

Greater Tulsa Area African American Affairs Commission 2025 End of Year Report

Commission's Purpose

The purpose of the Commission is to advise the Mayor and the City Council as advocates for the African American people of the Greater Tulsa Area on matters, facilitating unity and understanding, within communities and with local, state, and federal governments. With the goal of creating a strong, prosperous, self-sustaining African American community, the Commission will advise and advocate for the use of city resources for the development of matters of importance to the African American community.

Three committees provided Commission work to achieve annual goals: (I) The Community Engagement, Culture, and Promotion Committee, (II) The Policy Recommendations Committee, and (III) The Education & Skill Building Committee:

1. Active engagement
2. Aligning actions taken by the commission with shared values
3. Strategic activism for the group
4. Collaborative approaches
5. Trust building in being in a consulting role with the Mayor

Commission's Work to Achieve Yearly Goals

Defining Committee Work:

- I. **Community Engagement, Culture, and Promotion:** This committee focuses on the areas of Culture, Health (Opportunities), and Communications
- II. **Policy Recommendations:** This committee focuses on the areas of Accountable Policing, Housing (Recommendations), Economic Development, and Transportation
- III. **Education & Skill Building:** This committee focuses on the areas of Education, Housing (Informational), Health (Informational), and Economics

Activities to Note:

Goal 1. Active Engagement

a. Continued Monthly Newsletter Communication

The Culture & Engagement Committee sustained a consistent monthly newsletter that highlighted community events, committee updates, and historical education. This included themed editions for Black History Month, Juneteenth, and Black August.

b. Monthly Commission meetings included notable professionals around the Tulsa area from diverse organizations and community backgrounds: Keith Jimmerson, Manager of Rudisill Library — Provided an update on the Tulsa City-County Library's "My Library, Our Future" campaign, including updated branch plans and community engagement opportunities; **Dr. Laura Latta**, Executive Director of the Tulsa Higher Education Consortium — Presented on THEC's mission to support post-secondary access and persistence across northeast Oklahoma, including FAFSA support and transfer pathways; **Carlos Moreno**, Client Advocate at 9b Corp — Shared

about **Neighborhood Explorer**, a public tool for data visualization and community disparity analysis; and **City Councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper** — Spoke to the Commission regarding transparency and community involvement in the Greenwood land planning processes, offering local governance perspectives on equitable development and civic engagement. These guest presentations enriched Commission priority discussions—especially on **education access, public data systems, and land use governance**—and provided attended commissioners with context and connections for responding to community needs and policy considerations.

b. Expanded Community Presence Through Tabling & Events

Commissioners increased their visibility at community events, including tabling at the **Black Wall Street Legacy Festival** in May and June.

c. Black Educator Excellence Awards—Year Two

The Education Committee hosted the **second annual Dr. LaVerne Ford Wimberly Black Educator Excellence Awards** on **October 28, 2025**, with Mayor Nichols serving as keynote speaker.

d. Growing the Commission Through New Members

Several new commissioners joined throughout the year, with four organization and two individual seats remaining to be filled for 2026—supporting the goal of achieving a full 23-member commission.

e. Public Education and Literacy Initiatives

Commissioners supported and publicized numerous literacy, cultural, and civic engagement events throughout the year, including museum programs, film screenings, genealogy workshops, and student-centered opportunities.

Goal 2. Aligning Actions with Shared Values

a. Committee Strengthening and Clear Priorities

The Chair led a review of committee priorities early in 2025, emphasizing achievable, high-impact goals and supporting committees in refining their work plans.

b. Inter-Commission Collaboration with Title V Commissions

Education committees from all Title V commissions (Asian Affairs, Hispanic/Latinx, Indian Affairs, Women’s Commission, Human Rights) met multiple times in 2025 to jointly address literacy, absenteeism, and family engagement.

c. Increased Focus on Housing, Transportation & Equity

The Policy Committee aligned its work with critical issues identified by residents—housing affordability, transportation needs, and infrastructure equity—while coordinating with city priorities.

Goal 3. Strategic Activism

a. Op-Ed Writing and Public Education

The Policy Committee began crafting op-eds to inform the public on housing, transportation, and policy impacts within African American communities, along with the Education Committee embarking on an op-ed on attendance for students for classroom success.

b. Partnership with Beyond Apology Commission

The Commission continued collaboration with the Beyond Apology Commission to advance reconciliation and policy recommendations related to the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and community wealth-building.

c. Responding to Community Issues through Research & Dialogue

When significant policy topics arose—such as community concerns involving the Greenwood Legacy Community Development Corporation—the Commission conducted interviews, gathered documentation, and issued committee recommendations.

Goal 4. Collaborative Approaches

a. Participation in the Title V Commissions Retreat

Members joined the inaugural **Title V Commissions Retreat** to strengthen cross-commission collaboration in civic engagement, community education, and outreach.

b. Joint Education Initiatives with TPS & Local Organizations

The Education Committee met with organizations such as **Junior Achievement Oklahoma** and monitored major shifts in TPS literacy and absenteeism policy.

c. Partnerships for Youth Voice & Cultural Expression

The Commission worked with **Tulsa Juneteenth** to design the inaugural Spoken Word competition (later postponed due to low submissions), showing a commitment to youth-centered programming.

d. Engagement with Black Wall Street Chamber & Greenwood Community

Multiple commissioners supported or attended initiatives led by the Black Wall Street Chamber and Greenwood businesses, including educational panels and community resource events.

Goal 5. Trust-Building in a Consulting Role with the Mayor

a. Regular Chair–Mayor Consultation

The Chair continued ongoing meetings with Mayor Nichols to strengthen communication pathways and coordinate shared priorities in housing, infrastructure, and community engagement.

b. District-Level Engagement with City Councilors

Commissioners initiated outreach across multiple districts—identifying six Tulsa districts with 5,000+ African American residents—to better understand councilors’ engagement strategies.

c. Human Rights Commission Collaboration

GTAAAC maintained a liaison to the Human Rights Commission, supporting updates to the city’s complaint processes and advocating for expanded equity protections.

Major Achievements for 2025

- **Successful launch of a year-long newsletter series** featuring history, civic updates, and committee reports.
- **Second Annual Dr. LaVerne F. Wimberly Black Educator Excellence Awards** honoring outstanding educators.
- **Expanded cross-commission collaboration**, including the first **Title V Commissions Retreat**.
- **Strengthened policy focus** on housing, transportation, and community transparency.
- **Increased commissioner engagement with district councilors** to elevate African American constituent voices.
- **Addition of new commissioners** expanding representation across economic development, youth technology, civic advocacy, and community leadership.

Goals for 2026

Based on 2025 accomplishments and forward-looking discussion:

1. **Achieve full 23-member commission through strategic recruitment.**
2. **Complete a comprehensive 2026 civic engagement and education calendar by February 2026.**
3. **Publish op-ed pieces from Policy and Education Committees** to highlight housing, transportation, and policy needs, along with attendance focus for the African American community to booster policy strategies and educational success within Tulsa's African American community.
4. **Deepen district-level assessments of African American needs**—literacy, transportation, housing access, health, and economic development—while partnering with councilors and agencies to address these issues.
5. **Strengthen the Network Engagement Protocol** initiated in 2025 to ensure each commissioner maintains strong ties with community partners.
6. **Advance policy recommendations** centered on equitable housing development, transportation access, and community-centered decision-making, while also position ourselves as an objective arbiter of information with the community through panel convenings, forums, and surveys.
7. **Expand visibility efforts**, including newsletter distribution, public tabling, and community presentations.