



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WORKSESSION MEETING AGENDA

**Wednesday, October 22, 2025
4:00 PM**

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.

CALL TO ORDER: Pursuant to due notice and call thereof, the Human Rights Commission will hold a Worksession on Wednesday, October 22nd, 2025, 4pm, in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

ROLL CALL:

BUSINESS:

- [1.](#) 2026 Workplan

ADJOURN:



Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Calendar Year 2025 Work Plan

Prepared in accordance with Commission By-laws, Article 10

2025 QUARTER	GOAL OR ACTIVITY (refer to goal or activity description page for more detail)	ORDINANCE	ACTION TAKEN	EST. COST (See Notes)	ACTUAL
Q1 Jan – March	Community Needs Work Group Established - Work group will review relevant resources and data to recommend actions to the HRC around priority issues.	2-303 (b)(f)	<i>Commissioners Meittunen & Blomquist, City staff Pierzina, and Councilor MacGregor</i>		
	Indigenous People’s Day - Work group to be established	2-303 ©	<i>Work group established to begin this and Juneteenth work</i>		
	Review of Data: - All Commissioners are asked to review the following resources: ○ ALICE – United Way ▪ You can download the 2024 report from this , as well as view area specific details ○ HRA-PIT Report – <i>To be released</i> ○ MN Community Civil Rights – <i>To be released</i> ○ KOOTASCA ○ Grand Itasca Community Health Needs Assessment Report	2-303 (a)(b)(f)			
<i>Possible events/recognitions: International Women’s Day – Black History Month -</i>					
	Quarter Total				
Q2 April – June	Story Stitch Event - Connecting Community...			\$1,500	
<i>Possible events/recognitions:</i>	Support Juneteenth Day Event - Recognize <i>Freedom Day</i> , including human rights, civil rights, and freedom of discrimination in our community by assisting in public awareness and celebration events	2-303 ©	<i>Work group established to begin this and Juneteenth work</i>	\$500	

<i>Stomp the Stigma – Mental Health Awareness Month – Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month – LGBTQ+ Pride Month</i>	- Banner request to city!				
	Support Pride Day Event/s Awareness - Look for opportunities to be involved in and/or support community events, outreach, or publication	2-303 ©	Itasca Pride presented 3/26. Requested funds as well as volunteer hours for community engagement (Pancake bfast or other community meal service)	\$1,000	
	Partner / Community Connection - Review opportunities to cooperate with other groups/governmental agencies concerned with Human Rights	2-303 ©			
	Housing - Develop a work group to review possible panel in November - Review / attend HRA event in March	2-303 ©			
	Onboarding - Schedule training/speakers/presentations following updated terms and commissioners (March)	Article 10 (1)		\$750	
	Quarter Total			\$3,750	
Q3 July – Sept <i>Possible events/recognitions: ADA / Disability Pride month – Hispanic Heritage Month</i>	Commissioner Survey - Develop and deploy survey for the Human Rights Commissioners that could be offered to other City commissions and boards to better understand the diversity of City groups.	Article 10 (1)(3); 2-301©; 2-303(b)(f)			
	Interfaith Opportunities - Review and explore possible opportunities with various interfaith groups	2-303 ©		\$750	
	Indigenous People’s Day	2-303 ©			
	Quarter Total			\$750	

Item 1.

Q4 Oct – Dec <u>Possible events/recognitions:</u> (Nov) Native American Heritage Month – International Day of Persons with Disabilities – Human Rights Day	Indigenous People’s Day Cosponsor activities or publications to further human rights purposes with regard to indigenous people in the city - Don’t forget banner request to City!	2-303 ©		\$1,500	Item 1.
	2026 Planning & Budgeting - Include presentation to city council				
	Housing Panel - Host or support panel on housing/homelessness in November	2-303 ©		\$1,500	
	Quarter Total			\$3,000	
	2025 Commission Budget	\$7,500			
	Budgeted Expenditures			\$7,500	
	TOTAL ACTUAL EXPENDITURES				

Notes:

- A. The time needed to organize and arrange the components for many activities will result in most listings involving more than one calendar quarter
- B. The estimated Cost column lists budgeted net cash costs to the City. It does not include contributions made to an activity by a collaborating partner nor an assumed value for donated time or resources by Human Rights commissioners, city administrative staff, or others.

Summary Description of Goals and Activities

Commissioner Training and Education

Actions or decisions by the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission to provide freedom from discrimination requires 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 act 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 new articles or reports, and/or in other ways. Commissioner training and education would be an ongoing objective and activity.

Support Juneteenth Day Event

The Commission intends to recognize *Freedom Day*, June 19th, which includes recognizing freedoms in our nation and community including human rights, civil rights, and freedom of discrimination and creating public awareness of these rights through assisting street-side setting of street banners recognizing these freedoms, posting of United States flags, and co-issuing news media information.

Community Needs Assessment

The Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission strives to identify human rights issues of greatest concern in the city, and to develop and implement activities to make improvements in the areas of greatest concern. Achieving this goal requires demographic data about the city population. To gather such data the Commission desires to identify data needs and data sources, analyze the data, and from the data analysis develop plans for Commission activities in the community or recommend city policies to address, mitigate or alleviate those human rights concerns or issues. The Commission intends to review 2020 census data to inform changes in priorities, activities, and recommendations in the city.

Review human rights educational opportunities with other groups*

Schools in Grand Rapids contain their own sets of human rights concerns and opportunities. The Commission intends to explore and begin discussions with the schools in Grand Rapids to look into such possibilities as improving student experiences and understanding of diverse cultures possibly through programs such as pen pal programs with students in other countries, sponsoring an education Summit focused on human rights, or conducting a Human Rights Day event with local school. When an appropriate event is identified, the Commission expects to support such event.

Indigenous People's Day

The Commission was an important factor in establishment of Indigenous People's Day in Grand Rapids and has continued as a key factor in conducting and sponsoring the annual event as part of creating cultural awareness in the local community. This role is planned to continue, including establishing a Human Rights Commission Indigenous People's Day committee to collaborate with other community groups to plan, identify a theme, organize, and conduct an Indigenous People's Day program and activities.

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:

Protected Classes	Protected Area
RACE	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
COLOR	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
CREED	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, and credit
RELIGION	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, and credit
NATIONAL ORIGIN	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
SEX	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
MARITAL STATUS	Employment, housing, public accommodations, education, and credit
DISABILITY	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE	Employment, housing, public services, education, credit
AGE	Employment and education
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
FAMILIAL STATUS	Employment, Housing
LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ACTIVITY	Employment

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

City of Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Workplan Session – Notes

Monday, December 9th, 2024 from 5—6pm at City Hall Council Chambers

Attending: Angie, Doug, Ron, Julee, Katelyn, Rick, Chery, Cindy

Absent: Amy

This information was collected through reflection and dialogue, and then used to guide the initial planning of the 2025 Human Rights Commission Work Plan.

What were successes/should we keep?

- **Events**
 - Indigenous Peoples Day – student portion great, would have liked more community engagement
 - Juneteenth – need to increase participation
 - Pride event
 - Lots of community members wanting to be involved after that event, lots of community interest and great community participation
- **Marketing**
 - New banners!
- **Presentations & Training**
 - Outside organization presentations
 - Justin Page from MN Dept. Civil rights
 - GRPD Chief Morgan
 - Onboarding
 - Doing more – still need to do more

What were our challenges or barriers?

- **Community Engagement**
 - Lack of community participation
 - Students at MN North – concerns of safety and feeling welcome in community
- **Commissioner Expectations**
 - Planning too late
 - Time & other time commitments
 - Participation of commissioners
 - Are expectations clear for work groups, showing up, volunteering equally?

- Lack of quorum
 - Subject matter – staying on task?
- **Missing – mission-focused work**
 - Lot of time in meetings spent on marketing and business (though necessary) also takes away from discussion around issues in community
 - *Briefly discussed looking at other rules to run meetings (i.e. get rid of Roberts Rules)*
 - Should have done more with Pride (larger sponsorship, actively volunteer, etc.)
- **Others**
 - Seek opportunities for funding
 - Systemic structures
 - Sexism, racism, ableism, etc.

What else could we be doing

- **Presentations & Data** – Continue having speakers come to the Commission; Do more with data collection in a variety of capacities.
 - Work with GRPD and Chief Morgan
 - 2024 Bias report
 - *Other reports / opportunities to partner*
 - Protected Classes
 - Scanning and ensuring we are hitting on all and finding opportunities to support wide range
 - Better statistics on understanding our community, diversity, and the needs
 - More guest speakers
 - Community partners
 - school personnel
 - others
 - 2-303. F – *data collection on low-income concentrations within the city and send recommendations to planning commission and council*
 - Reports to utilize or seek out re: data
 - MN Community Civil Rights Needs Report – *To be released February 2025*
 - ALICE
 - HRA – PIT report
 - KOOTASCA
- **Events**
 - More events for Juneteenth
 - Education to the public on protected classes
 - Increase event participation through advertising
 - Use of radio, newspaper, etc.
- **Partners**
 - Find a group to partner with like the blankets for homeless etc. of food bank
 - Partner with other city departments / commissions
- **Policy**

- Policy recommendations / engaging with City Council
- Voting protections
- **Others**
 - Seek additional funding
 - Do what we can to make GR more welcoming (ex. bring back “all are welcome” materials)
 - Combat misinformation – *what is our role or how can we support*
 - Discussion and/or actions on national/international human rights situations
 - Plan for the future to find ways to engage the next generation to take our places in future

WHAT and WHO is missing?

- **Housing / Homelessness**
- **Mental Health**
 - Community-based options for MH crisis (instead of police response)
- **Partner/Community Connections**
 - Opportunities to bring in students for planning / volunteering?
 - More interaction with other community stakeholders (schools, religious, social organizations, etc.)
 - Opportunities for connection in faith and nonfaith communities
 - Big View – how to help support and create a wider reach
- **DEI/IDEA + Recruitment**
 - Need to recruit more commissioners generally
 - *Unaware of the diversity of current commission make up – opportunity here to learn more*
 - Government Academy
 - Opportunities to help push visibility in different groups of people outside of facebook and newspaper
 - Other ways to recruit and engage?
 - Diverse population – ensuring representation and activities
 - Indigenous / Native American distrust of GR (city, policies, groups)
- **Others**
 - Accountability framework for City – ensuring actions by City (policies, regulations, projects, etc.) are viewed through a human rights lens
 - Immigration & Welcoming Communities
 - What opportunities are available here?