

Human Rights Commission 2025 Annual Report

Overview of HRC Activities, Goals, and KPIs

Overview of Activities

In 2025, the Human Rights Commission launched the year by reviewing its progress from the previous year. At the January meeting, the Chair presented a summary of Tulsa Equality Indicators 49 and 50, highlighting the main points from each of the subject matter experts' presentations from 2024, as well as a summary of the findings discovered throughout 2024 regarding civic engagement. Additionally, suggestions were provided for developing actionable steps during 2025. Throughout 2025, the HRC invited additional guest speakers, including City Auditor Nathan Pickard; Mayor Monroe Nichols; Compliance Officer LaKendra Carter; Chief Resilience Officer Dion'trae Hayes; and Susan Lamkin, President of the Tulsa Public School Board. Specific actions taken throughout the year are as follows:

- During the first quarter of 2025, HRC members engaged in discussion about what was learned during 2024, and as a result, decided to adopt two civic-engagement-related plans for action: (a) improving Tulsa residents' access to the Department of Resilience and Equity's resources and (b) increasing diverse representation across the City of Tulsa's ABCs. (Deciding these plans for action fulfills Goal 2, KPI-4 of 2024.) These plans would guide the HRC's actions during 2025 and possibly beyond. A summary of the Goals and KPIs, adopted on 4/21/2025, is provided below. The goals maintained the HRC's focus on Enhancing Civic Engagement, as it was determined in 2024 (see HRC 2024 Annual Report).

Additionally, during the first quarter, the HRC Chair presented the results of a 10-item survey, based on the HRC's powers, duties, and responsibilities as outlined in the Tulsa Code of Ordinances, measuring Commissioners' general perceptions of Effectiveness over Time 1, early in 2024, and Time 2, at the beginning of 2025. Commissioners, on average, strongly agreed that the HRC successfully developed an annual plan to set priorities; they also agreed that it had successfully promulgated rules to govern meetings, conducted activities necessary to implement provisions, and planned/conducted meetings, surveys, etc., as needed. Overall, Commissioners reported improvement in perceptions of fulfilling Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities over time. We hope this trend continues into 2026.

- During the second quarter of 2025, the annual HRC Retreat was held, during which the Goals and KPIs were finalized. Also, the Chair of the HRC was appointed to the Children's Cabinet, as facilitated through the Mayor's Office of Children, Youth, and Families. Regular updates were continually provided to the HRC as the events of the Children's Cabinet progressed throughout the year.
- During the third quarter of 2025, the HRC unanimously voted to endorse a letter to the City Council supporting an update to the Human Rights Ordinance that unifies the Nondiscrimination Protections in public accommodations and housing. The updated language has important implications for Veterans and 2SLGBTQIA+ groups, which are represented in the HRC. HRC members attended the City Council Committee meeting on August 27, during which Councilor Bellis withdrew the item for a vote, indicating that it would be pursued at a later time. The HRC plans to develop a strategy to provide education about this issue to City Councilors and members of the public at a later time.
- During the fourth quarter, progress made regarding the 2025+ Goals and Objectives was consolidated, and plans for the Humanitarian-of-the-Year event were finalized and carried out.

2025 Goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Goal 1: Improve Tulsa residents' access to the City of Tulsa Department of Resilience and Equity's resources by modernizing, streamlining, and removing barriers to the City of Tulsa's human rights complaint filing process

KPI-1: Assess the barriers to filing human rights complaints online or in more modern and accessible ways

- *Details:* Lexi Bollis, Resilience and Equity Program Administrator, researched and created a list of cities that have more modern options available for filing human rights complaints. Vice Chair France met with the Tulsa City Clerk and the head of City Legal to discuss the complaints process. Tulsans can currently mail in complaints, and they are accepted at the City Clerk's office. Currently, it is not possible to submit a complaint electronically.
- *Outcome:* There is clear agreement that modernization of the complaint-filing process is needed.

KPI-2: Improve the process of filing human rights complaints.

- *Details:* Chief Resilience Officer Dion'trae Hayes and Compliance Officer La Kendra Carter met with the City's IT department to determine next steps. All parties agreed on the goal of creating a platform that allows for the submission of discrimination complaints with an electronic signature, while also providing internal functionality such as reporting and tracking capabilities. Officers Hayes and Carter reported that there is momentum within the City to consider updates.
- *Outcome:* Await further reports from Officers Hayes and Carter before following up. The HRC will consider proposing a change to the Human Rights Ordinance to remove the reference to the City Clerk from the complaint process. It is not necessary for the Clerk to be the first point of contact for receiving complaints.

KPI-3: Develop and deploy educational outreach materials and processes to inform residents about their human rights and how to report violations of their rights.

- *Details:* Not yet begun.

KPI-4: Monitor accessibility and utilization of the new human rights complaint process

- *Details:* Will be addressed after the new process is in place.

Goal 2: Increase diverse representation and equitable recruitment practices across all City of Tulsa authorities, boards, and commissions

KPI-1: Assess the current state of diversity and equitable recruitment to authorities, boards, and commissions (ABCs).

- *Details:* Commissioner Pilehvar worked with Lexi Bollis to obtain anonymized data for 290+ members of the ABCs. Commissioner Pilehvar then analyzed the data for possible discrepancies in demographics.
- *Outcome:* Two discrepancies noted:
 - Age – individuals in their 40s and 70s+ are overrepresented, while individuals in their 20s-30s and 50s are underrepresented.
 - District – over 50% of the members serving on the ABCs come from Districts 4 and 9; the lowest representation occurs in Districts 5 and 3.

KPI-2: Strengthen equitable recruitment practices for ABCs.

- *Details:* Not yet begun.

KPI-3: Improve transparency and accessibility.

- *Details:* Commissioner Pilehvar proposed to report the outcome of her analysis to the City Council to alert them to discrepancies and solicit feedback and support for new recommendations on the process of filling ABC seats. Commissioner Pilehvar will provide a letter to the City Council for a possible HRC vote in January 2026. Also, Commissioner Pilehvar has scheduled a meeting with the City Auditor to learn more about their findings in the city audit around ABCs and how we might partner to increase transparency and consistency around recruitment and appointment practices.

KPI-4: Monitor progress and accountability.

- *Details:* Will be addressed after new process is in place.

Committee and Representative Reports (Listed Alphabetically)

Compassionate Tulsa Committee

The Compassionate Tulsa committee met regularly throughout 2025. The new committee chair, Gary Peluso-Verdend, engaged in a productive dialogue with the Human Rights Commission early in the year. We welcomed two new partner organizations: the Tulsa Symphony and Fellowship Lutheran Church. We awarded the Sherri Tapp Lifetime of Compassion Service Award to Mr. Michael W. Brose. We awarded the Compassionate Tulsan award to two individuals, Ms. Jana Rugg and Mr. Terry Berg. In August, with the help of HRC Commissioner Peregrina, we added a Spanish language version of the nomination form to our website. We are currently completing the nomination process for both a lifetime service awardee and another recipient of the Compassionate Tulsa award, to be presented in January and February 2026, respectively.

Disability Community Advocate Report

We have a continued working relationship with Tulsa Bike Club on accessibility issues as it pertains to their Bales parking area, which has been turned into Tulsa's first Wheelchair Softball Practice Field. The Center for Individuals with Physical Challenges Wheelchair Softball Team can now fully access the field, which has been a collaborative effort between Anthony Meadows, HRC's Disability Advocate Commissioner, and Tulsa Parks very own Anna America. Also in 2025, Commissioner Meadows advised on multiple Tulsa Parks Projects for ADA Compliance and assisted in establishing that all requirements are met when building new or refurbishing Tulsa Parks Facilities, parking areas, playground equipment, and all trails and access points. Listed below are some Tulsa Parks Projects that have been completed, and some are on-going to be completed in 2026.

- Helped guide the design team at Hicks and Bales Playgrounds (Set to be finished by February 2026)
- Johnson Park Improvements (Construction not started)
- Chamberlain Park Improvements (Construction not started)
- Berry Park Improvements (Construction not started)
- Minshall Park Parking lot and curb ramp
- Bathroom renovations at Hicks, Waterworks, Hunter and Helmerich

Moreover, Commissioner Meadows is a member of the Gathering Place Collective, which advises the park on accessibility for all visitors, including those with disabilities, at Gathering Place.

Fair Housing Committee

The Fair Housing Committee continues to strengthen community awareness through outreach, event coordination, and targeted initiatives, including facilitating the second annual Fair Housing Summit, which this year focused on Veterans and emphasized housing rights. We remain a strong partner with the Tulsa Area Fair Housing Partnership by speaking at their events, supporting promotion efforts, sharing resources, and increasing participation among underserved groups. We also support the facilitation of the Human Rights/Fair Housing complaint process, as housing remains the most frequently reported concern, helping



ensure individuals know how to file and access support when experiencing discrimination. In addition, we advocated to add Veteran status as a protected class within the City's fair housing protections and for the inclusion of fair housing training language within City of Tulsa HUD grants, strengthening expectations for equitable housing practices among funded partners. By expanding fair housing education across Tulsa, these collaborations have built a stronger, more connected fair housing network that is better equipped to support equitable housing outcomes in 2026.

Community Relations Committee

The Community Relations committee selected two nominations from other Title V Commissions as co-honorees for the 2025 Humanitarian of the Year Award: Maybelle Wallace (Greater Tulsa Area African American Affairs Commissioner) and Winnie Guess Perdue (Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commissioner). Each honoree embodies the qualities of a humanitarian through their artistic endeavors, service to Tulsa, advocacy, and civic engagement. Now in the fourth year, the annual ceremony was again held in December to commemorate adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948—the first global enunciation of human rights. Deputy Mayor Krystal Reyes helped celebrate the two community elders for their lifetime of contributions to the City of Tulsa.