



CITY EXPERIENCE
Mayor's Office of Resilience and Equity

Human Rights Commission 2024 Annual Report

In 2024, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) Chair and Vice Chair collaborated to develop an organized and systematic approach to goal development and measurement of success throughout the year. Prior to the annual retreat for the Commissioners, which occurred during a prolonged meeting of the Commission starting at the regular April meeting time, the Chair and Vice Chair decided upon recommendations for three HRC goals for the year. During the Retreat, Commissioners discussed/revised these recommendations and decided upon two overriding goals and four related key performance indicators (KPIs), as follows:

Goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Goal 1: Solidify and Mobilize the HRC's Working Structure

KPI-1: Develop an Operational Plan and Support Form

- *Details:* Create an addendum to the HRC bylaws outlining processes for responding to community or Title V concerns.
- *Outcome:* Adopted unanimously at the 8/19/2024 HRC meeting. (See Addendum A)

KPI-2: Measure HRC Effectiveness Through a Perceptions Survey

- *Details:* Develop and administer a survey to track Commissioners' perceptions of the HRC's effectiveness throughout the year.
- *Outcome:* Administered during the April retreat (4/15/2024); scheduled for re-administration in January 2025. (See Addendum B)

Goal 2: Enhance Civic Engagement in Title V Boards and Commissions (2024-2025)

Overview and Rationale: The HRC focused on fostering civic engagement and addressing barriers to participation, aligned with its mission and Tulsa's status as a Certified Welcoming City.

Background: The HRC is tasked with securing and extending democratic rights while encouraging community support for civil rights. Civic engagement is critical to achieving this mission.

Data Highlights:

- Oklahoma ranks among the lowest in the nation for electoral participation.^[1]
- Voter turnout in South Tulsa is 2.2 times higher than in North Tulsa.^[2]



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- White Tulsans are overrepresented on city boards and commissions compared to Hispanic/Latinx Tulsans.^[3]

KPI-3: Host Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

- *Details*: Invite experts to educate Commissioners on civic engagement barriers.
- *Outcome*: Guest speakers included:
 - Krystal Reyes, Chief Resilience Officer, City of Tulsa
 - Kathryn Aung and Matthew Fransein, Tulsa Voter Coalition
 - David Blatt, Oklahoma Appleseed
 - Rebecca Hubbard, Chief Mental Health Officer, City of Tulsa

KPI-4: Develop an Action Plan

- *Details*: Based on SME presentations, create actionable steps to improve civic engagement.
- *Outcome*: In progress; final recommendations to be completed in 2025.

Impact and Conclusion: This organized and systematic approach appears to have worked well in maximizing the time and resources available to the HRC and ensuring efficiency and productivity. The Commissioners participated in deciding on the goals and have maintained focus and energy around following through with the goals. In addition to the general focus and events of the Commission, several committees maintain activity and participate in events that support the overriding goals of the commission.

Humanitarian of the Year Committee

After adopting a formal nomination process in 2023, the Community Relations committee employed that process and selected Amairani Perez Chamu from several nominees to receive the 2024 Humanitarian of the Year Award for her work supporting the Hispanic/Latinx community. Nominations for the award were received from Title V Commissions, including from the recently established Asian Affairs Commission. Now in the third year, the annual ceremony was moved from December to November to provide outgoing Mayor Bynum a final opportunity to celebrate the City of Tulsa's *Certified Welcoming* designation—identifying the community as a place where every person, including immigrants, can contribute and prosper.

Fair Housing Committee

It has been an exciting and impactful year for the Fair Housing Committee, with several significant milestones reached. Through these efforts, meaningful strides have been made in advancing Fair Housing awareness, education, and equity across our community:

- *City of Tulsa Water Insert*: We spearheaded the creation of the city's first-ever water bill insert focused on Fair Housing education, ensuring the message reached thousands of Tulsa residents.



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- **Monthly Fair Housing Meetings:** We held consistent monthly meetings, fostering collaboration with Tulsa Area Fair Housing Partners, Oklahoma Legal Aid, the Greater Tulsa Association of Realtors, and countless other community stakeholders.
- **Support for Key Events:** Our committee actively supported three Tulsa Area Fair Housing Partners events this year, which covered topics including Fair Housing rights, Tenant and Landlord law, and homebuying education.
- **2SLGBTQIA+ Fair Housing Summit:** We facilitated Tulsa's inaugural Fair Housing Summit tailored to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, featuring expert speakers, advocacy resources, and actionable solutions.
- **Committee Growth:** We welcomed new community members to the Fair Housing Committee, enhancing our ability to address equity, health disparities, and systemic housing challenges.
- **Quarterly Guest Speakers:** To stay ahead of trends, we hosted quarterly guest speakers who provided insights, education, and advocacy strategies surrounding Fair Housing in Tulsa.

2SLGBTQIA+ Committee

The 2SLGBTQIA+ Committee, established in May 2023, has continued to identify the needs of its members and raise awareness about issues facing the community to foster a more safe, welcoming, and inclusive city. On November 15, 2024, the Fair Housing Committee and 2SLGBTQIA+ Committee co-hosted a "Know Your Rights" Summit highlighting policy, advocacy, and fair housing for 2SLGBTQIA+ folks in Oklahoma. On November 20, 2024, the Committee established subcommittees and approved a set of bylaws comparable to those of Title V Commissions.

Compassionate Tulsa Committee

Tulsa City Council and Mayor signed on to the Charter for Compassion in 2015, which established Compassionate Tulsa as a standing committee on the HRC and endorsed the effort for Tulsa to become a more compassionate city. To fulfill one of the committee's purposes—to bring awareness to compassionate acts being done—Compassionate Tulsa continued in 2024 with their tradition of regularly honoring Tulsans for the compassionate work they do in the community. Recipients are presented with their awards, consisting of a certificate and an emblematic pin, at the start of the regularly scheduled HRC meetings. This year, recipients included Betsy Lewallan (March), Karen Ghan (April), and Mike Simons (September). The 2024 annual award, the Sherri Tapp Lifetime of Compassion Award, presented each January, was awarded to Nancy McDonald.

The committee also sponsored the Sister Golden Hair Concert, to benefit Tulsa Day Center on Friday, May 17 at Trinity Episcopal Church. The concert had an estimated 150 people in attendance, and the event successfully raised approximately \$4,000 for the Center. Sister Golden Hair also played an hour-long set for Day Center participants on Saturday after the



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Friday night fundraiser. The room was packed with unhoused people who utilize the services of the Day Center.

Compassionate Tulsa hosted a 30-minute candlelight vigil on Monday, November 4, the eve of the election, at Boston Avenue United Methodist Church. The event was a non-partisan, non-political gathering to provide a physical reminder that we are neighbors to each other, a reality that should transcend our political differences. The program included several short speeches from individuals who were both politically left and right, group singing, and time to reflect.

Disability Community Advocate Report

One accomplishment in 2024 was advising Tulsa International Airport on ADA Compliance and established requirements. We encouraged them to go beyond those requirements and implement the heart of what ADA is about when developing their new guest services areas. These areas are geared towards making traveling accessible to everyone. They are located on the lower level of each concourse and include a sensory room, quiet room, service animal relief area, lactation room, and family restroom.

Additionally, we announced a collaboration with Tulsa Bike Club and their new state-of-the-art Home Facility. We have worked to ensure all aspects of the facility are ADA compliant and fully accessible for our Adaptive Trail Bikes.

Discussions have begun about bringing a wheelchair softball field to one of our area parks. We have identified the parking lot of Bales Park (5801 S Union Ave) as a dedicated practice field for the Center Twisters Wheelchair Softball Team. Our Disability Representative, Anthony Meadows, is in discussion with Anna America, Chief of Culture & Recreation and Tulsa Parks Director, to use this as a starting point to hopefully building a dedicated space for an all-adaptive wheelchair softball field in 2025.

¹¹ This includes voter registration, representation and participation, voting in person, voting by mail, election security, and independence and integrity. *Unlocking the Ballot Box: Policies to Promote Voter Access And Engagement in Oklahoma*, Oklahoma Appleseed Center for Law and Justice (December 2023), www.okappleseed.org/unlocking-the-ballot-box

¹² *Tulsa Equality Indicators*, Community Services Council (2020), csctulsa.org/equality-indicators-services

¹³ *Tulsa Equality Indicators*, Community Services Council (2020), csctulsa.org/equality-indicators-services