

# **CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA**

**Wednesday, March 25, 2026  
4:00 PM**

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## ***MISSION STATEMENT***

*The Mission of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission is to promote a community of harmony and respect for the rights and dignity of all.*

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Pursuant to due notice and call thereof, the Human Rights Commission will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday, March 25th, 2026, at 4:00 pm in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PUBLIC INPUT** (if anyone wishes to address the Commission):

**SETTING THE AGENDA:** (This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an Agenda item by a majority vote of the Commission members present.)

**PRESENTATION:**

**APPROVE MINUTES:**

- [1.](#) Approve Minutes from February 25th, 2026

**BUSINESS:**

2. Introduction of New Commissioners
3. Election of Officers
- [4.](#) 2026 Workplan
- [5.](#) Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund Draft-Community Foundation
- [6.](#) HRC Presentation

**UPDATES:**

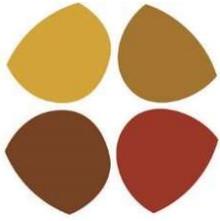
7. Housing
8. City Council Updates
- [9.](#) Stomp on Stigma

10. Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration WG: Commissioner Miller and Council Representative MacGregor  
Interfaith WG: Commissioner Grossman

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

ADJOURN:



# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Pursuant to due notice and call thereof, the Human Rights Commission will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday February 25, 2026, 4:00pm in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

### **ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Commission Chair Angela Erickson, Commissioner Doug Learmont, Commissioner Amy Blomquist, Commissioner Ronald Grossman, Council Representative Molly MacGregor, Commissioner Janet Miller, Commissioner Brittany Pope-Sears

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Stephanie Meittunen

**PUBLIC INPUT** (if anyone wishes to address the Commission): None

**SETTING THE AGENDA:** (This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an Agenda item by a majority vote of the Commission members present.)

Motion made by Council Representative MacGregor, Seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the agenda as written. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Meittunen, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Pope-Sears. Motion passed.

### **PRESENTATION:**

#### 1. Community Foundation - Mindy Nuhring

Mindy Nuhring from the Community Foundation discussed the Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund Draft (the "Fund") with the Human Rights Commission. Once the draft for the Fund has been approved by the City Council, the Community Foundation would be responsible for marketing, accounting and reporting, tax receipting and distribution.

The distributions from the Fund would need to be consistent with the Human Rights Commission's Mission statement and are at the discretion of the Community Foundation. The Human Rights Commission will review and suggest any changes to the Fund Draft and bring to both the City Administrator and the City Council for approval.

### **APPROVE MINUTES:**

2. Approve January 28, 2026, Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Learmont, Seconded by Commissioner Blomquist to approve the January 28, 2026, Minutes. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Meittunen, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Pope-Sears. Motion passed.

BUSINESS:

3. 2026 Workplan

Looking at the 2026 Workplan, Commission Chair Erickson stating that she hadn't heard from the City Attorney, Chad Sterle, regarding the Ordinance review, whether it went to the City Council or not. She also requested that the HRC Presentation get sent out to the new Commissioners, which is part of why it was put together.

4. Community Foundation

Commission Chair Erickson requested that all commissioners bring any comments on the Community Foundation's HR Fund Draft to the next meeting. Commissioners Blomquist and Learmont will review the document thoroughly and make their recommendations. Council Representative MacGregor said that the City Council should look at this for their March 23rd meeting.

5. HRC Presentation

Commission Chair Erickson asked if there was any brainstorming as to where the HRC Presentation, can be shared. For example, Commissioner MacGregor said that the Chamber Luncheons are booked for 2026 but could book for 2027. There are also meetings to check like the Local Adventure Council, Rotary Club, Grand Itasca Board, the Police Community Advisory Board and there are others to check on.

UPDATES:

6. Housing

Commission Chair Erickson and Council Representative MacGregor went to the Itasca County HRA meeting. They discussed both tenant and landlord rights and the 1968 Fair Housing Act. The Commission should work on a Proclamation for next year.

7. City Council Updates

Commission Chair Erickson said that the City Clerk would be sending out re-appointment requests. Both she and Commissioner Miller were at the City Council worksession to present the 2026 Human Rights Commission Workplan, the HRC Presentation and gave them the 2025 Highlights and 2026 Priority Report.

8. Story Stitch

The Commissioners participated in Story Stitch, which is a game that was developed before the pandemic that assists communicating with others.

9. Stomp on Stigma

Commissioner Blomquist discussed that the 14th Annual Stomp on Stigma 5k is set for May 2nd, 2026. It was discussed that the Human Rights Commission banners being held in Human Resources Officer Chery Pierzina's office could be used for the event. Other Commissioners asked if they could post the flyer for the event.

10. Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration WG: City Council Representative MacGregor. Commissioner Blomquist met with Kootasca and said that they were receptive to the Presentation. She will go again the first Thursday in March. Commissioner Miller will be added to this work group.

ADA Compliance WG: Commissioners Learmont & Erickson - this work group will not proceed.

Interfaith WG: Commissioner Grossman. Commissioner Grossman discussed challenges that he sees with discussing issues with different Interfaith groups. Other Commissioners thought he could use the Human Rights Commission Presentation at these meetings. As per the ordinance, it doesn't have to be presented by the Commission Chair.

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

None.

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

BUSINESS:

3. Introduction of New Commissioners
4. Election of Officers
5. 2026 Workplan
6. Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund Draft-Community Foundation
7. HRC Presentation

UPDATES:

8. Housing
9. City Council Updates
10. Stomp on Stigma
11. Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration WG: Commissioner Miller and Council Representative MacGregor
- Interfaith WG: Commissioner Grossman

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48pm.  
Respectfully submitted by Cynthia Lyman



## Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Calendar Year 2026 Work Plan

Prepared in accordance with Establishing Ordinance and Commission By-Laws

All activities for 2026 are supported by our guiding vision themes of: Community Awareness; Education outreach and Communication; Our Role; Collaboration; and Listening to Community

2026 QUARTER	GOAL OR ACTIVITY (refer to goal or activity description page for more detail)	ORDINANCE	ACTION TAKEN	EST. COST (See Notes)
<b>Q1 Jan – March</b>  <i>Possible events/recognitions:</i> International Women's Day – Black History Month	<b>Ordinance Review</b> Review and clarify HRC role and alignment with city ordinances	2-303 (F)	Updated draft sent to Commissioners for review	\$0
	<b>Fair Housing Act</b> Support development of work group to review possible panel / other community engagement opps within Itasca County	2-303 (B, C, E, F)	Planning meeting set for 1/14 in partnership with Itasca County HRA	\$1,500
	<b>Presentation to Outside Organization</b> Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	<b>Quarterly Workplan &amp; Budget Review</b> Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures	Article 10 2-303 (G)		\$0
<b>Q2 April – June</b>  <i>Possible events/recognitions:</i> Stomp the Stigma – Mental Health Awareness Month – Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month – LGBTQ+ Pride Month	<b>Story Stitch Event</b> Host community event - either facilitating or bringing someone in. Education/outreach, listen to community	Article 10 (1, 2, 3)	Commissioner McGregor attended training 11/22/2025	\$1,500
	<b>Volunteer at Stomp on Stigma</b> Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C) Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5)		\$5,000
	<b>Volunteer at Pride Event</b> Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C) Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5)		\$7,000
	<b>Presentation to Outside Organization</b> Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	<b>Quarterly Workplan &amp; Budget Review</b> Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures	Article 10 2-303 (G)		\$0
<b>Q3 July – Sept</b>	<b>Braver Angels Event</b>	Article 10 (1, 2, 3)		\$2,500

2026 QUARTER	GOAL OR ACTIVITY (refer to goal or activity description page for more detail)	ORDINANCE	ACTION TAKEN	EST. COST (See Notes)
<i>Possible events/recognitions:</i> Hispanic Heritage Month Q3	Host community event - either facilitating or bringing someone in. Education/outreach, listen to community			
	<b>Presentation to Outside Organization</b> Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	<b>Quarterly Workplan &amp; Budget Review</b> Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures	Article 10 2-303 (G)		\$0
Q4 Oct – Dec  <i>Possible events/recognitions:</i> Native American Heritage Month	<b>Soup on the Street</b> Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C)		\$2,000
	<b>Indigenous People’s Day Support</b> Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C) Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5)		\$5,000
	<b>Presentation to Outside Organization</b> Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	<b>Quarterly Workplan &amp; Budget Review</b> Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures	Article 10 2-303 (G)		\$0

**Notes:**  
 City Council eliminated a set budget for the Human Rights Commission in 2026. Estimated costs are ballpark for the entire event – not necessarily a direct contribution expected or anticipated from either the HRC or City of Grand Rapids.

## Summary Description of Goals and Activities

The Commission will conduct a comprehensive review of city ordinances related to human rights to clarify the HRC's role and ensure alignment with current city regulations. This review will help commissioners better understand their authority, responsibilities, and the scope of their work in protecting human rights within the community. The ordinance review will provide a framework for future decision-making and help define how the Commission can most effectively serve the community within its legal mandate.

### **FAIR HOUSING ACT SUPPORT**

The Commission will support the development of a work group to explore fair housing issues and possible panel discussions or other community engagement opportunities within Itasca County. This activity aims to increase awareness of fair housing rights, identify housing discrimination concerns, and provide education to community members about their rights and responsibilities under fair housing laws. The work group may partner with local housing authorities, advocacy organizations, and community stakeholders to create meaningful dialogue and resources around housing equity.

### **PRESENTATIONS TO OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS (QUARTERLY)**

The Commission will conduct quarterly presentations to outside organizations such as schools, service clubs (Rotary, Lions, etc.), faith communities, and civic groups. These presentations will raise community awareness about the HRC's role, educate audiences about human rights and protected classes, provide outreach to diverse community segments, and create opportunities to listen to community concerns. Each presentation will be tailored to the specific audience and may include information about discrimination prevention, the complaint process, and available resources. This activity supports the vision themes of Community Awareness, Education/Outreach, and Listening to Community.

### **STORY STITCH EVENT**

Story Stitch is a community dialogue facilitation methodology that creates safe spaces for people to share personal stories and build understanding across differences. The Commission will either facilitate a Story Stitch event directly or bring in trained facilitators to lead this community conversation. This event will provide an opportunity for community members to share their lived experiences related to identity, discrimination, belonging, and human rights. Through storytelling and guided dialogue, participants will build empathy, discover common ground, and strengthen community connections. This activity aligns with the vision themes of Education/Outreach, Our Role, and Listening to Community.

### **BRAVER ANGELS EVENT**

Braver Angels is a national organization dedicated to bridging political divides and fostering constructive dialogue across ideological differences. The Commission will either facilitate a Braver Angels workshop or bring in certified Braver Angels facilitators to lead a community event. This structured dialogue will help participants understand different perspectives, reduce contempt and hostility, and find common ground despite political or ideological differences. The event will contribute to building a more cohesive community where diverse viewpoints can coexist respectfully. This activity supports Education/Outreach, Our Role, and Listening to Community vision themes.

### **QUARTERLY WORKPLAN & BUDGET REVIEW**

The Commission will conduct quarterly reviews of its work plan progress and budget expenditures to ensure accountability, transparency, and effective use of resources. These reviews will allow commissioners to assess which activities are meeting their goals, identify any needed adjustments to priorities or approaches, track spending against the annual budget, and ensure alignment with the Commission's vision themes. Regular review creates opportunities for learning, course correction, and strategic planning. This activity reflects the Commission's commitment to responsible stewardship of public resources and effective governance as outlined in Article 10 of the Commission By-Laws.

### **COMMUNITY EVENT PARTICIPATION & VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT**

The Commission will actively participate in and volunteer at established community events throughout the year to increase HRC visibility, demonstrate collaboration with community partners, and engage directly with diverse community members. Target events include Stomp on Stigma (mental health awareness), Pride celebrations (LGBTQ+ support), Soup on the Street (food security and homelessness), Indigenous People's Day, and other community gatherings as opportunities arise. Through this hands-on engagement, commissioners will staff information tables, distribute educational materials about human rights protections, assist with event logistics, and engage in conversations with community members about discrimination and available resources. This visible presence helps vulnerable populations feel uplifted and supported while educating the broader community about human rights. The Commission remains open to participating in additional community events that align with its mission and vision themes. This activity supports Community Awareness, Collaboration, and Listening to Community vision themes.

**COMMISSIONER TRAINING AND EDUCATION (ONGOING)**

Actions or decisions by the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission to provide freedom from discrimination require knowledge about the types of prohibited discrimination and ways in which these types of discrimination may occur in employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, public services, education, and unfounded charges (City of Grand Rapids Rules, Division 6 Sec 2-301). The Commission plans to identify and support commissioner training opportunities and activities throughout the year. This may include approaches such as outside speakers, presentation or event sponsorship, community meetings, interviews, identifying and sharing of pertinent news articles or reports, and/or other methods. Commissioner training and education will be an ongoing objective and activity that strengthens the Commission's capacity to serve the community effectively.

**Notes:**

During the year, adjustments may be made to reflect changes in costs, changes in priorities, changes in format or delivery methods, or identification of human rights concerns that were not identified in compiling the preceding list but which the Commission feels need to be addressed. Examples include:

- a. Possible adjustments could occur due to identifying new or incidental human rights concerns related to protected groups and areas from the [Minnesota Human Rights](#) and other state statutes and regulations:

<b>Protected Classes</b>	<b>Protected Area</b>
<b>RACE</b>	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
<b>COLOR</b>	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
<b>CREED</b>	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, and credit
<b>RELIGION</b>	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, and credit
<b>NATIONAL ORIGIN</b>	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
<b>SEX</b>	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>	Employment, housing, public accommodations, education, and credit
<b>DISABILITY</b>	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business

<b>PUBLIC ASSISTANCE</b>	Employment, housing, public services, education, credit
<b>AGE</b>	Employment and education
<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
<b>FAMILIAL STATUS</b>	Employment, Housing
<b>LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ACTIVITY</b>	Employment

b. Adjustments could occur as a result of use of alternative education/training delivery methods such as print, seminars, webinars, speeches, and others



***Agreement to Establish the  
Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund DRAFT***  
within the  
***Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation***

**THIS AGREEMENT**, dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ is made to establish the the Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund (the “Fund”) within the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation (the “Foundation”). With this agreement, Human Rights Committee (the “Donor”) makes an irrevocable gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to The Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation (the “Foundation”), a 501(c)(3) organization authorized to receive and hold charitable funds in accordance with its charter and bylaws. This is to be used to establish a fund at the Foundation to be known as the Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund (“the Fund”). The purpose of the Fund is to support organizations, initiatives, and community-led efforts that uphold human rights and promote dignity and respect for individuals and families in the Grand Rapids, Minnesota area, with an emphasis on education, awareness, and constructive community engagement.

1. The Fund will be identified, as described above, by the Foundation in all relevant literature, reports, promotional material and public documents.
2. The Fund will be subject to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Foundation, as they may amend them from time to time.
3. The Fund is designated to meet charitable needs in the community and surrounding area of the Greater Itasca Area.
4. Distributions from the Fund shall be consistent with the exempt purposes of the Foundation. The Foundation board shall have the power to modify any restriction or condition on the distribution of funds for any specified charitable purposes or to specified organizations if in the sole judgment of the board, (without the approval of any trustee, custodian or agent), such restriction or condition becomes, in effect, unnecessary, incapable of fulfillment or inconsistent with the charitable needs of the community or area served.

5. It is the intent of the donor that the Fund be considered nonendowed and distributions from the Fund may be made in any amount not to exceed the balance of the Fund.
4. Gifts may be added to the Fund anytime. The Foundation may commingle the assets of the Fund with the assets of other funds held by the Foundation, provided the separate identity of the Fund will be maintained and distribution from the Fund will be clearly identified as such to the grantees.
5. It is intended that the Fund will be continued as long as the need for the Fund exists, and assets are held in the Fund for its purposes.
6. The governing board of the Foundation shall have final authority and discretion as to the investment and reinvestment of the assets of the Fund as part of the Foundation Investment Portfolio.
7. The Foundation will provide all routine accounting, and reporting to the Minnesota Attorney General and Internal Revenue Service regarding the Fund. The Foundation shall be entitled to reasonable compensation for management of the Fund in accordance with their regular fee schedule. The administrative fee for a nonendowed fund is 2% annually (calculated .50% quarterly) with a minimum annual fee of \$250.
8. The Fund will be the property of the Foundation held by it in its corporate capacity and will not be deemed a trust fund held by it in a trustee capacity. It is intended the Fund will be a component fund of the Community Foundation and that nothing in the Agreement will affect the status of the Foundation as an organization described in Sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Code. This Agreement will be interpreted in a manner consistent with the foregoing intention and to conform to any applicable requirements of the Internal Revenue Code and IRS Regulations.

### **Advisors**

\_\_\_\_\_ is the Advisor(s) to this Fund. When they are no longer willing or able to serve as Advisors, the following individuals may serve as Advisors to the Fund.

- 1.
- 2.

Upon the death, incapacity, or other disqualification of the last of the Advisors named above, the following individual(s) may serve as successor Advisor(s) to the Fund.

- 1.
- 2.

3.

If at any time there is more than one Advisor to the Fund, the Advisors will appoint a designee and all communications to and from the Foundation will be through the designee. If there is no designee appointed, the designee will be the first Advisor listed above, and, if no Advisor is listed, the first Donor listed below will be the designee.

At such time as the Fund ceases to have any Advisors, it will be used for general charitable purposes at the discretion of the Foundation's Board without consideration of advice or recommendation from an Advisor.

**Anonymity/Publicity**

To recognize and honor our donors, the Foundation's policy is to include our donors' names in publicity about the Foundation unless they wish to remain anonymous. Please check the box below that best describes your wish regarding publicity:

- I have no objection to the inclusion of my name in Foundation publicity
- I do not wish to have my name included in Foundation publicity and I wish to be listed as an anonymous donor
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

By:

\_\_\_\_\_

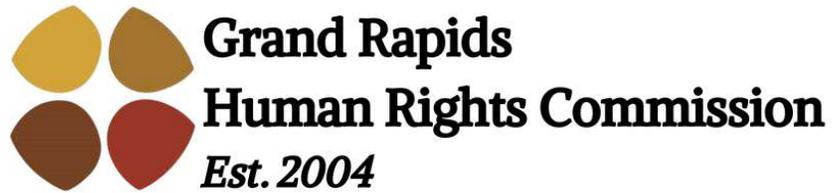
_____	_____	_____
Donor Signature	Printed Name	Date

ACCEPTED:

By:

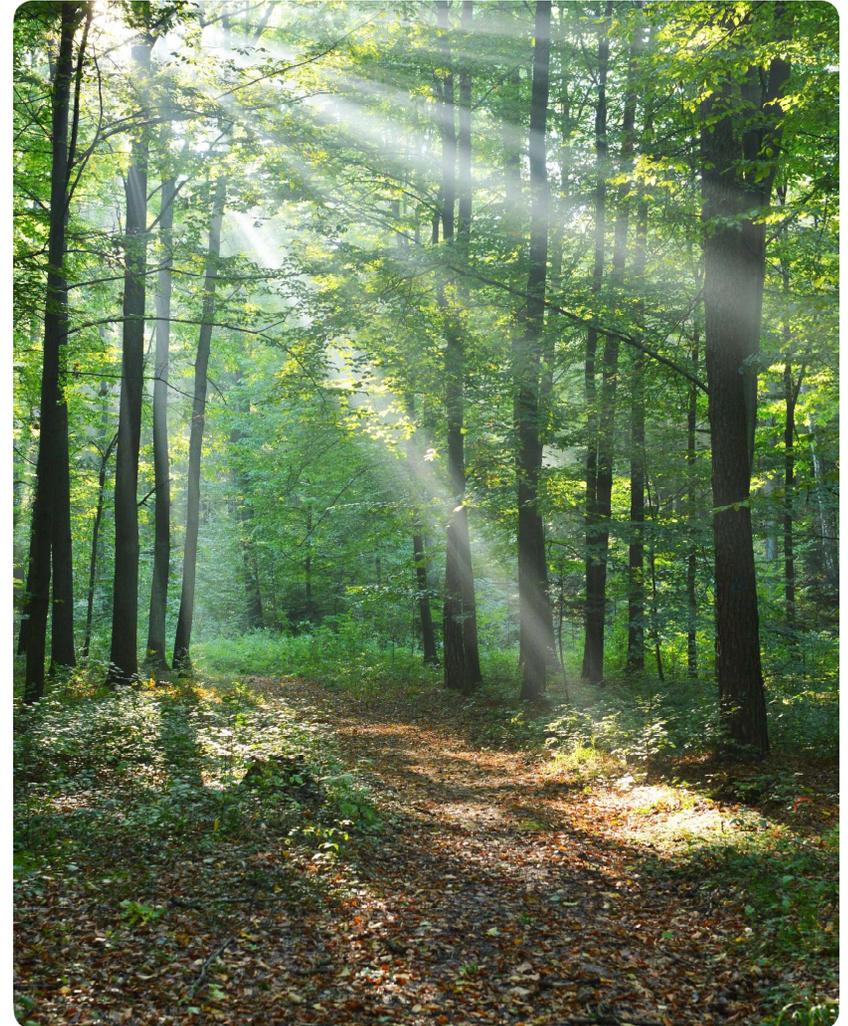
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_____	_____	_____
Foundation Signature	Printed Name	Title



# Human Rights at Home:

THE ROLE OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION





# Human Rights Matter Here

- Human rights are everywhere – they show up in housing, schools, jobs, public spaces, and daily interactions.
- Minnesota has one of the strongest Human Rights Acts in the country - EVERY PERSON is covered and protected
- Our city ordinance mirrors that law because rights only matter if they are known, understood, and accessible locally.
- A Human Rights Commission exists to help bring visibility, accessibility, and meaning to law in every day community life.



# Our Legal Foundation

- Established May 24, 2004 under City Code Division 2-V-6.
- One of 5 local City commissions north of the metro
- We are a 9-member Commission
  - All-volunteer
  - Appointed by City Council.
  - Three-year terms, renewable
- Role is education, awareness, listening, and advising
- Not an enforcement or investigative body

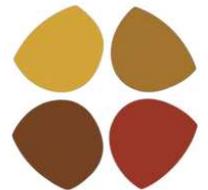
**Our mission is to promote a community of harmony and respect for the rights and dignity of all**





# Our Purpose

- Recognize and prevent discrimination and inequalities in the daily life of the community
- Design or support educational programs
- Assist in the implementation of the ordinance
- Provide leadership
- Serve as an advisory body to the City





# Who is “protected”?

It is illegal to discriminate on the basis of:

- Race
- Color
- Creed
- Religion
- National Origin
- Sex
- Marital Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Status with regard to public assistance
- Disability
- Age

The Minnesota Human Rights Act (363) prohibits discrimination in:

- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Public Accommodations
- Public Services
- Credit Services

# Actions & Support Highlights

- School and youth engagement through presentations coordinated with the GRHS and Civics Class
- Event support: Juneteenth, Indigenous Peoples Day, Pride
- Presentations and outside speakers
- Disability and accessibility advocacy
- Community conversations



# 2026 Vision: Guiding Themes

- Community Awareness
- Education & Outreach
- Our Role (clarity & consistency)
- Collaboration
- Listening to Community





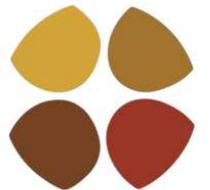
# 2026 Priority Activities

- Community presentations (schools, service clubs, faith groups, businesses)
- Community dialogue opportunities (Story Stitch or Braver Angels)
- Fair housing education
- Visibility at Pride, Indigenous Peoples Day, Soup on the Street, Stomp on Stigma
- Ongoing ordinance and role clarity work



# Funding Reality

- Historically, the City has provided modest but meaningful support (e.g., \$7,500 in recent years).
- 2026 is the first year in recent memory with no allocated funding, due to fiscal constraints and the goal of a 0% levy following federal cuts.
- The work continues – but partnership, collaboration, and community support matter more than ever.



# How You Can Be A Part of the Work

- Attend our meetings
- Invite us to present
- Partner on events
- Share concerns or experiences
- Apply to serve as a commissioner
- Help connect people to resources
- Help amplify voices that are often unheard



# We're Here to Listen

**Join our meeting**

Held every last Wednesday of the month  
Held at City Hall in the City Council Chambers  
420 N. Pokegama Ave | Grand Rapids, MN 55744

**Call us**

(218) 326-7646

**View our Commission Page**

Snap the QR code or visit:  
<https://cityofgrandrapidsmn.com/bc-hrc>

