

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

**Wednesday, October 28, 2026
5:00 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 Regular Meeting on Wednesday, October 28th, 2026, at 5:00pm 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.](#) Approve September 30th, 2026, Minutes

BUSINESS:

- [2.](#) 2026 Workplan
- [3.](#) Native American Heritage Month Event
- [4.](#) Fire in the Village-Indigenous Every Day
5. MN Exhibits/Story Stitch

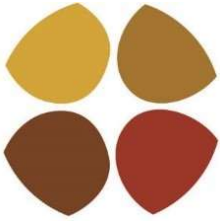
UPDATES:

- [6.](#) Indigenous People's Day
7. City & County Updates
8. Work Groups:
Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration: Commission Chair Miller and Council Representative Molly MacGregor
Interfaith: Commissioner Grossman
Indigenous People's Day: Commissioners Leone, Ducharme, Pope-Sears and Grossman

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

ADJOURN:



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 30, 2026
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 regular meeting on Wednesday, September 30th, 2026 at 4:00pm in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Miller at 4:00pm.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT

Commissioner Doug Learmont, Commissioner Ronald Grossman, Council Representative Molly MacGregor, Commissioner Janet Miller, Commissioner Stella Leone, Commissioner Renee Ducharme

ABSENT

Commissioner Brittany Pope-Sears

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 Ducharme to add Native American Heritage Month to the Agenda. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion passed.

PRESENTATION:

1. Grace House

Program Director Dustin Witkofsky, Outreach Coordinator Nicole DeJarlais and Treasurer Angie Tanner from Grace House came to speak to the Human Rights Commission. They shared information such as it being the only homeless shelter in Grand Rapids and it's a fundamental asset to Itasca County. Grace House provides a safe environment for the homeless and relies on volunteers.

They would not mind having a few extra volunteers to assist with their Annual Dinner at the Timberlake on the first Thursday of December. Anyone who is interested can go to info@gracehouse.org to sign up.

The Commissioners asked if Grace House had any data or information that could assist the Human Rights Commission in helping with possible discrimination of the 12 or so protective classes. They replied that they are working on a database where demographics/statistics are collected, from the ground up.

APPROVE MINUTES:

2. Approve July 29th, 2026, Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Grossman, Seconded by Commissioner Leone to approve the July 29th, 2026, Minutes. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion passed.

BUSINESS:

3. 2026 Work Plan

The Commissioners discussed when the Soup on the Street would be and Council Representative MacGregor said she would ask about it and Commissioner Ducharme thought it was through Kootasca and it was sometime in November last year.

The Commissioners also decided that they would work on the 2027 Workplan at a Worksession prior to the Regular Meeting on October 28th, 2026. No motion needed.

4. Indigenous People's Day

Commissioner Leone showed the flier and spoke about the upcoming Indigenous People's Day on October 12th, 2026, being held at the MN North College, Chucker Auditorium. A notice of a possible quorum will be posted prior to the event. Council Representative MacGregor will talk to Barb Sanderson to see if she would like to make the introductions at the event.

4A. For Native American Heritage Month, there will be an event on November 9th, 2026, from 6-8pm at the MacRostie Art Center, called Native Stories in Mixed Media. The flier and public service announcement for the event will need to be approved. A notice will be posted for a possible quorum closer to the event date.

Motion made by Council Representative MacGregor, Seconded by Commissioner Learmont to approve both the Native American Heritage Month Event flier and the corresponding Public Service Announcement for the Event. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion passed.

5. MN Exhibits/Story Stitch

Council Representative MacGregor will have an update for the next meeting.

6. NAMI Walk for Mental Health-Oct 3rd, 2026

The NAMI Mental Health Walk for 2026 happened last weekend, but anyone who wishes to donate can still do so.

UPDATES:

7. 9th Annual Walk for Life

There were not as many in attendance as in the last couple of years, but those who attended carried signs, encouraged others and were very enthusiastic. The Kiesler Wellness Center was very appreciative of the water station.

8. Fire in the Village Potluck

The Fire in the Village cancelled with the Commission, but they usually hold their potlucks on Wednesdays and the Commission is always welcome to come.

9. City and County Updates - Community Foundation Grant

Commissioner Ducharme found out that the Community Foundation had grants available, so she brought it to the City Council and they approved that the Human Rights Commission could apply for a grant for \$5,000. She was able to get it in by the deadline and it was approved.

10. Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration: Commission Chair Miller and Council Representative Molly MacGregor

Interfaith: Commissioner Grossman

Indigenous People's Day: Commissioners Leone, Ducharme, Pope-Sears and Grossman

Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration: Commissioner Ducharme attended the recent Bridge Builders Event and said it was a positive experience and she will go again. Council Representative MacGregor plans on volunteering at Grace House. Commissioner Grossman will be attending an Interfaith meeting tomorrow.

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

None mentioned.

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

WORKSESSION:

2027 Workplan

BUSINESS:

3) 2026 Workplan

4) Native American Heritage Month Event

5) MN Exhibits/Story Stitch

UPDATES:

- 5) Indigenous People's Day
- 6) City and County Updates
- 7) Work Groups

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.
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)
Q1 Jan – March <i>Possible events/recognitions:</i> International Women's Day – Black History Month	Ordinance Review Review and clarify HRC role and alignment with city ordinances	2-303 (F)	Updated draft sent to Commissioners for review	\$0
	Fair Housing Act 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
	Presentation to Outside Organization Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	Quarterly Workplan & Budget Review Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures	Article 10 2-303 (G)		\$0
Q2 April – June <i>Possible events/recognitions:</i> Stomp the Stigma – Mental Health Awareness Month – Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month – LGBTQ+ Pride Month	Story Stitch Event 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
	Volunteer at Stomp on Stigma Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C) Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5)		\$5,000
	Volunteer at Pride Event Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C) Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5)		\$7,000
	Presentation to Outside Organization Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	Quarterly Workplan & Budget Review Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures	Article 10 2-303 (G)		\$0
Q3 July – Sept	Braver Angels Event	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			
	Presentation to Outside Organization Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	Quarterly Workplan & Budget Review 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	Soup on the Street Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C)		\$2,000
	Indigenous People's Day Support Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C) Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5)		\$5,000
	Presentation to Outside Organization Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	Quarterly Workplan & Budget Review 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:

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

**CELEBRATE NATIVE AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH**

**NATIVE STORIES IN
MIXED MEDIA**

FEATURING ANISHINAABE EDUCATORS,
STORYTELLERS, AND ARTISTS
DEVERY FAIRBANKS
GEORGE J. GOGGLEYE JR.
DENISE ESTEY LINDQUIST

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2026

6 – 8 PM

MACROSTIE ART CENTER
DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL
SPONSORED BY



City of Grand Rapids
Human Rights
Commission



MacRostie Art Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Native Stories in Mixed Media

A Native American Heritage Month Community Presentation

The **Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission** and **MacRostie Art Center** invite the community to celebrate **Native American Heritage Month** with a special presentation, “**Native Stories in Mixed Media**,” on **Monday, November 9, 2026, from 6:00–8:00 p.m.** in the **Giinawind Creative Space at MacRostie Art Center**, 405 NW 1st Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Light refreshments will be served.

This free community event will feature three respected **Anishinaabe educators, speakers, contributors, storytellers, and artists from Minnesota:**

Devery Fairbanks — White Earth Nation

George J. Goggleye Jr. — Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Denise Estey Lindquist — White Earth Nation

Through **cultural artifacts, traditional history, mixed media and art, storytelling, and discussion**, the presenters will share stories, knowledge, and perspectives highlighting **Anishinaabe ways of life, cultural heritage, artistic traditions, history, and contributions.**

The presentation offers an opportunity for people of all ages to gather, listen, learn, and deepen their understanding of Anishinaabe culture and the important contributions of Native people in Minnesota.

The event is **free and open to the public**, and students, families, educators, and community members of all ages are encouraged to attend.

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the **Minnesota State Arts Board**, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the **Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund**.

WHAT: Native American Heritage Month — *Native Stories in Mixed Media*

WHEN: Monday, November 9, 2026 | 6:00–8:00 p.m.

WHERE: Giinawind Creative Space, MacRostie Art Center
405 NW 1st Avenue, Grand Rapids, MN

COST: Free and open to the public

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS: Will be served

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission

Contact Commissioner Stella Alpina Leone

StellaAlpinaLeone@gmail.com

10/28/26

6-8PM

INDIGENOUS EVERY DAY

STORY CIRCLE

Every day is a good day to be Indigenous!
You're invited to listen and learn from
local Anishinaabe artists and culture
bearers, and others leading creative
community efforts in our region.

Facilitated by Fire in the Village Artist
& Director Annie Humphrey. And there will
be frybread! Frybread is the answer.



MACROSTIE ART CENTER

405 NW 1ST AVE

GRAND RAPIDS, MN 55744

*This work is funded in part by MHC with money from the
Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund that was created with the
vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.*



Minnesota
Humanities
Center



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

OCTOBER 12, 2026 • 12 PM – 1 PM

“NATIVE AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS”

Featuring Anishinaabe Educators, Speakers,
Contributors, Storytellers, Artists:

**Devery Fairbanks, George J. Goggeye JR.
and Denise Estey Lindquist.**

MN North College Chucker Auditorium

EVERYONE WELCOME! | FREE EVENT! | OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!



**Minnesota
North College**
A Member of Minnesota State



GRAND RAPIDS
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION