



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA
SEPTEMBER 17, 2025 AT 5:00 PM
HJEMKOMST CENTER AUDITORIUM - 202 1ST AVE N.**

Disclaimer: Voting requirements may be subject to changes in the law, parliamentary procedural matters, or other unforeseen issues. The City Attorney provides opinion on questions of voting requirements by the Moorhead City Code, Minnesota State Statutes, and parliamentary procedure.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Land Acknowledgement
 - A. *We, the Moorhead Human Rights Commission, collectively and with gratitude, acknowledge the sacred land the City of Moorhead is built upon. We acknowledge the people who have resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Dakota, Ojibwe, Metis and all Indigenous Communities permeates this land. The contribution of the Indigenous people shall not be forgotten nor will the success that is achieved by the People of the land. We will continue to educate, advocate, honor and unite for Indigenous people of this land.*
3. Approval of Minutes
 - A. August 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes
4. Guest Speaker
 - A. Brandon Baity, Executive Director — Indigenous Association
5. Community Partners
6. Citizens To Be Heard
7. Law Enforcement Update
8. Regular Business
9. Subcommittee Reports
 - A. Education and Outreach Committee
 - B. Events
 - C. Awards
10. Reports/Announcements/Upcoming Events
11. New Business
 - A. Human Rights Awards
Voting Requirements:

B. Future of the Human Rights Commission
Voting Requirements:

12. Adjourn

Upon request, accommodations for individuals with disabilities, language barriers, or other needs to allow participation in city meetings will be provided. To arrange assistance, call the City Clerk office at 218.299.5166 (voice) or 711 (TDD/TTY). Visit our website at www.moorheadmn.gov



**MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
HJEMKOMST CENTER AUDITORIUM - 202 1ST AVE N.
August 20, 2025 - 5:00 PM**

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

2. Land Acknowledgement

3. Approval of Minutes

A. May 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve made by AnnaPoorna Rajesh and seconded by Jennifer Aranda.
For 5: Evett Ellis, AnnaPoorna Rajesh, Siham Amedy, Jennifer Aranda, Sebastian McDougall
Against 0: None
Abstain/Recuse 0: None
Motion Passed

4. Guest Speaker

A. Karla Hernandez - Executive Director, CASA

Karla presented to the Commission and reported on what C.A.S.A (Cultura, Amigos, Salud, Y Ambiente) does for the community and how they are dedicated to advancing the well-being of Latino and underserved communities through culturally relevant programming, advocacy, and engagement.

B. Michael Burson, Welcome Week and Inclusive Moorhead

Michael Burson presented and provided information to the Commission on Inclusive Moorhead and Welcome Week. Michael reported that Sanford is partnering with Inclusive Moorhead. Michael provided the commission on what Inclusive Moorhead does and how they engage the community by hosting events.

5. Community Partners

6. Citizens To Be Heard

7. Law Enforcement Update

Officer John Laddie Bata provided the commission with an update of events that the Moorhead Police Department have attended and put on, such as Safe City Nights.

8. Regular Business

9. Subcommittee Reports

10. Reports/Announcements/Upcoming Events

11. New Business

Commissioner Aranda requested to have on next months agenda a discussion on the

purpose of the Human Rights Commission.

12. Adjourn



MOORHEAD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR 2025 HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

The Moorhead Human Rights Commission (MHRC) is seeking nominations for the Moorhead Human Rights Award. The awards honor individuals and/or organizations serving the Moorhead area for making outstanding contributions to protecting and promoting human rights in our community. The Commission has established the following categories to nominate individuals or organizations in the area of human rights:

- Workplace
- Education
- Civic/Community
- Non-profit
- Youth

Nominees should have established integrity, creativity and commitment to principles and exhibit courage and perseverance in the area of human rights. Current members of the Moorhead Human Rights Commission are not eligible. Please use the following criteria as guidelines in recommending the nominee(s):

- Designed and initiated programs to promote education, housing, transportation and other opportunities, and protect human rights in our community.
- Personal risk taken.
- Promoted educational equality.
- Portrayal of human rights values and principles in personal life or professional practices.

Human Rights are the inherent rights that belong to each and every person. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, some fundamental rights include the right to equality and freedom from discrimination, freedom of thought and religion, the right to education and work, and the right to participate in the cultural life of the community. Understanding and protecting each person's human rights is essential to the establishment of justice, peace and happiness in the world.

The recognition for award recipients will be December 8, 2025. ***If you know of anyone who should be considered for a human rights award, please tell us about them!*** We know there are many individuals in our community working to promote the rights of Moorhead citizens by example and deeds. This is an opportunity to bring attention to this good work. I have attached a nomination form for your use.

Please forward your recommendation to us by November 4, 2025, in order that the Commission may review the nominations and plan the event. Feel free to copy and distribute the nomination form to other persons you know who might also be aware of candidates.

Sincerely,

–Jennifer Cannon, Chair
Moorhead Human Rights Commission



HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Workplace

*Best Practice work setting/business

Education

*private/public-
Pre-school-12 & colleges

Civic/Community

*police/fire/citizens/political

Non-Profit

*group/individual/churches

Youth

*individual under 18

Current members of the Moorhead Human Rights Commission are not eligible to be nominated. Please use the following criteria as guidelines in recommending the nominee(s):

- **Designed and initiated programs to promote education, housing, transportation and other opportunities, and protect human rights in our community.**
- **Personal risk taken.**
- **Promoted educational equality.**
- **Portrayal of human rights values and principles in personal life or professional practices.**

Nomination forms from multiple individuals recommending the nominee are encouraged.

Nominee:

Phone:

Email:

Nominator:

Phone:

Email:

How do you know the nominee?

Tell us about how the nominee's work/volunteerism advances human rights in Moorhead?

Does this person/organization know they are being nominated?

Y

N

Submitted by:

Name:

Signature:

Please return by November 4, 2025, to:

MOORHEAD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

City of Moorhead

403 Center Ave

Moorhead, MN 56560

(218) 299-5375

contactmhrc@ci.moorhead.mn.us

RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE
OF THE MOORHEAD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

1. Recitals

1.1 Commission: The Moorhead Human Rights Commission, hereinafter referred to as “Commission”, was duly established by Ordinance No. 89-19, passed September 11, 1989, and effective October 25, 1989.

1.2 Purpose: The purpose of the Commission is to secure for all persons, whether resident or visitor, equal opportunity in education, employment, housing, public accommodations, and public services and full participation for all Moorhead citizens in the affairs of this community.

1.3 Duties and Responsibilities:

- A) Fair Housing Event: The Commission will conduct an annual fair housing event or activity.
- B) Human Rights Recognitions: The Commission will annually recognize individuals, businesses, and groups for their contribution to furthering human rights in the community.
- C) Advice and Recommendations: The Commission will advise the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager on human rights issues and recommend to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager the adoption of such specific policies or actions as are needed to provide for full and equal opportunity in the community.
- D) Reporting: The Commission will develop and follow an annual plan, as approved by the City Manager, Mayor, and City Council. The annual plan will be submitted to the Mayor and City Council no later than November 15. After the end of each year, the Commission will write and submit a report of its activities to the City Manager, Mayor, City Council. The annual report will be submitted no later than March 15. The report will describe educational and other community activities of the Commission; the number of Commission meetings held, together with the names of those in attendance; the activities of Commission committees; and such other information as the Commission may deem appropriate.

The Commission is encouraged to develop additional activities around current or emerging human rights matters.

2. PARTICIPATION

2.1 Training: Appointees to the Human Rights Commission will be required to participate in training conducted by the City of Moorhead that includes orientation on the Commission’s Rules of Practice, MN Data Practices, Open Meeting Law, and

appropriate use of social media/email related to service on a city-sponsored board/commission. Additional training that may be offered by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights is encouraged.

2.2 Appointment: The Commission will consist of seven (7) members.

- 4 members will be appointed at-large by Council members from each ward
- 2 members will be appointed at-large by the Mayor
- 1 member will be appointed from the City Council

The City of Moorhead's policies for appointments to citizens advisory groups will govern the Commission. Mayor and City Council should strive for membership diversity by appointing 1 student member 12-18 years of age, 3 members representative of marginalized populations and others which have been historically discriminated against; of these 3 members, 2 should be representative of separate populations.

2.3 Compensation: Members of the Commission will serve without compensation. The City of Moorhead will formally recognize the volunteer service of Commission members.

2.4 Terms: Four members appointed in 2017 will be appointed on a staggered basis; two members for a term of three years ending January 31, 2021 and two members for a term of two years ending January 21, 2020. Thereafter, future members of the Commission will be appointed for a term of three years. A member of the Commission serves until the member's successor is appointed and qualifies. A member of the Commission may not serve more than two full terms, whether that full term is three years or, in the case of the four members appointed in 2017, two years. Any member appointed to complete a partial term will be eligible thereafter for appointment for two additional full three-year terms.

2.5 Attendance: Attendance at Commission meetings is important to allow for an effective Commission. Members who miss three consecutive regular scheduled meetings or in excess of one-third of the regular scheduled meetings of the Commission in one year may be asked to resign. If the member is asked to resign but does not comply, the Commission may recommend the removal of the member for the consideration of the City Council in accordance with its policies on removal for citizens advisory groups.

3. OFFICERS AND STAFF ROLES

3.1 Chair: A Chair will be elected by the Commission at its annual meeting in February. The Chair will preside and maintain order at all Commission meetings in accordance with Rule 5.4 and will make such reports as required by law and as may be deemed

necessary by the Commission to the Mayor and City Council. The Chair will have the authority to appoint committees and such other authority as may be granted by the Commission.

- 3.2 Vice-Chair: The Vice-Chair will be elected by the Commission at its annual meeting in February. The Vice-Chair will fulfill the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair, including the calling of Commission meetings, and assist the Chair with administrative duties.
- 3.3 Secretary: The Secretary will be a staff liaison responsible for the minutes of all meetings of the Commission and such reports at Commission meetings as may be deemed necessary or may be required of the Secretary and performing such other duties as are incidental to the Secretary's office or as are required of the Secretary by members of the Commission.
- 3.4 Liaisons: The Moorhead Human Rights Commission may authorize a Commissioner or staff to act as a permanent or temporary liaison with private and public organizations. The Liaison can explain the purpose and activities of the Commission, but cannot commit the Commission to any action without first receiving authorization from the Commission.
- 3.5 Staff: The City of Moorhead may designate staff to assist the Commission with facilitating meetings and carrying out the work of the HRC, including but not limited to agendas, meeting minutes, and meeting coordination.

4. MEDIA RELATIONS

- 4.1 Media Relations: The policy of the Moorhead Human Rights Commission is to consistently provide reliable information about its activities. While the Commission recognizes the right of every Commissioner to address the media, some guidelines are needed to ensure that the views of the Commission as a whole, or the views of a body of the Commission, are presented clearly and uniformly.
- 4.2 Commission Chair: The chair is the authorized representative to speak to the media on behalf of the Commission. Chairs of Committees may speak to the media on behalf of their Committees, but not on behalf of the Commission as a whole. Commissioners who speak to the media as a member of the Human Rights Commission should qualify their remarks as representing their own views and not those of the Commission unless they have prior authorization from the Commission or committee.
- 4.3 Staff: Staff is authorized to speak to the media, but should direct requests for interviews to the Commission Chair or the most knowledgeable source on the subject.

5. COMMITTEES

- 5.1 Executive Committee: The Commission may appoint an Executive Committee comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and one member at-large. The Executive Committee may assist the Commission in reviewing, organizing, scheduling, and conducting its business and affairs. The Executive Committee may recommend new and innovative programs and coordinate with ongoing community efforts aimed at furthering human rights.
- 5.3 Other Committees: The Chair, with the approval of the Commission, may appoint additional ad-hoc or standing committees as are needed to carry out the responsibilities of the Commission.

6. MEETINGS

- 6.1 Regular Meetings: A regular meeting schedule will be determined and voted upon annually by the Human Rights Commission. Such meetings and notice thereof will comply with applicable law (three days posted notice). Meeting schedules will be posted on the City of Moorhead website.
- 6.2 Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called by the Chair with notice to all Commission members. The Chair must call a special meeting at the request of two Commission members. Such meetings and notice thereof will comply with applicable law (three days posted notice).
- 6.3 Emergency Meetings: Emergency meetings may be called by the Chair with notice to all Commission members. Such meetings and notice thereof will comply with applicable law (three days posted notice).
- 6.4 Procedure: All business of the Commission will be conducted in an orderly and lawful manner. Persons having human rights complaints may share their concerns at Commission meetings, but will be referred to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. Human rights complaints against named individuals will not be heard at Commission meetings. Generally, Commission business will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of parliamentary Procedure except, as Robert's Rules may be in conflict with these Rules of Practice and Procedure herein, in which case, these Rules will govern.
- 6.5 Minutes: The Commission will record the minutes of all meetings. Minutes will be posted on the City of Moorhead website after approval at a subsequent meeting.

6.6 Public: All regular, special, and emergency Commission meetings, records, and minutes will be open to the public except as otherwise may be provided by applicable law including the Minnesota Data Privacy Act.

7. AMENDMENTS

These Rules of Practice and Procedure may be amended as needed by majority vote of the Commission members, upon written notice to all Commission members, provided the proposed amendment has been introduced at a previous regular meeting and provided that any such amendment complies with applicable law, including any applicable City Code or ordinance provisions, in particular, the legal requirement that any amendment, prior to taking effect, be approved by the City Council.

ORDINANCE 2017-7

AN ORDINANCE AMEND AND REENACT SECTIONS OF TITLE 1 CHAPTER 11 SECTION 1, FINDINGS, DECLARATION OF POLICY AND PURPOSES; AND TITLE 1 CHAPTER 11 SECTION 3, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MOORHEAD AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Title 1 Chapter 11 Section 1: Findings, Declaration of Policy and Purposes

1-11-1: FINDINGS, DECLARATION OF POLICY AND PURPOSES:

A. Findings: The city council finds that arbitrary and unfair discrimination against any person, whether resident or visitor, in the city adversely affects the health, welfare, peace and safety of the community, in particular, but not limited to, any discrimination because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, age, sexual orientation, and familial status. Discrimination demeans the dignity of persons, threatens the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of this city, and menaces the institutions and foundations of democracy.

B. Declaration Of Policy And Purpose: It is the public policy of the city and the purpose of this chapter:

1. To encourage all persons, whether individual or corporate, to join in establishing and preserving full and true equality among all residents and visitors in the city;
2. To provide any person having a complaint with regard to discrimination or denial of equal opportunity or treatment with the right to appear before a local commission and be heard with regard to the complaint;
3. To declare, as civil rights, the rights of all persons to equal opportunities in obtaining employment, education, housing, public accommodations, public services and credit, in particular, but not limited to, equal opportunity without regard to a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, age, sexual orientation, or familial status;
4. To seek an end to any arbitrary and unfair discriminatory practices existing in the city with regard to education, employment, housing, public accommodations, public service and credit, in particular, but not limited to, any discriminatory practices based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, age, sexual orientation, or familial status;
5. To protect all persons from unfounded charges of discrimination; and
6. To effectuate the foregoing policy by means of public information and education. (Ord. 2005-26, 10-3-2005)

SECTION 2. Title 1 Chapter 11 Section 3: Human Rights Commission

A. Establishment: There is hereby established a human rights commission for the city of Moorhead.

B. Purpose: The purpose of the commission is to secure for all persons, whether residents or visitors, equal opportunity in education, employment, housing, public accommodations, and public services, and full participation for all Moorhead citizens in the affairs of this community.

C. Composition, Appointment, Removal And Compensation:

1. The commission shall be comprised of representation from significant minority populations within the community as well as various institutional and community groups.

2. The commission shall consist of seven (7) members; 4 members shall be appointed at-large by city council members from each ward; 2 members shall be appointed by the Mayor; and one city council member designated by the mayor, in accordance with the city's policies for appointments and removal for citizen advisory groups. Mayor and City Council should strive for membership diversity by appointing 1 student member 12-18 years of age, 3 members representative of marginalized populations and others which have been historically discriminated against; of these 3 members, 2 should be representative of separate populations.

3. Members of the commission shall serve without compensation.

D. Terms Of Members, Vacancies: The seven (7) members of the commission will be appointed for a term of three (3) years. A member of the commission serves until the member's successor is appointed and qualifies. A member of the commission may not serve more than two (2) full three (3) year terms. Any member appointed to complete a partial term will be eligible thereafter for appointment to two (2) additional full three (3) year terms.

E. Meetings, Officers, And Annual Report:

1. The commission shall meet upon a regular schedule adopted by it, and may meet additionally at the call of its chair or any two (2) members.

2. The commission shall, at its annual meeting in February, elect a chair and vice chair.

3. The commission shall make a regular report of its activities to the mayor and the council each year, and shall submit such report in writing annually before April 1. The report shall include a listing of all speaking engagements and other educational activities of the commission; the number of commission meetings held, together with the names of those in attendance; the activities of commission subcommittees; and such other information as the commission may deem appropriate.

F. Commission Duties And Responsibilities:

1. The commission shall foster, through education and public information, general awareness and understanding of human rights issues and laws in the community.

2. The commission shall enlist the cooperation of the agencies, organizations, and individuals in the community, and shall cooperate with the human and civil rights agencies of other communities in an active program directed to create equal opportunities and equal rights for all persons, in particular, but not limited to, equal opportunities and equal rights for persons regardless of their race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, age, sexual orientation, or familial status.

3. The commission shall annually recognize individuals and groups for their contribution to furthering human rights in the community.

4. The commission shall advise the mayor, city council, and city manager on human relations and civil rights issues and recommend to the mayor, city council and city manager the adoption of such specific policies or actions as are needed to provide for full equal opportunity in the community. Upon request, the commission may provide similar such advice and recommendations to the board of education and superintendent of Independent School District 152.

5. The commission shall call such meetings, hearings and conferences as may be needed to effectuate the purposes and policies of this chapter.

6. The commission shall govern its own affairs and adopt reasonable rules of practice and procedures, provided, that any such rules and any amendments thereto, prior to taking effect, shall be approved by the city council.

7. The commission shall not seek to impose penalties nor shall any penalties be imposed by the city under this chapter.

8. The commission shall inform any persons seeking to resolve their disputes through the commission of their rights to pursue a claim through the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.

THIS ORDINANCE shall take effect upon publication in accordance with the Moorhead City Charter.

PASSED: <Meeting_Date> by the City Council of the City of Moorhead.

First Reading: June 12, 2017

Second reading: July 10, 2017

Title and Summary:



Human Rights Commissions Research Report

October 22, 2015

Prepared by:

Tia Braseth
City of Moorhead HRC Staff Liaison
Community Development Program Administrator

Contents

Introduction 3

Summary of Findings..... 3

Analysis 3

Human Rights Commissions: List of Activities 6

Human Rights Commissions Questionnaire: Questions & Responses..... 7

Introduction

The purpose of this research task was to explore the activity of other human rights commissions in Minnesota communities and in the adjacent city of Fargo, North Dakota. The primary goal was to learn about missions, goals, history, activities, and roles. A questionnaire was developed and a total of 14 commissions were invited to participate: 10 communities partook (Bloomington, Duluth, Eden Prairie, Edina, Mankato, Owatonna, Richfield, St. Cloud, St. Louis Park, and Fargo); four did not (Brooklyn Park, Rochester, Roseville, and Winona).

Summary of Findings

Most of the commissions interviewed were established in the late sixties following the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the beginning, civil rights were a central focus for commissions. During that time, many of the commissions also mitigated human rights complaints locally. Over time, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR), established in 1967 as “neutral state agency that investigates charges of illegal discrimination¹”, has taken on a greater role in formal complaint adjudication and has become the agency to which commissions usually refer people to file a complaint. Today, through education and outreach, commissions focus on current issues relevant to their communities, including bullying, human trafficking, genocide, and those related to immigration, people of color, fair housing, diversity, inclusivity, disabilities, and the LGBTQ community. All of the commission representatives interviewed thought that their commissions were still as relevant today as when they started and that they were still one of the best vehicles for addressing human rights in their communities. Many were eager to discuss their collaborative partnerships and share some of their most important activities and services.

Analysis

Role in the Community –*Human rights commissions are a resource for the community and an arm of the City.* The commissions reported a prior focus on mediating and investigating complaints, but now other resources are more readily available (i.e., internet, free legal advice or pro-bono legal services, MDHR). With population on the rise and ever-changing demographics, commissions today primarily focus on education, training, and awareness, particularly for kids. Though some still mediate or hear complaints on a local level, it is not their primary purpose. Most commissions’ time is spent on educational activities, events, and partnerships.

Activities & Services –*There is a significant need for awareness education and leadership within many communities.* The commissions have developed a strong capacity to respond through collaborative partnerships (i.e., other commissions, cities, departments, groups, businesses, and organizations). All of the commissions interviewed host and attend a variety of educational events. Though activities and services vary, usually due to resource availability, focus is similar across the commissions. Activities are varied and related to issues relevant to the communities (See “Human Rights Commissions: List of Activities”).

Human Rights Complaints –*Human rights commissions are hearing fewer direct human rights complaints and referring people to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR).* A majority of the commissions interviewed reported that they were seeing less human rights complaints from citizens today than when they started. This shift is attributed to greater awareness and accessibility to formal human rights agencies like the MDHR because much of the authority has transferred to the MDHR.

¹ Minnesota Department of Human Rights (2015), retrieved from www.mn.gov/mdhr/.
Human Rights Commission Research Report

Some commissions reported getting between zero and two complaints per year, a significant decrease from the 1980s and 1990s when there were 60 to 70 per year. Though most people are referred to the MDHR to file a complaint, where they have up to one year from the date the discrimination occurs to file (or the ND Dept. of Labor and Human Rights and the ND Human Rights Commission in Fargo's case), complaints are still heard locally by some commissions:

- Bloomington helps to determine whether or not a complaint should be filed with MDHR, because not all discrimination is illegal. In this case, the commission still informs the public of their lack of authority and the role of the MDHR and it still has trained mediators on its commission.
- Eden Prairie and St. Louis Park partner with their local police departments, who share incident reports related to bias crimes and hate crimes with the commissions. Eden Prairie's commission receives information on the crimes only while the PD withholds the victim's identities. The commission then takes action on awareness and education related to the issue. St. Louis Park's commission receives reports from its local PD and sends a letter to the person making the complaint, letting them know the commission is there to hear them and that their complaint may be filed with the MDHR.
- The St. Cloud Regional HRC addresses complaints on a local level because the MDHR provides and pays for a regional enforcement officer who attends all St. Cloud commission meetings and has an office at City Hall. Previously, there was a Human Rights Office in St. Cloud that had been 100% funded by the city. This Human Rights Office originated as a community response to tension between whites and Somalis (and other people of color) in St. Cloud.
- Some commissions hear complaints during a regular meeting and follow up with a subcommittee meeting.

Training –*With human rights commissions having generally small budgets, the trend is no formal training.* The most common training that the commissions reported was provided by the City Attorney and/or the City Manager on an annual basis. Training focused on data practices, open meeting laws, rules and legal ramifications from a City perspective, conducting a meeting, and the roles of commissioners. The commission with the largest budget sends their commissioners to a single day training at a local university about every two to three years. Most inform and encourage their commissioners to attend webinars, workshops, conferences, etc. Some commission staff liaisons perform new member training on bylaws, activities, and roles and sometimes attend training on specific issues or topics. One commission describes self-training because they choose to work with people who are well educated, experienced, and good at what they do, which causes training to naturally happen during meetings.

City Staff & Annual Budgets –*City staff support human rights commissions and budgets are generally small.* City staff supports all of the commissions interviewed. Depending on budgets and the job position of the staff liaison, hours that city staff worked on human rights commission-related tasks varied from 1 hour per month to 20 hours per week. On average, the staff liaison spent about 1-2 hours per week on HRC related work. In some cases where the hours were higher, the staff liaison explained that their job positions were already doing a lot of work related to human rights. Those were typically people in positions related to human resources/services or community services coordinator. Staff liaisons came from a variety of departments, including the police department, administration (i.e., city clerk), retired Chief of Police, human services, and community services. The budgets of those interviewed ranged from \$0 to \$55,400; most of the budgets reported were between \$500 and \$3,000.

Appointments/Membership – *HRC appointments are made by the Mayor and/or City Council, and all appointments are ratified by their city council; membership composition is nonspecific although some communities include youth designation.* Two commissions interviewed suggested that the commissions be comprised of people from various backgrounds (i.e., gender, various economic levels, racial and ethnic minorities, various age groups including seniors and students, and property owners and tenants). Only one commission interviewed makes appointments based on ward/district distinctions.

Human Rights Commissions: List of Activities

- Diversity Day with the school district
- Prominent speakers/performers (i.e., Mayhem Poets, Jane Elliott of the Blue Eyes-Brown Eyes exercise, Holocaust survivors, Dred Scott's great-great-granddaughter)
- Exhibits (i.e., Holocaust exhibit, Treks in the Snow Muslim exhibit, underground railroad, freedom writers, homelessness, Black History Month quilts)
- Naturalization Ceremony (partner with US District Courts)
- Thurgood Marshall curriculum with kids/other curriculums
- LGBTQ pride month proclamation
- Anti-bullying event (provide multi-cultural crayons and booklet at event)(Pacer partnership)
- Showings/Movies/Pre-screen/Film series (i.e., Bully movie, partner with public television)
- Print marketing documents in top 5 languages of the area
- Attend annual Easter egg hunt (booth/offer jelly beans that taste different than what they look)
- Giveaways while having a presence at an event
- Memorial unveilings
- Go to events rather than hold event
- Attend Indigenous Commission meeting/attend other commissions meetings
- Community organizing
- Educating leadership and decision makers
- Focus on Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, etc.)
- City Council held town halls
- Forums/mini-forums throughout the year with specific topics/panel discussions
- 5k co-sponsor
- Human rights awards (categories: youth, individual, non-profit, business)/Outstanding Citizen
- Provide welcome packet for new residents with important human rights information
- Healing Minnesota Stories (Native American artwork concerns at the State Capitol)
- MLK event/MLK breakfast with speaker
- Community Intersections Programs
- Sponsor pow wow
- Sponsor fair housing projects/partner with fair housing center/tenant-landlord issues
- Working with schools to provide hot lunches for all students regardless of income
- Diversity training/partner with businesses to post human rights information at their business
- LGBTQ training at K-12 schools to reduce discrimination (students, staff, faculty)
- Monthly newsletter/email updates
- National Night Out (Night to Unite)
- Welcoming Week for New Americans
- Presence at community events to market availability
- Ice Cream Social
- Annual theme/focus
- Create PSA with City's communication group
- Resource library that can be checked out (topics include Black Americans, Civil Rights, Cultural Diversity, Disabilities, Hispanic Americans, Japanese Americans, Native Americans, Women)

For more information on individual activities, please see the "Human Rights Commissions Questionnaire: Questions & Responses".

Human Rights Commissions Questionnaire: Questions & Responses

Including Moorhead, the cities that were contacted are listed in the chart below, includes population:

City	Responded	Population (2010 Census)
Bloomington, MN	X	82,893
Brooklyn Park, MN		75,781
Duluth, MN	X	86,265
Eden Prairie, MN	X	60,797
Edina, MN	X	47,941
Fargo, ND	X	105,549 (208,777 MSA)
Mankato, MN	City Council acts as HRC	39,309
Moorhead, MN	n/a	38,065 (208,777 MSA)
Owatonna, MN	X	25,599
Richfield, MN	X	35,228
Rochester, MN		106,769
Roseville, MN		33,660
St. Cloud, MN	X	65,842
St. Louis Park, MN	X	45,250
Winona, MN		27,592

1. What year was your commission established? Includes meeting times.

City	Year	Established By	Monthly Meeting Time
Bloomington, MN	1968	City Council	Third Mondays @ 5:30 pm
Duluth, MN	1995	Mayor & City Council	Second Wednesdays @ 5:00 pm
Eden Prairie, MN	1968	City Council	Second Thursdays @ 7:00 pm
Edina, MN	1970	Mayor & City Council	Fourth Tuesdays @ 7:00 pm
Fargo, ND	2000	Mayor & City Commission	Third Thursdays @ 12:00 pm
Moorhead, MN	1990	Mayor & City Council	Second Thursdays @ 6:00 pm
Owatonna, MN	2000	Mayor & City Council	Second Tuesdays @ 5:30 pm
Richfield, MN	1968	City Council	First Tuesdays @ 6:30 pm
Rochester, MN	1998	Board of Commissioners	Third Thursdays @ 7:00 pm
Roseville, MN	2012	City Council	Third Wednesdays @ 6:00 pm
St. Cloud, MN	2010	Mayor & City Council	Unknown
St. Louis Park, MN	1968	City Council	Third Tuesdays @ 7:00 pm

2. If possible, can you speak to any changes in your community which makes the commission more or less relevant today than when it began?

City	Response Summarized
Bloomington, MN	In the beginning (1968), received complaints formally and performed investigations. Later, MN Dept. of Human Rights (MDHR) took on that role. Some trained mediators are still on the commission, but the commission only receives 1 to 2 complaints a year now versus the 60-70 per year that were received in the 1980s and 1990s. People may still pursue complaints at a local level and appreciate that option, but are still referred to MDHR. Today focus is primarily on education, training, and awareness.
Duluth, MN	In the beginning (1995), the commission had an education and advisory role. Later, enforcement powers were added. In 2003, there was a full time HRC officer, PT investigator, and 2 offices until 2008 when the budget was cut. Now there is no investigator or offices, but there are 5-6 strong commissioners today. Commission is diverse and immersed in culture and community.
Eden Prairie, MN	In the beginning (1968), the focus was on people with disabilities, halfway houses, and affordable housing. It was a homogenous community for a long time, but the commission has more relevance now with changing demographics.
Edina, MN	The commission is still very relevant, though there have been some changes. The current focus is on diversity, inclusivity, and developing a welcoming community.
Fargo, ND	In the beginning (2000), the focus was more on fair housing and civil rights. Now it is on current issues and education and awareness surrounding those issues.
Owatonna, MN	Population is becoming more diverse each year.
Richfield, MN	Unsure, new staff liaison.
St. Cloud, MN	There was a local HRC initially, but the interfaith community wanted a regional HRC and for it to have enforcement authority. Today, St. Cloud is part of the St. Cloud Regional HRC and an enforcement officer has been assigned by the MDHR. Focus is still education and outreach in various ways, but compliance is now localized.
St. Louis Park, MN	Population is increasing and becoming more diverse each year. The commission takes on issues that are relevant as they occur and there have been no major changes in the past 6 years.

3. Recognizing your community’s current characteristics/demographics, is your commission the best vehicle for addressing human rights in your community?

City	Response Summarized
Bloomington, MN	Absolutely, but the commission does not work alone. It works in partnership with many other organizations. It also never tackles an issue alone. The commission is a great starting point for City involvement if someone wants them involved. The City Council refers issues or proclamations to the commission. The commission is an advisory to the Council and develops recommendations to the Council on issues. The Council likes having an avenue for issues to be addressed and the HRC does the research. The commission is not a decision making body, everything goes to the City Council for approval. It is a solid process. The hardest part is making people understand that the HRC is an arm of the City and not a standalone non-profit. The HRC really has to flesh things out before moving forward, they cannot just take a stance on something. The HRC does not have to be the expert, but can play a role by being a partner, getting the Mayor to events, get something in the local paper, or do a story on something. The HRC is a resource for community.
Duluth, MN	The commission is a partner in addressing human rights in the community. Work with community groups to address human rights issues.
Eden Prairie, MN	Technically, we are the vehicle. When bias crimes occur, either the police or victims contact the HRC and the commission listens. The commission helps people through the process, but has no “legal teeth”. They will assist with language barriers and through the legal process, for example. They will listen and help bring reconciliations, providing a space for victims to be processed and heard.
Edina, MN	School district does a good job with various community groups.
Fargo, ND	Made a few steps in that direction, but still have a long way to go especially with education, particular with New American community. A lot of new programs geared towards New Americans, feeling a lot of racial bias, much like Native Americans. Education is key.
Owatonna, MN	Yes, our committee is made up of people from diverse background with passions for human rights.
Richfield, MN	It is one option, probably the best.
St. Cloud, MN	One of the more important ones, yes. Human rights and violations, yes. Forums throughout the year. Only group that advocates for enforcement of human rights.
St. Louis Park, MN	Yes, it is one of the best vehicles. The commission collaborates quite a bit with other city organizations in general, especially on whichever issue they are honing in on that year. Overall as a City, SLP is progressive in wanting to tackle issues head on.

4. What are some important activities/services your commission performs?

City	Response Summarized
Bloomington, MN	<p>Diversity day with school district and high level speakers (usually for kids). Some of the high level speakers/performers have included the Mayhem Poets, Jane Elliott of the Blue Eyes –Brown Eyes exercise, Holocaust survivors (including Judith Meisel from CA) with exhibit of Holocaust camps for kids to see what it was like (also includes a 5k run), Lynne Jackson, Dred Scott’s great-great granddaughter (Dred Scott Decision 1857) for field dedication including a reenactment, and attorneys from various backgrounds to talk to kids. Activities/services include partnership with US district courts (i.e., Thurgood Marshall, curriculum with kids, naturalization ceremony -67 different countries last year), public television communications/video, community conversations between police and ethnic groups, exhibits including Treks in the Snow (Muslim exhibit), underground railroad, freedom writers, homelessness, black history month with quilts and how they helped them escape slavery, LBGTQ pride month proclamation (exhibits are in a very public place, civic hall, theatre, gallery). Other activities include multi-cultural crayons and booklets at anti-bully event (Pacer wanted partnership), youth homelessness, trafficking, print all documents in 5 primary languages/marketing/postcards, HRC goes to the P&R Easter egg hunt and has a resource booth there (provides jelly beans that taste different than they look), celebrate different holidays in different ethnic groups. Big events are great way to access families and there are so many different people from different backgrounds at these events. Giveaways, pens, have a presence. Training with block captains. Annual focus: mental health problems this year, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) came in and did a training. HRC partners include YMCA, credit unions, grocery stores, joint community police partnership, police department, local historical society, League of Women Voters, and different ethnicity groups.</p>
Duluth, MN	<p>Used to be dysfunctional, but Council directed them to work on issues of homelessness and hunger. Only 5 or 6 commissioners now but it is strong. Would like to see those on the commission that are good at social justice in the community. Diverse commission, immersed in culture, community, and education. Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial, working with curriculum advisor of the schools and using the story of the memorial. Get teachers sharing best practices, not just school board or tax levy, bigger than that with partnering. Internal voice toward government and external voice in the community, needs to work together and be balanced. Employment, disparities for people of color and commission used to do a lot with the police, but now there is a citizen review board and they work with the police and are building trust in the community (took 5 years). No annual events hosted at this time; HRC attends other events rather than hosting them (same people show up/preaching to the choir), which helps diversify the people the HRC meets. HRC occasionally attends indigenous commission meetings, CDBG board meetings, and is trying to pull boards together to partner. Commission is looking for leaders who are people of color, that's the goal right now. Housing</p>

	<p>Access Center for landlords and tenants, used to have training, if there was a complaint, they could go to this place and doing informal mediation, but it dissolved due to budget issues. Community organization and education, partnering with others such as NAACP. Change people who have the power to make change. Education is the greatest focus; kids need to graduate to avoid poverty and homelessness. Focus on Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is everyone having the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, etc.)</p>
Eden Prairie, MN	<p>Educational activities, community cinema partnership with public television and another station, HRC pre-screens shows (i.e., anti-bullying initiative). Other focal areas include genocide, ally training for LBGTQ, ethnic business owners, accessibility and disabilities, City Council hosted town halls, annual human rights awards, 5k co-sponsor for justice for awareness/human trafficking, film series on disabilities this year, film and panel discussions on Native American heritage, systemic revamp, welcome packet for new residents with important human rights information, working on status of becoming a welcoming city/immigrants/national effort that mayors have signed, education and awareness, initiative on the art in the state capitol building (Healing Minnesota Stories –Native American concerned about incomplete and inaccurate stories that the art is telling). Human Rights Award has categories: individual, youth, non-profit, and business.</p>
Edina, MN	<p>In 2010, the Commission led the way in establishing a Domestic Partnership ordinance. Other areas of focus: Days of Remembrance about genocide, human trafficking, looking at disability act and black history month, declaring indigenous people's day (unsuccessful), Healing MN Stories regarding state capitol art -partnered with Ms. MN and Ms. America (same person).</p>
Fargo, ND	<p>MLK event, disability events, homeless coalition, LBGTQ Pride Collective and pride week, pow wow, National Night Out, Welcoming Week for New Americans, sponsor fair housing projects and training sessions with High Plains Fair Housing Center (give grant money to them)</p>
Owatonna, MN	<p>Organize the annual MLK breakfast with keynote speaker, Community Intersections Programs, participated in Blandin Ethnically Diverse Communities Program Leadership training, reviewed and revised by laws.</p>
Richfield, MN	<p>It varies according to present issues, but in last year a couple have been: human trafficking forum; diversity on City Commissions; working with schools with hot lunches for all students regardless of economic meals; tenant/landlord issues. *Outstanding Citizen Award noted on their website.</p>
St. Cloud, MN	<p>Develop partnerships with local businesses and offer diversity training (business agrees to post Human Rights information at their business), monthly newsletter, mini-forums throughout the year, offer training to reduce discrimination against the LBGTQ K-12 school community including students, staff, and faculty.</p>
St. Louis Park, MN	<p>Table at community events to market availability, promote events and activities that HRC is hosting, SLP-specific usually (e.g., ice cream social), there is a different annual focus or theme but it does not</p>

always change each year (e.g., anti-bullying campaign in high school and junior high, worked with schools and parent advisory committee, took 2 years to do and was planned that way), hosted screenings of “Bully” in high school and junior high and held a round table discussion as separate event following the film. Last year’s focus was senior citizen bullying (e.g., isolation and exclusion) and created a PSA with City's communication group. This year the focus is multi-culturalism with a coffee and cultural chats from which the HRC can determine what to do. HRC wants to provide more educational opportunities.

5. Does your commission have a forum for human rights complaints from the public? If yes, please describe your process.

City	Response Summarized
Bloomington, MN	The commission mediates complaints relating to discrimination and educates and advocates on human rights. People can file locally and utilize mediation, otherwise they are referred appropriately. Some people are given a list of attorneys. A lot of people are referred.
Brooklyn Park, MN	Has a bias complaint form online that indicates the HRC will hear bias complaints and help determine if they should be reported to the MN Department of Human Rights. Nice form, still letting people know they can be heard locally, yet still informing them about HRC’s lack of authority and the role of the MN Department of Human Rights.
Duluth, MN	In the beginning, the commission met in different parts of community to offer a platform for people to make complaints, but no one showed up. Now, there are some phone calls from time to time. They will be starting informal mediation again, mostly for landlords and tenants because volunteer attorneys are available for other things now. In the past, people that used it were usually disabled or struggled in some other aspect of their life. Issues have to be from human rights perspective to utilize mediation. They partner with non-profits, some of which HRC commissioners are board members.
Eden Prairie, MN	The Bias Crime Network is a collaborative effort between the Eden Prairie Police Department and the Human Rights and Diversity Commission. It was set up as a support network for citizens who feel they have been discriminated against or have been victims of bias crimes. When an incident is reported to the Police, the Commission is notified (names are usually anonymous) and takes action. Victims sometimes call commission, too. There are separate meetings in a subcommittee as needed to hear complaints.
Edina, MN	No, refers people to organizations or MN Dept. of Human Rights.
Fargo, ND	Yes, people are asked to go to regular meetings and a subcommittee will follow up with the person, talking to both parties. People are referenced to ND Labor Law and ND Human Rights Coalition.
Owatonna, MN	Open forum offered during regular monthly commission meeting.
Richfield, MN	A formal forum, "no". The commission meets once a month and during their meetings they make opportunity on their agenda for, "open public comment" opportunity for public to speak.
St. Cloud, MN	Enforcement officer established and paid for by MDHR. Staff works with officer. This has been a very positive change. People like having

a local office where they can log a complaint. Long ago, they had a Human Rights Office in St Cloud that had been 100% funded by the city. This Human Rights Office originated as a community response to tension between whites and Somalis (and other people of color) in St. Cloud.

St. Louis Park, MN Yes, goes through PD, bias and hate crimes through staff liaison, supervisor, and chair of commission, but there have not been that many. Typically send a letter to the person who filed a complaint/report, letting them know that the HRC is there to help but they forward to MNHRC, once or twice that they have had to do that.

6. What type of training does your commission receive and at what frequency?

City	Response Summarized
Bloomington, MN	Single day training at Hamline University, refresher every 2-3 years after first time taking it.
Duluth, MN	No, not at this time. Going to community organizing training. Training almost comes to the meetings, self-training because you choose and work with people who are good at what they do essentially.
Eden Prairie, MN	Annual orientation with City Manager on rules and legal ramifications from city perspective, human rights specific perspective, couple of speakers come in annually (deaf, blind -incorporate into meeting).
Edina, MN	New member orientation, staff meets with new members along with chair, plans and what they are working on and anything specific in bylaws.
Fargo, ND	Staff person goes to some of the training (e.g., fair housing, LBGT), city mandated training (i.e., discrimination) not frequent.
Owatonna, MN	This year the commission received training on Data Practices and Open Meeting Law Requirements from City Attorney. Annually, commissioners are encouraged to attend workshops or conferences offered within the state.
Richfield, MN	No training other than once a year on their roles and how to conduct a meeting presented by the City Attorney.
St. Cloud, MN	No formal training, whatever they can get from state staff.
St. Louis Park, MN	No formal training, new members can sit down with staff liaison to bring them up to speed with what commission is doing, small orientation packet (bylaws, HRC brochure). Recently, the U of M had an all-day forum with speakers and round table discussions. Things like that are always provided to commissioners via email.

7. Is your commission supported by City Staff? Please estimate the number of hours per week.

City	Response Summarized
Bloomington, MN	Yes, 15% time and 15% admin assistant (minutes, packets, point of contact). Human services staff, so a lot of time goes into both, sometimes shared. Manager of HS Division, liaison to HRC.
Brooklyn Park, MN	Yes
Duluth, MN	Yes, EO, HRC officer, ADA coordinator, fair housing agency partner, victim witness liaison for city attorney, secretary for police citizen review board, paid staff for HRC and commission of disabilities. Liaison “wears a lot of different hats”, he is a retired Chief of Police.

Eden Prairie, MN	Yes, a lot of what she works on is human rights but blurred, average 6-8 hours a week. Community Services Coordinator.
Edina, MN	Yes, 8-10 hours plus per week.
Fargo, ND	Yes, police and community development planning staff, seasonal anywhere from 5-20 hours a week.
Mankato, MN	City Council acts in place of a Human Rights Commission
Owatonna, MN	Yes, 2 hours a week.
Richfield, MN	Yes; approx. 1-2 hours a month.
St. Cloud, MN	State staff, local MDHR enforcement officer at all meetings.
St. Louis Park, MN	Staffed out of PD, 1-3 hours a week. Community Liaison through the PD.

8. What is your commission's annual budget?

City	Budget
Bloomington, MN	\$55,400
Duluth, MN	No budget, partner with people who do.
Eden Prairie, MN	No budget, partner with people who do.
Edina, MN	\$2,500
Fargo, ND	\$10,000 admin. \$5,000 from social service fund for grants
Moorhead, MN	\$2,000 + Staff Services
Owatonna, MN	\$2,700
Richfield, MN	\$500
St. Cloud, MN	\$3,000
St. Louis Park, MN	Comes out of community outreach budget, varies year to year, PD budgeted

9. Appointments & Membership Composition

City	Appointment	Geographic	Member#	Composition
Bloomington, MN	Council appointed		9	Includes 2 youth
Brooklyn Park, MN	1 from each district, 6 at large	X	9	Nonspecific
Duluth, MN	Mayor recommendation, council approval		15	Nonspecific
Eden Prairie, MN	Council appointed		5-7	Nonspecific
Edina, MN	By mayor with majority council consent		9	Includes 2 students
Fargo, ND	Mayor nominates, city commission appoints		9	Nonspecific; should represent a broad range of racial, religious, ethnic, social, economic, political and professional groups
Moorhead, MN	City appointment policy; mayor and	X	11	Specific; 1 member from each ward, 6 at large, 1

	council appoint		city council member, 4 must represent different minority populations and other groups historically discriminated against (3 of the 4 must be different from each other)
Owatonna, MN	Mayor appoints with approval of city council	7	Nonspecific; should reflect a broad cross section of the ethnic, cultural, and other diversity of the community; should include, but are not limited to, both sexes, various economic levels, racial and ethnic minorities, various age groups including senior citizens and students, and both property owners and tenants.
Richfield, MN	Council appointed	13	Includes 2 youth, 2 non-residents
Roseville, MN	Council appointed	7	Includes 1 youth
St. Louis Park, MN	Council appointed	13	Includes 2 students, 1 from public school (advisory/liaison role)

Human Rights Commissions in Minnesota (2025 Snapshot)

Key Takeaways

- Most MN commissions are advisory & educational – they host events, advise City Council, and connect residents with resources.
- Formal investigations are handled by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR). Only Minneapolis & St. Paul have local investigative power.
- Several cities have restructured their commissions into broader equity & inclusion task forces.

Status by City

Active Commissions

- Bloomington – Human Rights Commission (monthly meetings, 2025 Work Plan).
- Brooklyn Park – Human Rights Commission (meets monthly; accepts bias complaints, refers to MDHR).
- Duluth – Human Rights Commission (supported by City Human Rights Officer).
- Moorhead – Human Rights Commission (meets 3rd Wed; staffed by City liaison).
- Owatonna – Human Rights Commission (monthly meetings; events like MLK breakfast).
- Richfield – Human Rights Commission (programs like essay contest, tenant/landlord issues).
- St. Cloud – Regional Human Rights Commission (works with MDHR enforcement officer).
- St. Louis Park – Human Rights Commission (advises City Council, education campaigns).
- Winona – Human Rights Commission (11 members; monthly meetings, intake form online).

Recently Restructured

- Eden Prairie – Now the Human Rights & Diversity Task Force (since Jan 2025).
- Edina – Now the Race & Equity Task Force (since Jan 2025).
- Roseville – Renamed the Equity & Inclusion Commission (2024–25 transition).

Not City-Led

- Mankato – No city HRC; MDHR partners with Greater Mankato Diversity Council.
- Rochester – No city HRC; covered by the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission (since 1998).

Common Activities Across Cities

- Education & Awareness: MLK events, film screenings, cultural exhibits, school partnerships.
- Community Engagement: Town halls, anti-bullying campaigns, naturalization ceremonies, equity trainings.
- Advisory Role: Recommend policy changes, draft proclamations, advise City Council.
- Complaint Referral: Provide local listening space, then connect residents to MDHR for official cases.

Sources

- Bloomington HRC – City of Bloomington official site.
- Brooklyn Park HRC – City of Brooklyn Park official site.
- Duluth HRC – City of Duluth official site.
- Eden Prairie – Human Rights & Diversity Task Force (2025 restructuring).
- Edina – Race & Equity Task Force (2025 restructuring).
- Mankato – Minnesota Dept. of Human Rights directory; Greater Mankato Diversity Council.
- Moorhead HRC – City of Moorhead official site.
- Owatonna HRC – City of Owatonna official site.
- Richfield HRC – City of Richfield official site.
- Rochester – Olmsted County HRC official site.
- Roseville – Equity & Inclusion Commission (ordinance & city site).
- St. Cloud – Regional Human Rights Commission (MDHR + City of St. Cloud).
- St. Louis Park HRC – City of St. Louis Park official site.
- Winona HRC – City of Winona official site.
- Minnesota Department of Human Rights – Human Rights Commissions directory.