



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017

Human Rights Commission

(Official Name of Board or Commission)

The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:

Code of Ordinances: Section 2-1-148-Human Rights Commission

- (A) The Human Rights Commission is established as a local commission on human relations in accordance with Texas Labor Code Chapter 21 (Employment Discrimination) to promote the purposes of Chapter 21 and the City Code and secure for all individuals in the City freedom from discrimination because of race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age.
- (B) The commission should be composed of members who as nearly as possible are representative of the several social, economic, religious, cultural, ethnic, and racial groups which comprise the population of the City.
- (C) 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.

(Reference all reports, recommendations, letters or resolutions presented to the City Council on mission-specific issues. If some of the elements of the mission statement were not acted on by the board in the past year, the report should explain why no action was taken.)

July 25, 2016:

The Commission voted in support of including the Workers Defense Project Better Builder Program as a concept to be included in City of Austin expedited building permit programs.

The Commission voted to adopt a Draft Policy for Commissioners' use of the City of Austin Human Rights Commission's Facebook page.

Recommendation 20160725-4a: Recommendation regarding the creation of the position of Chief Equity Officer for the City of Austin approved by the Commission.

Recommendation 20160725-04b Part 2: Recommendation on Gentrification and Historic Preservation approved by the Commission.

September 26, 2016:

Recommendation 20160926-03a: Recommendation for the City of Austin Human Rights Commission to become a sponsor of the 2016 Austin Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20, 2016 at City Hall approved.

October 24, 2016:

By unanimous consent the Commission agreed to modify measures of success for the goals and objectives of the City of Austin Human Rights Commission related to disparate access and address community issues specific to race, policing, and criminal justice by committing to the aspirational goal of addressing such to City Council by March, 2017.

November 28, 2016:

Recommendation 20161128-3a: Reaffirming the City of Austin's commitment to Inclusion, Equity, and Freedom for All adopted.

January 23, 2017:

Recommendation 20170123-05a: Protection Against Discrimination in Public Accommodations—Added Prohibitions for Retaliation approved.

Recommendation 20170123-05b: Condemn Certain Discriminatory Conduct by the President of the United States and the Vice President of the United States, and to Ban Official Use of Trump Products and Services approved.

February 27, 2017:

Recommendation 20170227-04a: Negotiating Changes to the Austin Police Department's Use of Force Response to Resistance Policy: Increasing Transparency and Accountability approved.

March 27, 2017:

Recommendation 20170327-05a: The Creation of an LGBTQ Cultural Center in the City of Austin passed (recommended City Council explore the creation of such a center).

May 22, 2017:

Briefing from the City of Austin Human Resources Department's efforts to address gender disparities in the City of Austin, in support of Austin City Council Resolution 20170323-054.

The Commission's Mission Statement in part indicates The Austin Human Rights Commission exists to help all City residents live free from discrimination based on [disability, religion, sex, national origin, or HIV status.] The Commission, in partnership with the Austin Equal Employment/Fair Housing Office (EE/FHO), resolves discrimination complaints about [employment, goods, and services provided by businesses, disabilities, and HIV status.]

The issues in brackets were not specifically addressed by the Commission via Recommendations, Resolutions, or Letters to City Council due to the issues not specifically coming before the commission in a substantive manner between July 2016, and June 2017. However, the majority of Commissioners are extremely active in the community, and promote human rights awareness (of all categories listed in our mission statement) through educational programs, and by sponsoring, attending, and speaking at community meetings and events.

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

(If any of the board's actions were outside the scope of the mission statement, the report should explain the non-compliance issues.)

All actions of the Human Rights Commission during 2016 and 2017 complied with the mission statement.

Note: All actions and the continuous working group on Gentrification in the City of Austin, as well as a review of CodeNext, are in the interest of the existence of The City of Austin Human Rights Commission to help all City residents live free from discrimination based on race, color, disability, sex, national origin, age. It is also in the interest of furthering the mission of the Commission, in partnership with the Austin Equal Employment/Fair Housing Office, to resolve discrimination complaints regarding housing.

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

(Make sure the goals and objectives fall within the mission statement of the board/commission.)

Goal #1: Community Engagement

All commissioners will make an effort to attend various community functions to increase the commission's awareness of events impacting the community; commissioners will speak to promote the Human Rights Commission and its purpose at events when possible.

Measure of Success

Number of community events attended reported by commissioners at each Human Rights Commission meeting.

Goal #2: Best Practices

All commissioners are committed to increasing our working contact list of individuals with knowledge and understanding of the various issues that are brought to the attention of the Human Rights Commission. The individuals on the contact list will be consulted when researching issues brought before the HRC.

Measure of Success

All commissioners will make an effort to increase the number of contacts on our list three fold.

Goal #3: Addressing Disparate Impact

The commission will promote and secure for all individuals in the City freedom from discrimination because of race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age.

Goal #4: Address Community Issues Specific to Race, Policing, and Criminal Justice.

The commission will continue ongoing engagement with the Austin Police Department in order to address citizen concerns as they arise in the community.

Measure of Success

Continued engagement with the Austin Police Department via invitations to APD personnel to attend HRC meetings.

The commission will monitor and take action regarding issues in the community that arise involving the intersection of race, policing, and criminal justice.