

**Austin Human Rights Commission
Annual Internal Review
January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014**

The Commission Mission Statement per the City Code

The Commission shall:

- (1) advise and consult with the city council on all matters involving racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination, and devise practices to promote equal opportunity;
- (2) serve in an advisory and consultive capacity to all city departments, advisory boards, and regulatory agencies to assure effective compliance with non-discrimination policies and orders, and recommend to the city manager measures to improve the ability of various departments and agencies to insure equal protection of any and all persons and groups against discrimination;
- (3) recommend to the city council legislation to aid in programs designed to eliminate prejudice and discrimination and encourage community support for the legislation;
- (4) aid in the formulation of local community groups in neighborhoods as needed to carry out specific programs;
- (5) initiate and facilitate discussions and negotiations between individuals and groups to lessen tensions and improve understanding in the community;
- (6) assist in the enforcement of all laws prohibiting discrimination against persons where jurisdiction is not specifically vested in another agency;
- (7) receive and investigate complaints and, as provided by state law, and if necessary, subpoena witnesses and documents needed for investigation of those complaints, and initiate investigations of tensions, acts of prejudice, and practices of discrimination;
- (8) conduct public hearings on complaints and investigate and report to the council in writing facts, findings, and recommendations after using persuasion, mediation, and conciliation before any public hearing, and after making certain that any person named in any report of investigation was given the opportunity to be heard before the board with the right to examine and cross-examine witnesses;
- (9) institute and conduct educational programs to promote equal treatment, opportunity and understanding, and sponsor meetings, institutes, forums, and

courses of instruction to lead to a clearer understanding and solution of human relations problems;

(10) assist in training city employees to use methods of dealing with intergroup relations that result in respect for equal rights and equal treatment, and cooperate with the local Police Department in developing and including human rights courses in the curriculum of police training;

(11) conduct research, obtain factual data and hold public hearings to ascertain the status and treatment of racial, religious, and ethnic groups in the city and the best means of progressively improving human relations;

(12) provide services and information to the city manager and heads of all city departments and agencies to achieve the purposes of this chapter; and

(13) cooperate with all city, state, county, federal, and other governmental agencies, as well as racial, religious, ethnic, nationality, educational, community, civic, fraternal, benevolent and other groups, associations, societies, and individuals with constructive talents and resources helpful in achieving mutual appreciation of the privileges and the responsibilities of citizenship in a land of freedom enriched by free commerce and full utilization of all human resources from all racial, religious, ethnic and national groups.

For reference, the simplified mission statement adopted by the Commission on February 27, 2012, for purposes of external relations is:

The Austin Human Rights Commission exists to help all City residents live free from discrimination based on race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or HIV status. The Commission, in partnership with the Austin Equal Employment Opportunity/Fair Housing (EEO/FH) Office, resolves discrimination complaints about employment, housing, goods, and services provided by businesses, disabilities, and HIV status. Preventing discrimination, however, is just as important as remedying discrimination after it has occurred. To this end, the Commission promotes human rights awareness through educational programs and by sponsoring, attending, and speaking at community meetings and events. Public participation at all Commission activities is vitally important and always welcome!

1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.

January 2014:

- Recommended the City Council direct the African American Resource Advisory commission, City Manager, Representatives of the NAACP, as well as other stakeholders, to identify needs and opportunities for financial Investment in the City's African American community.

April 2014:

- Assisted in ultimate resolution of PARD congregate meal program at Asian American Resource Center issue.

July 2014

- 20140728-004b: Recommended adding source of income as a protected class to City Code.
- 20140728-005: Recommended amending City Code Chapter 5-2 to add broad protections to prohibit retaliation

September 2014

- 20140922-005b: Transgender Day of Remembrance Sponsorship Authorization Request

October 2014

- 20141027-4a: Recommended Gender Neutral Signage for Single-Occupancy Restrooms
- 20141027-5a: Recommended Expanded Housing Options

2014, other:

- HRC had a role in improving the City's Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index.
- HRC/APD communications improved.

- Successful implementation of the 2012 Secure Communities Resolution.
- HRC members successfully established and have maintained community relationships with stakeholder groups.

2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.

All actions of the Human Rights Commission during 2014 complied with the mission statement.

3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.

Goal #1: Increase Community Awareness of and Involvement with the Human Rights Commission

Commissioners will reach out to individuals in the community and a variety of community groups to open/continue a dialog about human rights issues facing the City of Austin, with the goals of understanding the needs better, continuing to identify specific areas suitable for the Human Rights Commission to take action on, and increasing community awareness of and participation in the work of the Commission.

Measures of Success

- Number of Commission actions taken as a result of issues produced from community discussions; and
- Extent of increased attendance at Commission meetings and Commission visibility in the community.

Goal #2: Increase Focus on Follow-Through

Commissioners will focus on following through on our recommendations to: (1) ensure that the recommendations reach and are understood by the appropriate audiences; and (2) increase the likelihood that the recommended action is taken by the City Council or other targeted body. For each recommendation the Commission makes, a Commissioner will be assigned to this follow-through effort, and will report back to the Commission periodically on the progress of the recommendation and desired action. Progress reporting will be a routine agenda item.

Measure of Success:

- At least two Commission recommendations result in the recommended action.

Goal #3: Create a Plan for 10-1 Commission Transition and Diversity

A sub-committee of Commissioners will draft a written plan for a smooth and successful transition to the new eleven-member Commission structure, including a proposed format for passing along current Commissioners' institutional knowledge and community contacts. During the early 2015 process of Commissioner selection by the new 10-1 City Council, the plan will also include suggestions for achieving increased diversity on the Commission.

Measures of Success

- A written transition plan – produced and approved by February 2015; and
- Extent of increased diversity on the Commission.

Goal #4: Continue collaboration with the Austin Police Department and other City bodies to address human rights issues, including racism and discrimination

Measure of Success

- At least one Commission recommendation that results in a policy change concerning racism/discrimination.

Goal #5: Continue to address affordability issues in the City of Austin

Measure of Success

- At least one Commission recommendation that addresses affordability issues in the City of Austin.

Goal #6: Continue to address challenges facing the disabled community in the City of Austin

Measure of Success

- At least one Commission recommendation that addresses the challenges facing the disabled community in the City of Austin.