

Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission 2022 Annual Reportⁱ

The *Duties* of the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission (HRC) detailed in the City's Code of Ordinances, require that the Commission report to City Council annually on two of its functions: a) receiving and acting on complaints of alleged violations of Chapter 112: Non-Discrimination and b) monitoring compliance by City contractors with the provisions of that ordinance for 2022. This report fulfills the first of those requirements. This report also goes on to describe the complaints the HRC received alleging violations of Chapter 122: Fair Chance Access to Housing Ordinance and provides a broad summary of the HRC's activity overall in 2022. A separate report, written jointly with the City's Purchasing Department, focusing on contractor compliance in FY22-23, will be submitted to Council in a separate document in the near future.

Commission Activity

The role of the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission has evolved since Council updated Chapter 112: Non-Discrimination Ordinance (NDO) in 2014 and charged the HRC with its enforcement. The Commission continues to address complaints alleging violations of that ordinance and now also handles complaints alleging violations of the Chapter 122: Fair Chance Access to Housing Ordinance that City Council passed in 2021.

In 2022, in addition to enforcing these two ordinances, the Human Rights Commission also identified some related issues that suggested areas where additional protections for people in Ann Arbor were needed. One of these became an amendment to the NDO, with the help of City Attorney Margaret Radabaugh, and was subsequently passed into law. A second would be passed into law early in 2023. Other human rights issues were the subject of HRC resolutions, our work with AAPD leadership, and our outreach activities.

In 2022, the HRC:

- **Recommended amending the Non-Discrimination Ordinance to expand the Non-Discrimination Ordinance to cover hairstyles and head coverings associated with religious practices**, which resulted in an amended Section 9:151. After researching and understanding the impact of the "Crown Ordinance" that the HRC recommended (and City Council passed) in 2021, it was clear to us that religious discrimination needed to include this expanded protection as well.
- **Completed most of the work leading to a proposed amendment to the Non-Discrimination Ordinance that would prohibit discrimination against the use of local government-issued identification credentials.** The final work of this important effort resulted in the acceptance of the amendment by City Council in January of 2023.
- **Passed two resolutions in support of work done by the Independent Community Police Oversight Commission (ICPOC).** The first calls for the continued collection of traffic-stop data and the public availability of that data and the second supports an ICPOC resolution in favor of establishing an effective unarmed response service in Ann Arbor. Both of these issues have ramifications central to ensuring the protection of human rights in this City and both have our strong support.

- **Obtained agreement on suggested changes to the AAPD policies and notice regarding “reading trespass”.** The HRC began examining the policies regarding “Trespass” prior to the establishment of the Independent Community Police Oversight Commission based on public outcry over an incident that took place at the Blake Transit Center and public comment about its use made at HRC meetings. Our investigation confirmed that changes should be made to help those given Trespass Notices a better understanding of the terms of the warning, how they could appeal it, and how business owners should have more flexibility in how long they could ban a person from their property. Our consideration of this was slowed by multiple changes in AAPD leadership and was enhanced by the inclusion of ICPOC members once ICPOC was established. We re-started our effort in 2022 and made significant progress, leading to an agreement with the AAPD that led, ultimately, to a completely revised Trespass Notice and accompanying policies and procedures in 2023.
- **Engaged in a number of activities responding to human-rights-related issues in Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County.**
 - Members of the HRC are still active in the Washtenaw County Re-Entry Stakeholders meetings that are now in their third year. They continue to inform us about the needs of people returning from incarceration and the programs that are being put in place. They also contribute to our effectiveness in supporting the Fair Chance Access to Housing Ordinance.
 - The Commission made contact with a UM-LSA student group, Ann Arbor Public Schools, Fair Housing, Washtenaw County Jail, Michigan Department of Civil Rights and Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust of Southeastern Michigan (ALPACT).
 - Our Commission also partnered with a University of Michigan Social Work class, SW509, for a second year, to do preliminary research on human rights issues that Ann Arbor residents are facing and on the solutions that have been suggested by experts in the field and/or implemented by other municipalities facing similar situations.
- **Finally, the HRC invested time enhancing its own efficiency and effectiveness.** The Commission explored the advantages of building a database of the complaints we have handled over the years and continue to handle. As we accumulate more and more experience with complaints, we see advantages for documenting them in ways that improve our ability to search them easily. This capability will help us better anticipate the human rights needs of our communities and identify potential resources needed to address them.

Facilitation of Contractor Compliance Under Chapter 112: Non-Discrimination

A separate report, jointly prepared by the Human Rights Commission and Purchasing Manager, Colin Spencer, for FY22-23 will be submitted to City Council for its approval in the near future (pursuant to section 9:158 of the Ann Arbor Non-Discrimination Ordinance).

Handling Complaints Under the Non-Discrimination Ordinance and Fair Chance Access to Housing Ordinance

Under both the revised Non-Discrimination Ordinance and the Fair Chance Access to Housing Ordinance, the Human Rights Commission is tasked with receiving and responding to complaints of alleged violations. Community members seem to be increasingly aware of the complaint-handling services now available to them. Spreadsheets summarizing the complaints received (or primarily addressed) – separated by the ordinance allegedly violated -- in 2022 are attached.

- In addition to these complaints, the HRC receives calls and answers questions about human rights and discrimination in Ann Arbor. Simple requests for information were not tracked in 2022, although a number of requests were taken from Ann Arbor residents that required considerable attention yet did not become formal complaints. The HRC will continue its efforts to increase awareness in the community that this complaint process is available.
- It should also be mentioned that the HRC has begun to receive an increasing number of complaints about alleged human rights violations that took place beyond city limits (usually in the neighboring townships) – and some of these had been filed as formal complaints. While this Commission must explain that the complaint involves situations we have no power to address, it does its best to refer the complainants to other resources that can be of help to them.

ⁱ This report was formally accepted by the members of the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission on a unanimous vote of all Commissioners present at its February 14, 2024 meeting.