



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

**Wednesday, August 27, 2025  
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, August 27th, 2025, at 4:00pm 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.](#) July 30th, 2025, Minutes

**FINANCIALS:**

- [2.](#) Review July 2025 Financials

**BUSINESS:**

- [3.](#) Review Bylaws & City Ordinance Documents
- [4.](#) Workplan

**UPDATES:**

- [5.](#) Community and/or Internal Collaboration
- [6.](#) League of MN Cities-Braver Angels Workshop & Annual Conference
- [7.](#) CNA WG: Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioners Meittunen & Blomquist  
ADA Compliance: Commissioners Learmont & Erickson  
Community Events WG: Commissioners Erickson, Jackson and Dokken  
City Staff/Volunteer Survey WG: Commissioners Erickson and Jackson

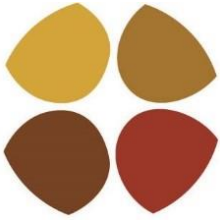
8. Community Engagement/Education

9. Current Events

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

ADJOURN:



# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 30, 2025  
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, July 30th, 2025, at 4:00pm in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Erickson at 4:14pm.

### ROLL CALL:

#### PRESENT:

Commissioner Angella Erickson  
Commissioner Doug Learmont  
Commissioner Amy Blomquist  
Commissioner Julee Jackson  
Commissioner Janet Miller  
City Liaison, City Attorney Chad Sterle

#### ABSENT:

Commissioner Ronald Grossman  
Commissioner Katelyn Dokken  
Commissioner Stephanie Meittunen  
Council Representative Molly MacGregor

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 Commissioner Blomquist, Seconded by Commissioner Jackson to add Introductions to the Agenda, prior to the Presentation. Voting Yea: Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Miller**

### PRESENTATION:

1. City Liaison, City Attorney Chad Sterle

City Liaison, City Attorney Chad Sterle discussed that the City Council created the Human Rights Commission by Ordinance back in 2004, at a time when there were not many rural commissions of this type. There is opportunity for change as there haven't been any changes since 2018 when the 75% attendance requirement was added. He handed out the Ordinance and the Bylaws for the Commissioners to review for the August meeting.

#### APPROVE MINUTES:

2. Approve June 25, 2025, Minutes

**Motion made by Commissioner Blomquist, Seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the minutes with corrections from June 25, 2025. Voting Yea: Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Miller**

#### FINANCIALS:

3. Approve Financials for July 2025

No motion needed per City Attorney Chad Sterle.

#### BUSINESS:

4. Workplan

Discussed where the Commission is in Quarter 3 and went over the survey, interfaith and Indigenous People's Day. They will review these again next meeting. Looking ahead at Quarter 4 and planning for 2026, the Commission could still do something in November and establish a Housing work group to work with the Itasca County HRA Executive Director Diane Larson at the Community Needs Assessment.

#### UPDATES:

5. League of MN Cities-Braver Angels Workshop

Council Representative MacGregor is absent this evening and they will follow up with her next meeting on possibly hosting a Braver Angels Workshop.

6. League of MN Cities-Annual Conference

Once again Council Representative MacGregor is absent and will have information to update the Commission at the next meeting.

7. Work Groups

Community Needs Assessment WG: Commissioners Meittunen, Jackson, Blomquist & Council Representative MacGregor

ADA Compliance WG: Commissioners Learmont and Erickson

Community Events WG: Commissioners Erickson, Jackson and Dokken

City Staff/Volunteer Survey WG: Commissioners Erickson and Jackson



CNA Assessment WG: Commissioners Meittunen, Blomquist & Council Representative MacGregor. This work group is ongoing.

ADA Compliance WG: Commissioners Erickson and Learmont met with the Jon Peterson, the City's Facility Maintenance Manager/Building Official and Rob Mattei, the City's Community Development Director to discuss Disability Issues, Challenges and the possibility of the City doing an accessibility audit for City-owned properties. The Commissioners drafted a letter titled City Accessibility Recommendations as a start and will try to meet with Jon Peterson and Rob Mattei again.

Community Events WG: Commissioners Erickson, Jackson and Dokken. Getting things lined up for Indigenous People's Day has been a challenge and it needs to be done soon.

City Staff/Volunteer Survey WG: Commissioners Erickson and Jackson. City Attorney Chad Sterle said that the draft of the survey is done well and the City's Human Resources Officer is now reviewing it.

#### 8. Community Engagement/Education

Grace House has a pancake breakfast the Sunday of Tall Timber Days.

#### 9. Current Events

The City is probably not having a booth at either Tall Timber Days or the Itasca County Fair. National Night Out is also coming up and the Commission should put it on their calendar for next year's event.

#### CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

None.

#### SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

#### BUSINESS:

1. Review Bylaws and City Ordinance Documents
2. Workplan

#### UPDATES:

3. Community and/or Internal Collaboration
4. League of MN Cities-Braver Angels Workshop & Annual Conference
5. Work Groups:
  - CNA WG: Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioners Meittunen & Blomquist
  - ADA Compliance: Commissioners Learmont & Erickson
  - Community Events WG: Commissioners Erickson, Jackson and Dokken
  - City Staff/Volunteer Survey WG: Commissioners Erickson and Jackson
6. Community Engagement/Education
7. Current Events

#### ADJOURN:

Commission Chair Erickson adjourned the meeting at 5:35pm

Respectfully Submitted by Cynthia Lyman

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JULY 31, 2025

| SUBSIDIARY           | ACCOUNT                                 | NUMBER                 | ENTITY                               | DATE      | MEMO                           | AMOUNT      |
|----------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Government Budget #61  |                                      | 1/1/2025  |                                | \$ 7,500.00 |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #280092           | V04393 TREASURE BAY PRINTING         | 2/4/2025  | NAMEPLATES BLOOM/MEITTUNEN     | \$ 43.00    |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #2025 MM/JG EVENT | V00073 JUDY GARLAND CHILDRENS MUSEUM | 4/30/2025 | BRONZE EVENT SPONSORSHIP       | \$ 500.00   |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #050125           | V04318 KOOTASCA COMMUNITY ACTION INC | 5/1/2025  | JUNETEENTH FREEDOM WALK/PICNIC | \$ 500.00   |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #202504           | V00072 ITASCA PRIDE                  | 5/8/2025  | ITASCA PRIDE SPONSORSHIP 6-22  | \$ 1,000.00 |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #73091.00         | V00090 ASSOCIATION OF MN COUNTIES    | 5/14/2025 | 25 5-14 JJACKSON HRC TRAINING  | \$ 30.00    |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #73092.00         | V00090 ASSOCIATION OF MN COUNTIES    | 5/14/2025 | 25 5-14 SWEITTUNEN HRC TRAININ | \$ 30.00    |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #062225           | V00092 ANGELLA ERICKSON              | 6/22/2025 | STX PAID                       | \$ 5.33     |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #062225           | V00092 ANGELLA ERICKSON              | 6/22/2025 | 6-22-25 5661 PRIDE BRKFST ICE  | \$ 4.98     |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #062225           | V00092 ANGELLA ERICKSON              | 6/22/2025 | 6-22-25 2648 PRIDE BRKFST ICE  | \$ 4.98     |
| City of Grand Rapids | 003225 003225 - Human Rights Commission | Bill #062225           | V00092 ANGELLA ERICKSON              | 6/22/2025 | 6-20-25 #04565 PRIDE BREAKFAST | \$ 191.15   |
|                      |   |                        |                                      |           | BUDGET BALANCE REMAINING       | \$ 5,190.56 |



CITY OF  
**GRAND RAPIDS**  
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

420 NORTH POKEGAMA AVENUE, GRAND RAPIDS, MINNESOTA 55744-2662

## MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission  
From: City Attorney Chad B. Sterle  
Date: July 29, 2025  
Re: Annual Meeting – Review of Foundational Documents and Commission History

Dear Commissioners,

I am pleased to provide you with two foundational documents that guide the structure and purpose of our Commission:

1. **Amended Bylaws of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission** (Adopted October 22, 2018)
2. **Human Rights Ordinance No. 18-10-08**

These documents serve as the legal and procedural framework for our work in promoting and protecting human rights within the City of Grand Rapids. As your City Attorney for the past 23 years, I have had the privilege of advising on the development and refinement of these materials. They reflect our shared commitment to equity, inclusion, and civic responsibility.

During this meeting, I will offer a brief historical overview of the Commission's formation, evolution, and role in our community. This is intended to help refocus our efforts and reaffirm the importance of our mission. While there may be limited new business to address, revisiting our history and foundational principles will provide valuable context for our ongoing work.

Please review the attached documents prior to the meeting. I look forward to our discussion and to continuing our collaborative efforts in service of the residents of Grand Rapids.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

  
Chad B. Sterle

# GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

## AMENDED BYLAWS OF

### ARTICLE ONE

The office of the Commission shall be located in the City Hall, City of Grand Rapids, County of Itasca, State of Minnesota.

### ARTICLE TWO

The Commission shall meet monthly at such time and place as agreed upon by a majority of the Commission. Meetings shall be rescheduled when they conflict with major holidays. The chair or any two commissioners together may call special meetings of the Commission as deemed appropriate, on 72 hours written notice to all members of the Commission. No business shall be conducted at a special meeting that was not state in the written notice of the special meeting. All notices of meetings shall comply with the Minnesota's open meeting law.

### ARTICLE THREE

The Commission has nine commissioners, there were originally seven commissioners but that number was modified by the City Council on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Each commissioner shall have been appointed by the Grand Rapids City Council and the normal term of office shall be three years, with each of three classes of three commissioners each having staggered terms. Commissioners who are appointed to the Commission to fill an unexpired term shall be appointed to the unexpired portion of the previous commissioner's term.

### ARTICLE FOUR

Each commissioner present shall be entitled to one vote in the actions and decisions of the Commission. A quorum is necessary in all voting by the Commission. A majority of commissioners shall constitute a quorum at meetings of the Commission. Any action taken or decision made must be by a majority vote of commissioners present.

### ARTICLE FIVE

The elective officers of the Commission shall be a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary and a treasurer. The election of officers shall take place annually at the time and place of the March meeting of the Commission. A candidate for office must be nominated by a commissioner, seconded by at least one other commissioner, and the officer nominee must



agree to hold such position. Any commissioner shall be eligible for office, but only commissioners who are present shall be entitled to vote. Candidates who receive a majority of votes so cast shall be elected.

#### ARTICLE SIX

The chair shall be the chief officer of the Commission. The chair shall perform or delegate to the vice-chair all duties necessarily incident to the office including but not limited to, organizing meetings, meeting with outside community organizations or persons, and providing overall leadership for the Commission. In the event the chair is absent from a meeting or unable to attend to a duty, the vice-chair shall fill in for the chair. In the event both the chair and vice-chair are unable to attend a meeting, a temporary chair shall be elected by a majority of commissioners present. The chair shall have the authority to appoint commissioners to task-focused committees. Said committees shall follow the requirements on Minnesota's Open Meeting law.

#### ARTICLE SEVEN

The vice-chair shall perform the duties of the chair in the absence or at the request of the chair. The vice-chair shall assist the chair in planning, administering and conducting Commission business.

#### ARTICLE EIGHT

A city-designated administrative assistant shall be responsible for recording meetings of the commission and maintaining a roll of commission members, however, in the absence of a city administrative assistant, the secretary shall keep a complete record of all proceedings of the Commission and the roll of the members of the Commission. The secretary shall also perform all other duties usually pertaining to the position of secretary, and shall include responsibility for commission communications including writing applications for grants or cooperative activities for special projects or activities, including working with the treasurer on the related financial aspects thereof. In the event the secretary is absent from a meeting, the chair shall appoint a secretary pro tempore to record the proceedings of the Commission meeting. Minutes of each meeting shall be submitted to the City Council, City Administrator and City Clerk by the administrative assistant will be mailed or e-mailed to all commission members by the administrative assistant to all Commission members one week before the next scheduled meeting.

#### ARTICLE NINE

A city-designated administrative assistant shall be responsible for routine treasury functions and financial reporting, however, in the absence of a city administrative assistant, the treasurer shall have access to and report all financial transactions of the Commission and shall submit a report of all disbursements and other commitments of the Commission. The report is to be mailed or e-mailed out with the minutes one week before each meeting

and shall be reviewed at each monthly meeting. The treasurer shall work with the secretary to develop the financial aspects when developing grant requests or commission programs and projects.

## ARTICLE TEN

A yearly budget shall be prepared and established by the treasurer in accordance with the regular city budgeting process subject to the agreement of the commission at a regular or special commission meeting for City Council consideration and be subject to City Council approval. Budgeted funds may be used for the following:

1. Workshops for commissioners;
2. Public Relations;
3. Educational purposes;
4. Grants for services with the purpose of promoting Human Rights issues;
5. Participation in organizational events;
6. Enrichments and awards;
7. Memberships in organizations;
8. Per diems for commissioners;
9. Other items deemed appropriate and in conformance with the municipal code.

## ARTICLE ELEVEN

At the monthly meetings of the Commission, the order of business shall in general be as follows:

1. Call to order;
2. Welcome guests;
3. Approval of or amendments to meeting agenda;
4. Minutes of preceding meeting and action thereon;
5. Treasurer's report;
6. Correspondence;
7. Public Comments;
8. Old business;
9. New business;
10. Reports on calls and inquiries;
11. Pending complaints;
12. Adjournment.

The sequential order of business may be adjusted or revised by the commission near the beginning of each meeting during agenda approval.

## ARTICLE TWELVE



Every member of the Commission shall be required to attend at least seventy five percent of all meetings each calendar year. Commission members who are unable to meet the attendance requirement will be deemed to have resigned from the Commission. Any member of the Commission may voluntarily terminate membership by submitting a written resignation to the chair and the City Council.

#### ARTICLE THIRTEEN

These Bylaws may be amended by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the commissioners, at any regular meeting of the Commission, provided notice of such amendment or amendments and the nature thereof shall have been given to the members at least one month prior to the date of the meeting at which said amendment or amendments are to be presented for consideration. The proposed amendment(s) must meet with the approval of the Grand Rapids City Council.

#### ARTICLE FOURTEEN

If any provisions of these Bylaws with respect to the objectives or activities of the Commission as established by Ordinance No. 04-05-09 dated May 24, 2004 establishing the Commission, or with Grand Rapids Municipal Code DIVISION 6 – HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION Sections 2-301, 2-302, 2-304, then the provisions of the city ordinance and municipal code shall prevail unless and until such city ordinance and municipal code have been duly amended.

#### ARTICLE FIFTEEN

The foregoing constitute the Bylaws of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission as amended at the regular meeting of the commissioners, duly held on September 26, 2018.

ADOPTED AND PASSED BY THE City Council of the City of Grand Rapids on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2018.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dale Adams, Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly Gibeau, City Clerk



Councilor Zeige introduced the following Ordinance and moved for its adoption:

**ORDINANCE NO. 18-10-08**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING GRAND RAPIDS MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 2,  
ARTICLE V. – BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, DIVISION 6 - HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**Section 1.** Grand Rapids City Code is hereby created by adding the following Section 1 entitled 'Human Rights Commission':

**"SEC. 1. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.**

**Subd. 1. Establishment and Composition.** A Human Rights Commission, composed of seven (7) members, is hereby established for the purpose of securing for all citizens freedom from discrimination:

- (1) In employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and age;
- (2) In housing and real property because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and familial status;
- (3) In public accommodations because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, and disability;
- (4) In public services because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, and status with regard to public assistance; and
- (5) In education because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and age. Such discrimination threatens the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of this state and menaces the institutions and foundations of democracy.

It is also the purpose of the Human Rights Commission to protect all persons from wholly unfounded charges of discrimination. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as restricting the implementation of positive action programs to combat discrimination.

It is also the purpose of the Human Rights Commission to secure for all citizens full participation in the affairs of the City by assisting the Minnesota Department of Human Rights in implementing State laws against discrimination and by advising the Council in long-range programs to improve community relations in the City of Grand Rapids.

Members shall be appointed by the Grand Rapids City Council for indefinite terms. An Administrative Assistant who is a permanent City staff person shall, and the City Attorney may, function as ex officio members of the Commission. It is desirable that Commission members be representative of the broad spectrum of the citizens of the City. Commission members should be willing to attend training sessions for the purpose of facilitating the discharge of their duties. Members shall serve without compensation.



**Subd. 2. Meetings.** Regular meetings shall be scheduled on a quarterly basis to handle regular Commission business and further efforts of information dissemination. Special meetings shall be held at the call of the Chairperson. Such business meetings shall be open for public attendance. Minutes shall be kept of all Commission proceedings. The Administrative Assistant shall be responsible for all minute and record-keeping duties. The Commission shall adopt its own bylaws after approval by the City Council.

**Subd. 3. Quorum.** No meeting shall be conducted by the Commission without a quorum, being a majority of all members, being present. The concurring vote of a majority of the Commissioners present shall be necessary for any action.

**Subd. 4. Purpose and Duties of the Commission.** The Human Rights Commission shall have the following purpose and duties:

- A. To initiate, implement, and administer the policies and regulations of the City with respect to preventing and prohibiting all unfair discriminatory practices based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, and disability status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and age.
- B. To assess the human relations and civil rights needs of the community and to advise the administration and the City Council of the results of these assessments.
- C. To cooperate with other groups and governmental agencies concerned with human rights.
- D. The Human Rights Commission will not participate in the investigation, nor opinion rendering of human rights violation complaints. They will simply refer such matters to the Minnesota Department of Human Service.
- E. To take positive measures to disseminate the nondiscriminatory policies of the City with respect to all unfair discriminatory practices by conducting public information meetings.
- F. To initiate data collection and evaluation activities that will identify minority and low-income concentrations within the City, and to prepare recommendations for submission to the planning Commission and Council that will contribute to lessening such concentrations, strengthen the fair housing policies of the City, and eliminate discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, sex national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and age.
- G. The commission shall have the power to seek outside funding sources in addition to any resources supplied by the City to assist in its mission. All outside monies or grants received by the commission are subject to the City's Ordinance provisions, as well as within the discretion of the City Council to accept or reject.


**Subd. 5. Duties of the Administrative Assistant.** The duties of the City staff person designated as Administrative Assistant to the Commission by the Mayor shall be:

- A. To act as the authorized liaison representative of the Commission, both with complainants and the public in general for dissemination of non-discriminatory policies.
- B. In consultation and cooperative with the City Attorney, to interview and evaluate complainant charges of discriminatory acts, advise the complainant of his/her rights, procedures for redress, responsibilities of the Commission and disposition alternatives in the case.
- C. To take minutes and keep official records of all Commission proceedings, and to function as correspondent for such communications with Federal and State agencies as are directed by the Commission.
- D. To conduct, or arrange to have conducted, such socio-economic research as is authorized by the Commission to enable the Commissioners to function affirmatively and effectively in implementing the non-discriminatory policies of the City.


**Subd. 6 Budget.** The Human Rights Commission must establish a yearly budget for Grand Rapids City Council's consideration and approval. This budget must be submitted in accordance with the regular Grand Rapids City budgeting process on a yearly basis and it is to cover all expenses including but not limited to legal services, staffing, and all expenses related to publication or promotion of the commissions activities.

**Section 2.** After adoption, signing and attestation, this ordinance shall be published once in the official newspaper of the City and shall be in effect on and after the date following such publication.

ADOPTED AND PASSED BY THE City Council of the City of Grand Rapids on the 22 day of October, 2018.

  
Dale Adams, Mayor

Attest:

  
Kimberly Gibeau, City Clerk

Councilor Connelly seconded the foregoing ordinance and the following voted in favor thereof: Christy, Connelly, Zeige, Adams; Opposed: None, whereby the ordinance was declared duly passed and adopted.



## DIVISION 6. - HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

### Sec. 2-301. - Establishment and composition.

- (a) A human rights commission is hereby established for the purpose of securing for all citizens freedom from discrimination:
  - (1) In employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and age;
  - (2) In housing and real property because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and familial status;
  - (3) In public accommodations because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, and disability;
  - (4) In public services because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, and status with regard to public assistance; and
  - (5) In education because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and age. Such discrimination threatens the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of this state and menaces the institutions and foundations of democracy.
- (b) It is also the purpose of the human rights commission to protect all persons from wholly unfounded charges of discrimination. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as restricting the implementation of positive action programs to combat discrimination.
- (c) It is also the purpose of the human rights commission to secure for all citizens full participation in the affairs of the city by assisting the Minnesota Department of Human Rights in implementing state laws against discrimination and by advising the council in long-range programs to improve community relations in the city.
- (d) Members shall be appointed by the city council for three (3) terms. An administrative assistant who is a permanent city staff person shall, and the city attorney may, function as ex officio members of the commission. It is desirable that commission members be representative of the broad spectrum of the citizens of the city. Commission members should be willing to attend training sessions for the purpose of facilitating the discharge of their duties. Members shall serve without compensation.

(Ord. No. 04-05-09, § 1(1), 5-24-2004; Ord. No. 05-08-13, 8-8-2005)

### Sec. 2-302. - Meetings.

- (a) Regular meetings of the human rights commission shall be scheduled on a monthly basis to handle regular commission business and further efforts of information dissemination. Special meetings shall be held at the call of the chair. Such business meetings shall be open for public attendance. Minutes shall be kept of all commission proceedings. The administrative assistant shall be responsible for all minute and record-keeping duties. The commission shall adopt its own bylaws after approval by the city council.
- (b) No meeting shall be conducted by the commission without a quorum, being a majority of all members, being present. The concurring vote of a majority of the commissioners present shall be necessary for any action.

(Ord. No. 04-05-09, § 1(2, 3), 5-24-2004)

### Sec. 2-303. - Purpose and duties.

The human rights commission shall have the following purpose and duties and shall comply with the following:

- (1) To initiate, implement, and administer the policies and regulations of the city with respect to preventing and prohibiting all unfair discriminatory practices based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, and disability status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and age.
- (2) To assess the human relations and civil rights needs of the community and to advise the administration and the city council of the results of these assessments.
- (3) To cooperate with other groups and governmental agencies concerned with human rights.
- (4) The human rights commission will not participate in the investigation, nor opinion rendering of human rights violation complaints. It will simply refer such matters to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.
- (5) To take positive measures to disseminate the nondiscriminatory policies of the city with respect to all unfair discriminatory practices by conducting public information meetings.
- (6) To initiate data collection and evaluation activities that will identify minority and low-income concentrations within the city, and to prepare recommendations for submission to the planning commission and council that will contribute to lessening such concentrations, strengthen the fair housing policies of the city, and eliminate discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, sex national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and age.
- (7) The commission shall have the power to seek outside funding sources in addition to any resources supplied by the city to assist in its mission. All outside monies or grants received by the commission are subject to ordinance, as well as within the discretion of the city council to accept or reject.

(Ord. No. 04-05-09, § 1(4), 5-24-2004)

Sec. 2-304. - Duties of the administrative assistant.

The duties of the city staff person designated as administrative assistant to the human rights commission by the mayor shall be:

- (1) To act as the authorized liaison representative of the commission, both with complainants and the public in general for dissemination of nondiscriminatory policies.
- (2) In consultation and cooperative with the city attorney, to interview and evaluate complainant charges of discriminatory acts, advise the complainant of his/her rights, procedures for redress, responsibilities of the commission and disposition alternatives in the case.
- (3) To take minutes and keep official records of all commission proceedings, and to function as correspondent for such communications with federal and state agencies as are directed by the commission.
- (4) To conduct, or arrange to have conducted, such socio-economic research as is authorized by the commission to enable the commissioners to function affirmatively and effectively in implementing the nondiscriminatory policies of the city.

(Ord. No. 04-05-09, § 1(5), 5-24-2004)

Sec. 2-305. - Budget.



The human rights commission must establish a yearly budget for the city council's consideration and approval. This budget must be submitted in accordance with the regular city budgeting process on a yearly basis and it is to cover all expenses including but not limited to legal services, staffing, and all expenses related to publication or promotion of the commission's activities.

(Ord. No. 04-05-09, § 1(6), 5-24-2004)

Secs. 2-306—2-320. - Reserved.



# Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Calendar Year 2025 Work Plan

Prepared in accordance with Commission By-laws, Article 10

| 2025<br>QUARTER | GOAL OR ACTIVITY<br>(refer to goal or activity description page for more detail)   | ORDINANCE       | ACTION TAKEN   | EST. COST<br>(See Notes) | ACTUAL |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|--------------------------|--------|
| Q1 Jan – March  | <b>Community Needs Work Group Established</b><br>- Work group will review relevant resources and data to recommend actions to the HRC around priority issues.  | 2-303 (b)(f)    | <i>Commissioners Meittunen &amp; Blomquist, City staff Pierzina, and Councilor MacGregor</i> |                          |        |
|                 | <b>Indigenous People’s Day</b><br>- Work group to be established   | 2-303 ©         | <i>Work group established to begin this and Juneteenth work</i>                              |                          |        |
|                 | <b>Review of Data:</b><br>- All Commissioners are asked to review the following resources:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">ALICE – United Way</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ You can download the 2024 report from this , as well as view area specific details</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ HRA-PIT Report – <i>To be released</i></li> <li>○ MN Community Civil Rights – <i>To be released</i></li> <li>○ <a href="#">KOOTASCA</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Grand Itasca Community Health Needs Assessment Report</a></li> </ul> | 2-303 (a)(b)(f) |  |                          |        |
|                 | <b>Quarter Total</b>   |                 |  |                          |        |
| Q2 April – June | <b>Story Stitch Event</b><br>- Connecting Community...   |                 |  | \$1,500                  |        |
|                 | <b>Support Juneteenth Day Event</b><br>- 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>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Banner request to city!</li> </ul>   |  |  |                |  |
|  | <b>Support Pride Day Event/s Awareness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look for opportunities to be involved in and/or support community events, outreach, or publication</li> </ul>   | 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        |  |
|  | <b>Partner / Community Connection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review opportunities to cooperate with other groups/governmental agencies concerned with Human Rights</li> </ul>   | 2-303 ©                                |  |                |  |
|  | <b>Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a work group to review possible panel in November</li> <li>- Review / attend HRA event in March</li> </ul>  | 2-303 ©                                |  |                |  |
|  | <b>Onboarding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schedule training/speakers/presentations following updated terms and commissioners (March)</li> </ul>  | Article 10 (1)                         |  | \$750          |  |
|  | <b>Quarter Total</b>  |  |  | <b>\$3,750</b> |  |
| <b>Q3 July – Sept</b><br><br><i>Possible events/recognitions:<br/>ADA / Disability Pride month – Hispanic Heritage Month</i> | <b>Commissioner Survey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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.</li> </ul> | Article 10 (1)(3); 2-301©; 2-303(b)(f) |  |                |  |
|  | <b>Interfaith Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and explore possible opportunities with various interfaith groups</li> </ul>  | 2-303 ©                                |  | \$750          |  |
|  | <b>Indigenous People’s Day</b>  | 2-303 ©                                |  |                |  |
|  | <b>Quarter Total</b>  |  |  | <b>\$750</b>   |  |



|   |  |         |  |                |         |
|---|--|---------|--|----------------|---------|
| <b>Q4 Oct – Dec</b><br><br><u>Possible events/recognitions:</u><br>(Nov) Native American Heritage Month – International Day of Persons with Disabilities – Human Rights Day | <b>Indigenous People’s Day</b><br>Cosponsor activities or publications to further human rights purposes with regard to indigenous people in the city<br>- Don’t forget banner request to City! | 2-303 © |  | \$1,500        | Item 4. |
|   | <b>2026 Planning &amp; Budgeting</b><br>- Include presentation to city council   |         |  |                |         |
|   | <b>Housing Panel</b><br>- Host or support panel on housing/homelessness in November  | 2-303 © |  | \$1,500        |         |
|   | <b>Quarter Total</b>   |         |  | <b>\$3,000</b> |         |
|   | <b>2025 Commission Budget</b>  | \$7,500 |  |                |         |
|   | <b>Budgeted Expenditures</b>   |         |  | \$7,500        |         |
|   | <b>TOTAL ACTUAL EXPENDITURES</b>   |         |  |                |         |

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 19<sup>th</sup>, 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:

| <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

### **City of Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Workplan Session – Notes**

Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 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?

## Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission

### Mayor and Members of the Grand Rapids City Council

420 North Pokégama Avenue  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

### Recommendation to City Council: Strengthening Local Leadership in Accessibility Advocacy and Planning

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

On behalf of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission, we want to thank the City for fulfilling its responsibilities by enforcing state and federal building codes related to accessibility. We also believe there is a timely and meaningful opportunity for our community to go further, and lead by example in our commitment to inclusion and accessibility.

We respectfully recommend that the City consider a more active role in shaping the future of accessibility standards by designating or hiring a qualified staff member to:

- **Participate in state-level code development**, including technical advisory groups, code hearings, and collaboration with the Minnesota Accessibility Specialist;
- **Explore and evaluate accessibility audit opportunities** for City-owned spaces, including:
  - What types of audits exist and their scope (ADA, architectural, digital, etc.);
  - Whether audits can be conducted internally or require third-party support;
  - Estimated costs, timelines, and implementation considerations;
  - How audit findings might inform future planning and capital improvements.

Currently, these research and advocacy efforts are often shouldered by volunteers. While community engagement is vital, we recognize that sustainable, systemic progress requires dedicated capacity – particularly on issues tied to civil rights, safety, and equitable access for people with disabilities.

By investing in staff-level leadership, the City would:

- Ensure consistent, informed advocacy aligned with our community values;
- Strengthen coordination between local implementation and evolving state standards;
- Demonstrate a clear commitment to accessibility leadership, not just baseline compliance.

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate on this effort and ask that the Council consider whether this responsibility could be incorporated into an existing role (e.g., within Planning, Public Works, Community Development) or whether the scope warrants new or contracted support.

Accessibility and inclusive design improve usability, safety, and comfort for everyone in our community. Thank you for your continued partnership and for considering this step toward a more inclusive, accessible Grand Rapids.

Sincerely,

The Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission



## City Staff and Volunteer Diversity Survey

### Purpose

To better understand the diversity within our City staff, commissions, and boards, ensuring we promote inclusive and equitable representation across all aspects of the community.

### Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation

Your responses are confidential and will be used to help the City better serve our community. Participation is entirely voluntary – you may skip any question you do not wish to answer.

Survey results will be compiled and reviewed by the City's Human Rights Commission and shared with City Council, City staff, and board/commission members to help guide future diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

1. Please share if you are City staff, or which commission or board you are currently serving on.

(Dropdown or open field response)

2. How long have you served in your current City role?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1–2 years
- ☐ 3–5 years
- ☐ 6–10 years
- ☐ Over 10 years

3. How do you identify your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. How do you identify your race or ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino/a
- ☐ Native American or Alaska Native
- ☐ Middle Eastern or North African

- ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to say

5. Do you identify as having a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

6. Have you experienced poverty or financial hardship currently or in the past?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

7. Were you born outside of the United States?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

8. Do you identify with a religious group?

- ☐ Yes (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

9. What is your age group?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18–29
- ☐ 30–39
- ☐ 40–49
- ☐ 50–59
- ☐ 60+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

10. Are you or have you ever been involved in the criminal justice system?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

11. What is your marital status?

- ☐ Single

- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Other (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

12. How many people currently live in your home with you?

(Numeric response): \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is your highest completed level of education?

- ☐ GED / High school diploma
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ Associate's degree (AA)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (BA)
- ☐ Master's degree or above

14. Do you identify as a member of any of the following protected classes? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ LGBTQ+
- ☐ Immigrant or Refugee
- ☐ Veteran
- ☐ Religious minority
- ☐ English language learner
- ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ None of the above

15. How do you feel your identities (e.g., gender, race, disability, etc.) intersect to shape your experiences in your role on the City commission/board?

(Open-ended response)

16. Is there any other aspect of your identity or lived experience that you feel is important to mention for the purposes of this survey?

(Open-ended response)

17. Do you have any additional comments on diversity, inclusion, or representation on City boards and commissions?

(Open-ended response)