The committee will also uplift the work of 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 the RHRC Chairperson and City Staff, who will report all to the Commission for review.
- Schedule an appearance before the RHRC at one of its monthly meetings.

Diversity Relations Committee:

The Diversity Relations Committee will provide opportunities for the diverse residents of the City of Raleigh to come together to exchange ideas and experiences. In conjunction with Mayors Unity Day, on January 18, 2022, RHRC will promote opportunities for the Raleigh residents to participate in the National Day of Racial Healing through community dialogue. In addition, the committee will have an event in the spring for diverse communities to gather and share storytelling experiences. The committee will promote education to Raleigh's residents on the process of reporting any hate crimes and bias. The Commission will report to the City Council with any significant feedback and recommendations collected during events or activities.

Community Relations & Celebrations Committee:

The Community Relations & Celebrations Committee recommends participation and partnerships that promote and celebrate all residents of Raleigh. The Commission and its members will actively participate in local cultural events. Planned for November 2021, on two different occasions, the RHRC will visit, share a meal, and have conversations with those that participate in the LGBTQIIA+ Center programs and young adults that have recently aged out of the foster care system and participate in programs at the Hope House.

The Commission will support activities and events that align with our four focus areas during FY 2022 (examples: Out Raleigh, The NC International Festival, African American Cultural Celebration, and more). This committee is tasked to find creative ways to promote Human Relations Month, which is in February. It will spotlight individuals, business entities, non-profit organizations, and youth in the City of Raleigh that make a difference within our stated focus areas.

Grants Committee:

In 1989, the City Council charged the Commission with reviewing requests for human services funding and making recommendations to the Council.

The City of Raleigh received \$73 million under the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The City Council allocated \$1 million to human services grants. The RHRC will manage and conduct the application process. Applicants must meet eligibility requirements. Priority was given to those agencies not fully funded in the winter 2021 human service grant cycle. The Grants committee that reviewed ARPA applications consists of six RHRC members, one representative from a nonprofit organization not requesting funding, and three City staff.

The City of Raleigh human services grant process will start in January 2022. The City Council has allocated \$622,464 for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Funds received help meet unmet needs in targeted service areas for the elderly, youth, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, substance users, and unsheltered persons.

The Grants committee that will review Raleigh city funds applications for FY23, will consist 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, or one representative from a nonprofit funding agency.

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 monitor their work, members of the Commission will visit various agencies. Site visits confirm that funded programs or projects follow the grant agreement (scope of services, performance measures) and help the commissioners develop a deeper understanding of the agencies.

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 the Fire and Police Departments to strengthen community relations through education and activity-driven events.

The activities the Public Safety Committee will focus on this year are:

- Coordinate with the Office of Sustainability and City liaison to the Environmental Advisory Board concerning environmental justice and education efforts.
- Forward any public safety issues that citizens bring to the Commission to the attention of the 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.

Black History Education Committee (special committee):

The History Education Committee will focus on the history of Raleigh African American neighborhoods in recognition and pay tribute to the book Culture Town by Linda Simmons-Henry.