



**Human Rights Commission
Regular Meeting
May 19, 2022
Virtual/Electronic Meeting
6:30 pm**

Agenda Packet Attachments

1. Agenda
2. 04-23-2022 DRAFT HRC Annual Retreat Meeting Minutes
3. Summary of focus points identified during annual retreat
4. DRAFT Brochure: Was That Discrimination?
5. DRAFT Brochure: OHR & HRC General Information
6. DRAFT Brochure: Fair Housing in Charlottesville
7. OHR Director Monthly Report
8. Homelessness Summit Summary
9. Notes from first listening session with petitioners for housing
10. Notes from second listening session with petitioners for housing

Attachment 1



**Human Rights Commission
AGENDA
Regular Meeting
May 16, 2022
Virtual/Electronic Meeting
6:30pm**

Please take Notice that this virtual meeting of the Human Rights Commission is for the purposes of planning, developing and drafting management and administration documents for the Human Rights Commission. For the purpose of addressing issues during the quarantine, this virtual meeting will be a limited public forum to discuss the agenda items presented below and to ensure the continuity of services provided by the Commission. The Commission Chair may limit public comments or discussion points that are unrelated to agenda items or that pertain to topics outside the scope of this Agenda. This will be a virtual/electronic meeting open to the public and registration information is available at www.charlottesville.gov/zoom.

The Commission welcomes comments and questions and commits to listening carefully and thoughtfully to what is presented. A maximum of sixteen public comment time slots are allotted per meeting. Each speaker will have three minutes to speak. The Commission requests that members of the public refrain from engaging in personal attacks against Commissioners and staff members and asks that comments and questions focus on matters related to human rights within the City.

1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
- b. ROLL CALL
- c. MISSION (recited by all): *Act as a strong advocate to justice and equal opportunity by providing citywide leadership and guidance in the area of civil rights.*

2. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT (Webinar attendees use the "raise hand" function, phone attendees use *9)
- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

3. MINUTES

- a. 04-23-2022 HRC Annual Retreat Minutes*

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. CHAIR UPDATE
- b. OHR STAFF REPORT

5. WORK SESSION

- a. AD-HOC COMMITTEE UPDATES
- b. STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR ANNUAL GOALS

6. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT (Webinar attendees use the "raise hand" function, phone attendees use *9)
- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

8. NEXT STEPS & ADJOURN

* ACTION NEEDED

Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the public meeting may call the ADA Coordinator at (434) 970-3182 or submit a request via email to ada@charlottesville.gov. The City of Charlottesville requests that you provide a 48-hour notice so that proper arrangements may be made.

Attachment 2



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Annual Retreat
April 23, 2022
Virtual/Electronic Meeting
10:00 am**

Public link to meeting rebroadcasts on Boxcast: <https://boxcast.tv/channel/vabajtzeuuy3iclkx1a>

1) WELCOME

- a) CALL TO ORDER
 - i) Chair, Jessica Harris, called the meeting to order at 10:05 am
- b) ROLL CALL
 - i) Jessica Harris
 - ii) Ernest Chambers
 - iii) Jeanette Abi-Nader
 - iv) Mary Bauer
 - v) Wolfgang Keppley
 - vi) Erika Robinson
 - vii) Andrew Orban
 - viii) Lyndele Von Schill
- c) MISSION (recited by all): *Act as a strong advocate to justice and equal opportunity by providing citywide leadership and guidance in the area of civil rights.*

2) MINUTES

- a) Review of minutes from 3/17/2022 Regular Meeting
 - i) Motion to approve: Ernest
 - ii) Second: Jeanette
 - iii) Vote
 - (1) In favor: 7
 - (2) Opposed: 0
 - (3) Abstained: 1
- b) Review of minutes from 3/24/2022 Community Engagement Town Hall Meeting
 - i) Motion to approve: Wolfgang
 - ii) Second: Jeanette
 - iii) Vote
 - (1) In favor: 4
 - (2) Opposed: 0
 - (3) Abstained: 4

3) INTRODUCTIONS

- a) Commissioners all introduce themselves and share one interesting fact about themselves

4) WORK SESSION

- a) Review of HRC work in 2021
 - i) The public can view the HRC's work on the city website

- ii) Summary of HRC work from Jan. 2021 to Apr. 2022 is included in the agenda packet
 - iii) Previous Chair shares critique of her tenure that the Commission spent too little time on important matters and says that the HRC would have a greater impact if it focused on a few large priorities
 - (1) Commissioner says that the pandemic and the city government situation made it more difficult to get things done
 - iv) Commissioner says she would like to see the HRC continue to do two things at once
 - v) Chair observes that Commission has seen a shift to action and appreciates all of the work done during the previous Chair's term
 - vi) Commissioner acknowledges cohesion and agreement of direction of the current Commission
 - vii) OHR Staff adds that he has observed the Commission's growth over time, and they are now focusing more on how to directly engage the public
- b) Review of OHR work in 2021
- i) OHR data and takeaways is included in the agenda packet
 - ii) Key takeaways
 - (1) Incoming contacts continue to increase ever since reopening the Office in June
 - (a) Has quadrupled, and numbers continue to rise
 - (b) Expects contacts to rise as outreach in the community increases
 - (2) Wants Office to have the resources to accommodate these contacts, especially for formal complaints
 - (a) Will have to advocate to Council for staffing of full-time Investigator and Intake Counselor
 - (3) Race and disability continue to be the most common protected class referenced in inquiries and complaints
 - (4) Most inquiries and complaints are about housing, especially emergency housing
 - (a) Second most common is employment
 - (5) FHAP project
 - (a) Most recent iteration is emailed out, but it often changes
 - (b) Success of the FHAP partnership is going to be dependent on demonstration of Council's financial commitment to it and the OHR's staffing capabilities
 - (c) FEPA project is being outpaced by the need for a FHAP at the moment
 - iii) Response
 - (1) Chair says that the HRC should make OHR staffing a priority and suggests reviewing pending items to determine next steps
 - (2) Commissioner asks OHR staff for status of FHAP
 - (a) Todd submitted a draft to City Attorney's Office for legal review; made some more edits and was given more questions to ask
 - (b) Talked to Kenneth Saunders from the Fairfax County OHR about how they operate as a FHAP

- (c) Still has several questions to ask Erik Steinecker
 - (d) Other priorities have put this project on the backburner lately, but it is an upcoming priority to create a revised draft for adoption
 - (e) Must be prepared staff-wise for changes before adopting the new Ordinance
- (3) Commissioner confirms that 1,962 contacts is from 1/1/2021 to 12/31/2022, but incoming contacts quadrupled once the Office reopened in June
- (a) Also confirms that \$75,000 is about the total cost of an additional Investigator
 - (i) OHR staff says this did not get approved for FY 2023, but HRC can continue preparing to prepare a pitch to Council in September
 - (ii) Importance of completing the CY2021 Annual Report to show Council the numbers
- (4) Wolfgang provides updates on items from last year
- (a) Language Access Plan just needs to be signed by the Chair and taken to Council
 - (i) Plain-language version has not yet been made, but Lyndele and Wolfgang can work on it
 - (ii) Chair notes that there are plans to have a speaker visit to talk about plain language for the May meeting
 - (iii) Passed the Language Access Plan in December regular meeting
 - (b) Disability PSA Project
 - (i) One of the previous contacts responded
 - (ii) Arc of the Piedmont and Independent Resource Center said they would see if anyone is interested in participating, but no follow-ups yet
 - (iii) Project seems to be on hold
- (5) Commissioner also asks Todd about the nature of complaints about emergency housing
- (a) Complaints and inquiries/discussion are mostly about housing discrimination on the basis of disability (mostly mental health, sometimes coupled with substance use)
 - (b) There is a shortage of beds for emergency shelter (congregate shelter, individual room setting, and multi-person room setting)
 - (c) Emergency housing system is not closely linked with mental health services and substance use support (because there are also low resources in these sectors at the moment), but there are potentially other providers if there is funding
 - (d) Commission can provide legislative guidance to Council and advocate increased funding for mental health services, as well as talk to Council about what the

community has been talking about
(e) Look into long-term deeply affordable (<30% AMI) housing

- c) HRC projects to revisit
 - i) Legal representation for parties to a complaint
 - (1) Point of discussion that was tabled
 - (2) OHR staff says that when there is a complaint, one party (typically the respondent) has many more resources than the other, including legal representation
 - (a) So far, OHR tries to find pro bono counsel for complainants through LAJC's VA Volunteer Lawyer Program
 - (b) Also creating a program with law students doing research and presenting to an attorney
 - (c) A difficult system for finding legal advice for parties
 - (3) OHR staff says that Commission can look back at the draft resolution proposing a skeleton program to present to Council establishing a fund so parties to a complaint can pay an attorney
 - (4) Commissioner supports doing this advocacy so that finding legal representation is more sustainable---compare to advocacy for legal representation for tenants in eviction proceedings
 - (5) Add resolution for both legal representation issues to next meeting
 - ii) Commemoration of Days Honored
 - (1) HRC provided Ashley with feedback
 - (2) Does HRC want to partner more with Ashley in planning these days?
 - (3) Commissioner asks about HRC having social media presence to have platform for the days
 - (a) Can revisit this, just need to figure out logistics
 - (b) There are existing Twitter accounts linked to the Dialogue on Race and to OHR
 - (4) Can set up ad-hoc Community Engagement committee meeting to take next steps
 - (5) Commissioner notes it is important to prioritize and ensure HRC can do it
 - (6) Chair notes social media can be helpful in general for the HRC
 - iii) HRC representation on CLIHC
 - (1) Since housing is a big issue, Commissioners could engage/monitor what other groups are doing about it
 - (2) CLIHC had wanted to prioritize having people of color on the committee
 - (3) Meetings are the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30pm
 - (a) Can attend even if not an official participant
 - (4) Chair notes that it can be good to be present at other groups and commissions' meetings
 - iv) Greeting National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP) conference attendees

- (1) HRC can send an official letter of support and greet them in person
 - (2) November 6-9, 2022; conference will take over Downtown
 - (3) Commissioners are free to help with planning
 - (4) Wanting to work with schoolchildren---contact Lyndele if anyone has a contact
 - (a) Note that 11/7 and 11/8 are teacher workdays, so it may have to be up to parents to bring students
 - (b) Commissioner suggests trying to partner with YMCA in addition to public schools
 - (c) Ernest volunteers to help with school contacts
 - (d) Commissioner suggests contacting a Councilor to deliver some kind of welcoming proclamation
 - (5) Could have a dinner on the Downtown Mall open to NSBP students
 - (a) Possible as long as there is no talk about official HRC business
 - (b) Commissioner suggests being a partner with the City government
 - (c) Lyndele has been in contact with Ashley about the City government being involved
- v) Amendment to Rules and Procedures to Martha's Rules
- (1) Need to vote; Kathryn had been working on it
 - (2) Putting it on May's list
- d) Planning for in-person meetings
- i) Remy says there will be a formal email coming out Monday; most Boards and Commissions will be given to option to return to in-person meetings
 - (1) If they elect to stay on Zoom, the bodies will run the meetings themselves without the help of Communications
 - (2) Commissioner asks what restrictions will be put in place for in-person meetings
 - (a) There will be more clarification in coming weeks
 - ii) Commissioner asks what spaces will be available
 - (1) Many groups are being given the option of CitySpace, which would give the option of hybrid meetings (this has historically been the location for HRC meetings)
 - (2) Basement conference room may also be an option
 - iii) Commissioner strongly supports having a virtual option for meetings
 - (1) Town Halls could be helpful in person
 - (2) There are talks of there being state-mandated in-person meetings for publicly-appointed bodies
 - iv) It is helpful to be mindful of when other Commission meetings occur, but HRC can plan its own meeting times
- e) *Break (15 minutes)*
- i) Roll Call: all Commissioners from before the break are present
- f) Strategic planning for 2022
- i) Commissioners use Whiteboard function to brainstorm priorities for 2022
 - ii) Identify items to bring forward to City Council and choose 3-5 action items

- iii) *5-minute brainstorm period*
- (1) Screenshots of whiteboard will be available
 - (2) ** = circled for being a priority
- iv) Discussion over whiteboard points (Commissioners each assign each a numeric value 1-5 depending on their interest; 1=of low interest, 5=of high interest)
- (1) Each Commissioner picks other City committee to attend and report back/share potential overlap of interests/work
 - (a) Average numeric value: 3.31
 - (2) Fair housing testing through HOME (Housing Opportunities Made Equal) - test local landlords for discriminatory practices
 - (a) Came up during Virginia HRC meeting; other cities have invited HOME or another organization to test landlords
 - (b) A FHAP agreement would facilitate this action, or could look into another organization to test local landlords
 - (c) Could be a research project
 - (d) Average numeric value: 3
 - (3) Figure out what mandated "research project" should be
 - (a) Mandated to do 1 per year in current bylaws
 - (b) Chair suggests tabling this until after deciding upon priorities for the year
 - (c) No value assigned
 - (4) Commission committing to participate in one Right to Be webinar in a year (or other various trainings)**
 - (a) Webinars occur periodically throughout the year; can attend one that is convenient then reconvene to talk
 - (b) Not a focus necessarily, but agreeing to do the training to learn together as a Commission
 - (c) Todd adds that he can forward interesting training opportunities to Commissioners
 - (d) Average numeric value: 4.38
 - (5) Transitional housing**
 - (a) Came up in Town Hall and Housing Panel
 - (b) Individuals coming out of jail or treatment centers transitioning into housing
 - (c) Commissioner notes in chat this could be a good research project
 - (d) Average numeric value: 4.88
 - (6) Affordable housing**
 - (a) Come up with definition of affordable housing
 - (b) Being able to live, eat, and work in Charlottesville
 - (c) HRC should coordinate with other organizations/commissions about this
 - (d) Commissioner notes that a success of the Town Hall was how community members made connections; the HRC can continue to act as a facilitator for these kinds of connections
 - (e) Average numeric value: 5

- (7) City of Worcester, MA offers simultaneous interpretation equipment at no cost to community
- (a) Unknown what feasibility would be for Charlottesville
 - (b) In Worcester, it is offered as a service for any community organization that checks in out and returns it
 - (c) Could do within the Accessibility committee
 - (d) Average numeric value: 3.29
- (8) Playing a role in the discussion of what a City budget would look like that is truly equitable
- (a) The voice of the HRC could be valuable in looking at the budget through an equity and justice lens
 - (b) Commissioner suggests this could be a good research project
 - (c) Average numeric value: 3.61
- (9) Clarity around the equitable treatment of residents by CPD
- (a) Inequities are still happening
 - (b) Unsure of HRC action, but could request information or presence from CPD at least once a year to share insights
 - (i) Possibly a Town Hall with the community
 - (c) Commissioner suggests looking at disproportional contact and arrest for BIPOC residents could be a good topic for the mandated research project
 - (i) Could be overlap with PCOB
 - (d) Average numeric value: 4.62
- (10) HRC staffing
- (a) Average numeric value: 5
- (11) Community engagement—attending planned community events
- (a) Can be at community events to engage with the public once HRC decides on priorities
 - (b) Decide on number of engagements to commit to every year
 - (c) Victoria is currently working on an annual outreach plan
 - (d) Average numeric value: 5
- (12) Town Hall discussions**
- (a) Could be under community engagement/used as needed
 - (b) Average numeric value: 4.29
- (13) Homelessness
- (a) Related to transitional/affordable housing and care for local community
 - (b) Average numeric value: 4.78
- (14) Making sure Council follows through on priorities that affect marginalized communities
- (a) From talking to Councilor Payne about keeping up with priorities
 - (b) Average numeric value: 5
- v) Research focus ideas
- (1) Equitable City budget
 - (2) Equitable treatment of residents by CPD

- (a) Disproportional contact and arrest for BIPOC residents
- (3) Transitional housing
- (4) OHR staff notes there could be research around the system of care for people experiencing homelessness
 - (a) Anthony Haro is point person
- g) Final HRC conceptual priorities for 2022 (** = specific prioritized action item):
 - i) Housing equity (affordable housing**)
 - (1) Homelessness
 - (2) Transitional housing
 - ii) Community engagement events**
 - (1) Town Hall
 - (2) Providing interpretive tools for residents to rent
 - iii) Equity and accountability
 - (1) Following up with City Council**
 - (2) City budget analysis for equity
 - (3) CPD equity and research
 - iv) OHR capacity building
 - (1) OHR staffing increase**
 - (2) HRC commitment to attend other meetings
 - (3) Research project**
- h) HRC will keep these priorities in mind moving into the next year as it addresses different projects and concerns of the community
 - i) Jessica, Ernest, Todd, and Erika will set up time to meet about going over priorities and thinking about directions for specific action items

5) COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- a) None

6) NEXT STEPS

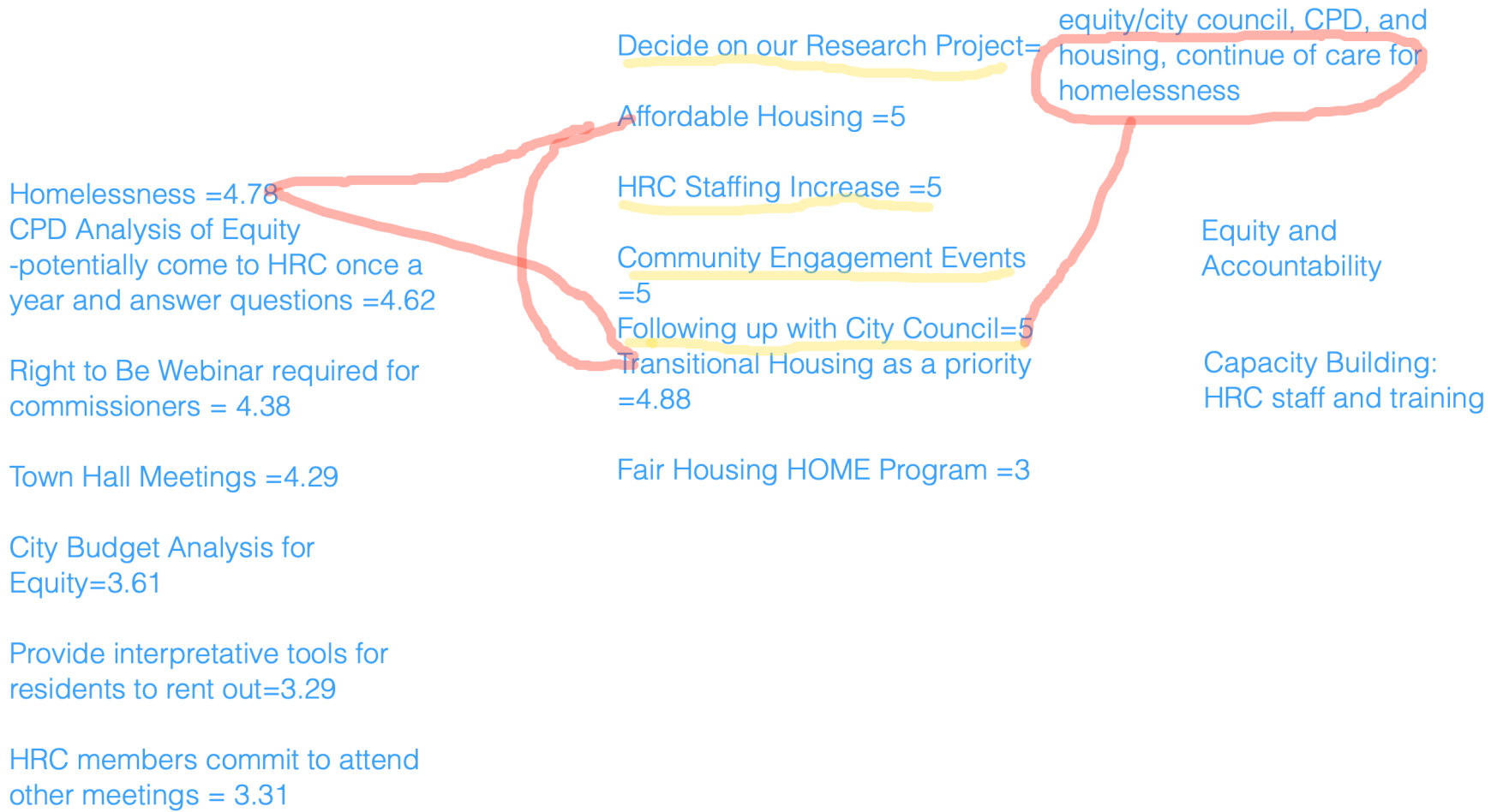
- a) Jessica
 - i) Sign off on Language Access Plan
 - ii) Will send out notes and visuals from meeting
- b) Jessica, Ernest, Todd, and Erika
 - i) Go over HRC priorities and start list of action items
- c) Lyndele
 - i) Work on plain-language version of Language Access Plan
- d) Wolfgang
 - i) Work on plain-language version of Language Access Plan
 - ii) Will share opportunities of interest as they arise before next meeting
- e) Next meeting
 - i) Plain-language speaker
 - ii) Resolutions for legal representation for parties to a complaint and legal representation for tenants in eviction proceedings
 - iii) Amendment to Rules and Procedures
- f) New committees/volunteers for fields of focus
 - i) Research project: Wolfgang
 - ii) Community engagement: Jessica, Jeanette
 - iii) Helping Todd with staffing increase: Jessica
 - iv) Housing: Mary

7) ADJOURN

a) Meeting adjourned at 1:01 pm

Pending HRC Approval





Attachment 3

**2022 Human Rights Commission Annual Retreat
Summary of Identified Focus Areas**

- 1. Housing Equity Assessment** [City Code Article XV. Sec. 2-435, 2-433(a), 2-433(b), &2-433(d)]
 - a. Assess the state of Emergency, Transitional, and Deeply Affordable housing
 - b. Assess the state of the Continuum of Care for people experiencing homelessness
 - i. Review wrap-around services that support access to housing
 1. Mental Health Support
 2. Substance Use Recovery Support
 - c. Test Fair Housing compliance within the Charlottesville housing market
 - i. Potentially partner with Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME)
 - d. Continue to pursue Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) workshare with HUD
 - i. Coinciding with an increase in OHR staffing (see focus area 4)
 - e. Provide recommendations to Council based on the above assessments
- 2. Community Engagement** [City Code Article XV. Sec. 2-433(b) & Sec. 2-434]
 - a. Listen to community member concerns
 - i. Town Hall meetings
 - ii. In-person events
 - b. Share information about HRC initiatives with community members
 - i. In-person events
 - ii. Social media
 - c. Collaborate with other groups doing related work
 - i. Commissioners will engage with other City boards and commissions
 - ii. Commissioners will engage local community groups and organizations
 - d. Provide recommendations to Council to improve community access to public meetings
- 3. Equity in City Government Review** [City Code Article XV. Sec. 2-433(c) & Sec. 2-435]
 - a. Engage with the Charlottesville Police Department and Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB)
 - b. Review City Council's equity priorities and encourage accountability and follow-through
 - c. Review City budgeting priorities through an equity lens
 - d. Provide recommendations to Council regarding potential actions resulting from the above.
- 4. Human Rights Commission (HRC) and Office of Human Rights (OHR) Capacity Expansion** [City Code Article XV. Sec. 2-433(a), 2-433(f), 2-434, & 2-435]
 - a. Advocate for adequate staffing in the OHR
 - i. Demonstrate to City Council the need to add an Investigator and potentially an Intake Counselor to OHR staff, as a pre-requisite for fulfilling City Code Article XV. Sec. 2-433(d)
 - b. Explore opportunities for Commissioners to engage in training and workshops that enhance understanding of human rights, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Attachment 4

WAS THAT DISCRIMINATION?



All people have the right to pursue employment and housing. All people have the rights to access places and services that are open to the public. When your rights are denied, you may be the victim of unlawful discrimination.

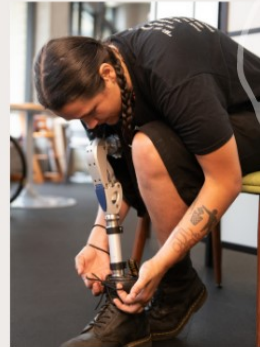
If you have questions about your rights, please contact the Charlottesville Office of Human Rights.

Phone: (434) 970-3023

Email: humanrights@charlottesville.gov

Images from Disabled and Here (<www.affecttheverb.com/disabledandhere/>)

WHAT DOES THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS DO?



The Office of Human Rights can answer questions and help you figure out the best way to address a concern of discrimination. Staff will listen to your story and ask you questions about what happened. If your concern is something staff can address directly, staff will walk you through this process. If another agency might be better able to help, we will help connect you with the right agency and assist you with presenting your concern.

HOW DO I CONTACT THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS?

We can meet people for appointments at the office or in the community. We can also address many concerns remotely. Please reach out if we can be of assistance or to set up an appointment.

Images from Disabled and Here (<www.affecttheverb.com/disabledandhere/>)

Attachment 5

WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?

Discrimination is the unlawful denial of a person's opportunity to engage in an activity of daily life. .

WHAT IS THE CHARLOTTESVILLE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS?



The Charlottesville Office of Human Rights receives individual complaints of discrimination, conducts community outreach, and provides staff support to the Human Rights Commission. The Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance defines the Office's jurisdiction and process for addressing complaints of discrimination, in accordance with state and federal law.



CONTACT US

1106 5th Street NE
Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-970-3023
humanrights@charlottesville.gov



**CHARLOTTESVILLE
OFFICE OF HUMAN
RIGHTS**

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human Rights are life activities that all people should have the freedom to pursue without fear of discrimination or harassment. The Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance and state law protect people from discrimination when engaging in the following protected activities within the City of Charlottesville:

- Credit
- Employment
- Housing
- Private Education
- Public Accommodation

The Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance and state law protect people from discrimination when engaging in the above protected activities on the basis of the following protected classes:

- Age/Elderliness
- Childbirth or related medical conditions
- Disability
- Familial Status (in housing)
- Gender Identity
- Marital Status
- National Origin
- Pregnancy
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Color
- Source of Funds (in housing)
- Status as a Veteran

WHAT CAN THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS DO FOR YOU?

If you believe you have been subjected to an unlawful discriminatory practice, you may do any of the following

- Call the Office of Human Rights at 434-970-3023 (Se habla Español)
- Send an email
- Print and submit an Intake and Complaint form (you can find this on our website)

If you would like to contact the Office or Commission about community outreach or a matter of public concern, you may do any of the following:

- Call the Office of Human Rights at 434-970-3115.
- Send an email to the Office of Human Right
- Attend a public meeting of the Human Rights Commission (every 3rd Thursday of the month)

ALL INQUIRIES BY PHONE OR EMAIL TO THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED BY LAW FROM DISCLOSURE TO OUTSIDE PARTIES WITHOUT YOUR EXPRESS PERMISSION.

WHAT IS THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION?



The Human Rights Commission (HRC) is a group of volunteers appointed by City Council to promote an inclusive, empowered, and diverse community through community education and engagement, as well as enforcement of the Human Rights Ordinance. The HRC also reviews City policies and provides recommendations to City Council for changes in policy that promote and protect human rights. View more information on the Commission page.

Attachment 6

Fair Housing in Charlottesville

How to recognize
potential housing
discrimination and
what to do about it

Need help?

Any of the following organizations can offer assistance with questions or concerns about your fair housing rights in Virginia.

Central Virginia Legal Aid Society
(CVLAS)
434-296-8851

Charlottesville Office of Human
Rights
434-970-3023

Housing Opportunities Made
Equal (HOME)
804-354-0641

Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC)
434-977-0553

Virginia Fair Housing Office
1-888-551-3247

Virginia Poverty Center Law
Center
804-351-5275
or
804-351-5266

Protect yourself

Take notes:

As you search for housing, keep a notebook and pen with you to write down who you talk to, the date you talk, and what they tell you.

Get it in writing:

If a landlord or property manager denies for application for housing, ask them to put their reasons in writing.

Know before you sign:

Before you sign a lease, make sure you understand what each section means. Always make sure you have a signed lease agreement before you move in, and keep your copy.

Report discrimination:

If you feel like you are experiencing discrimination, contact one of the organizations on the back of this brochure.



Finding housing in Charlottesville can be difficult. Affordable rentals are in especially short supply. The addition of application fees and strict screening criteria can result in a long expensive and frustrating search. In such a challenging landscape, there is no room for illegal housing discrimination.

This guide can help you understand your rights as you search for housing and show you what to do if you feel you have experienced housing discrimination.



Fair Housing Protections

The Virginia Fair Housing Law makes it illegal to discriminate in residential housing based on **race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, source of funds, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability.**

Below are a few examples of illegal housing discrimination:

- Telling you housing is unavailable when it is in fact available.
- Showing you housing only in certain neighborhoods
- Setting different terms, conditions, or privileges for sale or rental of a dwelling,
- Refusing to make reasonable modifications to a dwelling, even at your expense, to accommodate a disability.
- Harassing, coercing, or otherwise retaliating against someone for pursuing an allegation of housing discrimination.

If you feel you have experienced housing discrimination, contact one of the organizations listed in the back of this guide

"Source of funds"

If you use a voucher or another form of financial assistance to pay for housing, a landlord in Virginia cannot deny you housing because of your method of payment. While some exceptions to this rule exist, it generally applies to any landlord that owns 5 or more properties in Virginia. Additionally, it is a potential violation of the Virginia Fair Housing Law if a Landlord sets a minimum income requirement that is based on the full market rent as opposed to a voucher-holder's portion of the rent, or if the minimum income requirement is set so high that it systematically excludes all voucher holders.

Criminal Background

While having a criminal record is not a protected characteristic under fair housing law, criminal history-based restrictions on housing opportunities violates the law if, without justification, their burden falls more often on people of one race or national origin more than another. Additionally, if a housing provider treats individuals with comparable criminal history differently because of their race, national origin or other protected characteristic, this would also be a violation of the law.

If you are turned down for housing for a reason you don't understand, ask the landlord or property manager for a specific, written explanation of why your application was denied, and talk to one of the organizations listed in the back of this guide.

Attachment 7

Measures	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTALS
<i>Primary Service: Event Information</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Primary Service: Investigation Activity</i>	16	1	9	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39
<i>Primary Service: Information</i>	269	168	192	232	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	913
<i>Primary Service: Mediation Related Services</i>	4	5	9	21	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
<i>Primary Service: Outreach Coordination</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<i>Primary Service: Public Hearing</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Primary Service: Volunteer Coordination</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Administrative Tasks:

- Amendments to Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance for FHAP substantial equivalence under review
 - No additional steps taken this month
 - Pending follow up for HUD includes the following:
 - Clarifying the federal vs. state definitions and standards for reasonable vs. probable cause
 - Clarifying whether federal timeframes are business days or calendar days for continuity throughout ordinance
 - Clarifying whether housing enforcement procedures can include separate language that distinguishes “rendering a determination” vs. “filing a charge,” given that Council must pass the ordinance prior to HUD’s approval of FHAP status and likely before Council will fund adequate staffing in the City attorney’s office to accommodate filing civil actions
 - There is a clear need to think carefully about the staffing required in both the OHR and City Attorney’s Office and how that will be funded before we enter into the FHAP agreement
 - **Timeframe Goal: Present a final draft to HRC in June.**
- No new work on FEPA agreement, as FHAP process take precedence
 - Recall that the FHAP agreement provides substantial opportunities and resources to expand and improve the OHR, whereas the FEPA increases workload with insufficient support to increase staffing or training

Reporting:

Report	Status
CY2020 HRC & OHR Annual Report	Completed and submitted to Council on 03/24/2022
CY2021 Department Scorecard	Majority of data entered. Some revisions still needed. Not yet published. Timeframe Goal: Publish by end of May.
CY2021 HRC & OHR Annual Report	Not yet initiated. Timeframe Goal: Complete by end of June for presentation to Council.

Active Cases of Discrimination:

Case #	Protected Activity	Protected Class(es)	Status
2020-2	Housing	Race	Respondent accepted offer of mediation. Awaiting complainant response.
2021-2	Employment	Race	Settlement reached through mediation.
2021-4	Employment	Sex	Investigation in progress.
2021-5	Employment	Sexual Orientation, Race	Investigation in progress.
2021-11	Housing	Disability	Currently in mediation.
2021-12	Housing	Disability	Unable to reach complainant following complaint submission.
2022-1	Housing	Disability	Currently in mediation.
2022-2	Housing	Disability, Race, Color	Currently in mediation.
2022-3	Housing	Disability	Pending notice and offer or mediation.

Attachment 8

Homelessness Summit Summary

- **Specialized Housing**
 - There is a need for year-round emergency shelter and specialized emergency housing that can address the specific physical and mental health needs of the people seeking supports.
- **Wrap Around Services (including transportation)**
 - Barriers to housing (such as criminal backgrounds, credit scores, identification) exacerbate challenges.
 - Consider a Wrap Around Service Provider team to explore performance, expansion, and staff difficult cases. **(Action Item)**
- **Operational Needs**
 - Capacity is a driving factor in most of the needs highlighted.
 - Scarcity of housing options
 - Scarcity of wrap around services and case management
 - Providers are experiencing capacity issues themselves, including staffing shortages and hiring challenges largely mirrored by other agencies and the impact of COVID-19.
- **Planning**
 - Explore options between expanding existing programs and/or creating new ones.
 - Coordinate existing programs/services to avoid duplication, make efficiencies, and fill gaps.
 - Communicate information about the coordinated programs/services to the public, consumers, and other providers.
 - An Advisory Board of individuals who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness is critical to the development of strategic plans and creating services moving forward. **(Action Item)**
 - A regional approach and strengthened partnerships with Albemarle and UVA remains an opportunity.
 - Develop shared vision, mission, goals and strategic plans. **(Action Item)**
- **Funding**
 - The needs are well known, yet at times at competition with one another.

- All of the above require funding. How much is needed, and from where will it come?

Attachment 9

Petition for Housing Listening Session – TJACH/The Haven

- TJACH received the Petition for Housing the week of February 7, 2022, which was signed by 22 individuals experiencing homelessness in the Charlottesville area.
- The petition was addressed to TJACH, The Haven, PACEM, and several other local government agencies and nonprofits.
- The petition stated that all who signed have been homeless for at least one year, have physical or mental health conditions, and are at increased risk of serious illness or death from COVID.
- The petition signers asked for immediate and consistent housing, which they said they were not being afforded by local service providers and agencies.
- Along with The Haven, TJACH hosted a listening session at the library on February 18 to meet with the petition signers to discuss their needs and demands.
- About 25 people were in attendance; most of the petition signers were there, along with other guests from The Haven, many of whom added their names to the petition after the meeting.
- The meeting was loosely structured, and the attendees seemed glad to be able to talk to TJACH directly. They seemed excited to have a new audience, and there was a very clear desire to learn and understand more about the local system of care.
- At the end of meeting, TJACH collected a list of all the attendees' names and contact information to follow up with them in the coming weeks.

Key Discussion Points:

- Need for permanent stable housing, saying that the shelter environment was not only unstable, but also unsafe for those at higher risk of contracting COVID
- Wanted to know how our funds were being spent; did not think they were being distributed fairly or efficiently; a few said they didn't feel there was a clear goal of actually trying to end homelessness
- Many said they just needed simple support, like assistance with a security deposit and first month's rent, while others expressed a need for far more intensive support, like caregiving and assisted living
- Need for guidance, as in when they do obtain housing, they need to know how to keep it, how to find a stable job, how to manage their finances, etc.; they wanted to see more counseling and training opportunities, and to learn how to be more independent and self-sufficient
- Care and resources for those with mental health conditions, and keeping people out of prison and emergency shelters where staff are not always properly equipped to handle these conditions; they wanted to see non-police interventions in these cases
- Some felt that our local system of care was overloaded and under-resourced, because they see many people coming from other cities and even other states to receive shelter and other services in Charlottesville
- Suggested that they bring their petition in front of city council, to advocate for more housing development and accessibility in our community
- Agreed that a lack of housing was at the root of all these issues, and that long-term, permanent housing would be the ideal solution; it would give them the stability, privacy, and security they need to improve their health, their financial outlook, and their quality of life overall

Follow Up:

- Plan another meeting and invite other service providers/nonprofits and their board members along with local government agencies
- Further discuss the petition and housing needs
- Opportunity to educate people experiencing homelessness on the resources available to them, especially in terms of the more simple, immediate support
- Discuss possibility of forming a permanent lived experience advisory board, offering compensation to members
- Plan future "open forum" listening sessions, open to everyone experiencing homelessness in the community

Attachment 10

Second Listening Session with Petitioners for Housing
Central Library, Swanson Room
March 29, 2022
10:00 am

The following are notes captured during the above meeting. These are not official minutes.

Challenges

1. Rents are too high.
2. Some people have funds but find other barriers to entry
 - a. I.D. requirements
 - b. Eviction history
 - c. Inability to find available housing or anyone to navigate the housing market
 - d. Credit history
 - i. Some places require guarantors for people with low credit scores
3. Waitlists for support from agencies and organizations are months long
 - a. Responses from agencies are slow or there is no response
4. There are insufficient funds to provide temporary hotel stays to all people who need shelter
5. The warm room at the Salvation Army shuts down before the cold weather has passed
6. Available affordable housing often requires tolerating being around violence or other adverse situations
 - a. Even voucher holders may risk losing their voucher by leaving a dangerous situation
7. Transitions from overnight shelters that close early in the morning to day shelters are difficult
8. There are 15 to 20 people sleeping on the downtown mall currently
9. Premier Circle holds 90 and is currently full and only accepts people with specific medical conditions

Needs

1. More apartments and rooms for rent – not just emergency shelters
2. More emergency shelter is needed
3. Prospective tenants need advocates when interacting with landlords
4. Jobs that accommodate people
 - a. Treat people kindly and with respect
 - b. Options to live and work in the same space
5. Assistance with substance use recovery
 - a. More flexibility with substance use in emergency shelters

Ideas

1. Paying for rooms in rooming houses would cost less money than housing people in hotels
 - a. Screening of tenants is necessary to protect all residents in shared housing
2. Create a peer-advisory group of people with lived experience to help create a plan