



# Human Rights Commission

2023 Work Plan



# Background

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## **Purpose**

The Human Rights Commission was formed in 1968, shortly after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The HRC will fulfill its mission and purpose of aiding and advising the City Council in ensuring equal opportunity in the areas of human rights protected by law and the social standards of the city for all community members in the city of Bloomington. We will do this by identifying work plan goals, along with broader human rights issues, that align with the overall strategic plan of the City of Bloomington. The HRC will work to align the Commission's work plan with the goals and strategies of the Bloomington Tomorrow Together Strategic Plan (BTT) and work to ensure accountability to the Core Values of the plan. The HRC will work to ensure that the City Council's strategic plan does not have adverse effects on the human rights of Bloomington community members. The HRC will partner with other city commissions to ensure our work has the broadest impact. Success or failure of the HRC's work plan goals will be measured against the mission, core values, and strategic objectives of the BTT.

## **Duties**

According to City Code Section 2.83.01, the Human Rights Commission shall:

- (a) Study and review programs and policies and aid the City Council in enlisting the cooperation of agencies, organizations and individuals in the city in an active program directed to create equal opportunity and eliminate discrimination and inequalities;
- (b) Advise and aid the City Council in implementing such recommendations as may be appropriate to the city, including, but not limited to, such things as:
  - (1) Specific programs of public information regarding the statutory requirements of the State Human Rights Act (M.S. Chapter 363A, as it may be amended from time to time);
  - (2) Comprehensive studies and surveys of practices in the community;
  - (3) Programs of affirmative action to be developed with employers, the housing industry, the educational institutions and governmental agencies;
  - (4) Programs of review to give and gain information regarding compliance with state requirements concerning equal opportunity;
  - (5) Programs designed to alleviate community tension; and
  - (6) Programs designed to create a genuine climate of community readiness to accept orderly and demonstrable change in eliminating barriers of equal opportunity.
- (c) Attempt to conciliate, within its authority, all grievances involving discrimination occurring within the city and make all appropriate reports to the City Council and State Department of Human Rights;
- (d) Advise the Bloomington Independent School District No. 271 on matters relating to human rights, in accordance with the resolution of the City Council adopted May 4, 1970;

- (e) Establish committees, as the Commission finds it to be necessary, in the following areas:
  - (1) The various areas of concern under the State Human Rights Act;
  - (2) Public information;
  - (3) Legislation; and
  - (4) Liaison with other organizations including other city commissions and agencies.
  
- (f) Perform such other functions concerning human rights as the city may from time to time direct; and
  
- (g) Hold hearings and make recommendations to the City Council when a complaint is brought against a contractor for violation of §§ 2.100 to 2.104 of this code. Hearings for all contract compliance complaints shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures stated in § 2.104 of this code.

## 2023 Work Plan

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### Process

The Human Rights Commission developed this work plan during its monthly meetings from October and November 2022 to January 2023. Staff liason Laura Bohan led an action planning workshop in October and November, with additional support from Kayla Dvorak Feld, commission secretary.

### Guiding Principles

In developing its work plan for 2022, the Human Rights Commission concurred that the plan would be successful if it incorporated the following principles:

- Connected to the City’s strategies
- Impact on current policies
- Visible
- Impact on people’s lives
- Success that can be measured

### 2023 Work Plan Focus Areas

Below are the focus areas for the Human Rights Commission in 2023:

#### I. Annual Initiatives:

##### A. Proclamations:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January 16, 2023)
- Black History Month (February 2023)
- Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (May 2023)
- Pride Month (June 2023)
- International Day of Peace (September 21, 2023)
- Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 – October 15, 2023)
- Native American Heritage Month (November 2023)
- International Human Rights Day (December 10, 2023)

- Additional proclamations may be added throughout the year
- B. Omar Bonderud Human Rights Award

## II. Workgroup Initiatives:

### A. Just Deeds Project:

- Policy and Practices
  - a) Research equitable housing policies.
  - b) Partner with the City of Bloomington, Planning Commission, Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), and other entities to develop strategies to promote equitable housing practice in Bloomington.
- Awareness and Action
  - a) Develop methods to raise awareness of the Just Deeds Coalition.
  - b) Edit and publish the Just Deeds Tool Kit.
  - c) Increase the number of restrictive covenants discharged in Bloomington.
- Education
  - a) Connect with Bloomington Public Schools to support education of discriminatory housing practices in the United States.
  - b) Provide additional educations opportunities more broadly across Bloomington.

### B. Housing:

- Support Commissions and staff working on issues of homelessness and rental housing
  - a) Continue to work together with the Housing and Redevelopment Authority
  - b) Establish a relationship with the Planning Commission
  - c) Collaborate with city planners on policy issues
  - d) Correspond with Bloomington Public Schools Homeless Highly Mobile Education and Foster Care Liaison
- Increase awareness of homelessness and resource for renters and unhoused folks in Bloomington
  - a) Update the HRC website to include emergency shelter information along with other resources commonly requested by unhoused folks
  - b) Review and communicate the results of the Study of the Current State of Homelessness, Project 22-32, through the HRC website
- Advance tenant rights and accessibility to rental housing
  - a) Support initiatives protecting tenant rights
  - b) Provide input on the efforts of the Welcome to Bloomington Program
- Provide recommendations to the Council regarding issues of homelessness, housing access, and tenant rights

### C. LGBTQIA+ Initiatives:

- Conversion Therapy Ordinance
  - a) Work with the City of Bloomington website team to update the HRC website to have more visibility, make the Conversion Therapy Ordinance and reporting form easier to find.
  - b) Provide information to stakeholders regarding the conversion therapy ordinance.
  - c) Speak to stakeholders about the conversion therapy ordinance.
- Human Rights Campaign MEI
  - a) Research - what is it, why does it happen, and what does it mean?

- b) Review areas where Bloomington did not score well, and present recommendations to city council on areas of improvement.
- LGBTQIA+ Pride Proclamation
  - a) Review LGBTQIA+ Proclamation
  - b) Find a community stakeholder to accept the proclamation
- Bloomington Pride Partnership
  - a) Support Bloomington Pride planning
- Other partnerships and projects
  - a) Twin Cities Pride
  - b) School GSAs - Relationship building.

### **III. Partnerships:**

- A. Pride Month:
  - Provide representation on the planning committee for the 2023 Bloomington Pride celebration.
- B. City Boards and Commissions:
  - Staff liaisons to commissions to meet on a regular basis to drive closer collaboration between City Boards and Commissions.
- C. Welcome to Bloomington
  - Collaborate with W2B design team and staff to advise on programs to create a more welcoming city.

### **IV. Other Potential Opportunities**

During Work Plan planning sessions, the Human Rights Commission identified several ongoing areas of interest. These include past initiatives as well as new initiatives. These items are documented for posterity as well as future planning.

- A. Naturalization Ceremony
- B. Welcome Meals
- C. Connection and collaboration with the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
  - Collaborate to design and administer equity training for other Boards and Commissions
- D. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day activity
- E. Disability rights
  - Housing
  - City and school parks planning
- F. Housing
  - Accessibility/disability
  - Tenant and Homeowner Know Your Rights
- G. Food Sovereignty
- H. Continue to pursue collaboration with other Boards and Commissions
- I. Human Rights Commission website and communication updates


*Approved by the Bloomington Human Rights Commission on January 17, 2023.*

*Approved by the Bloomington City Council on*

# Appendix

## Minnesota Human Rights Act

The Minnesota Human Rights Act protects all Minnesotans from discrimination based on protected class and area of protection.



PROTECTED CLASSES	AREAS OF PROTECTION						
	Employment	Housing	Public Accommodations	Public Services	Education	Credit	Business
Race	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Color	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Creed	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Religion	●	●	●	●	●	●	
National Origin	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sex	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Marital Status	●	●	●		●	●	
Disability	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Public Assistance	●	●		●	●	●	
Age	●				●		
Sexual Orientation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Gender Identity	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Familial Status	●	●					
Local HR Commission Activity	●						

### Other Prohibited Practices

**Aiding/Abetting and Obstruction:** The Act prohibits a person from aiding in a violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA), coercing a person to violate the law, obstructing a person’s compliance with the Act, or interfering with the department’s performance of its duties.

**Retaliation:** The Act prohibits retaliation because a person opposed a practice forbidden by the MHRA, filed a charge or participated in a matter brought under the Act; or because a person associated with a person or group of persons who are disabled or of a different race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin.

## 2023 Human Rights Commission Meeting Dates

Below are the approved meeting days for the Human Rights Commission in 2023. Some members of the Human Rights Commission and presenters may participate electronically as permitted by law, Minnesota Statutes, Section 13D.021.

Date	Location
January 17, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
February 21, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
March 21, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
April 18, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
May 16, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
June 20, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
July 18, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
August 15, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
September 19, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
October 17, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
November 14, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza
December 12, 2023	Haeg Conference Room, Civic Plaza