

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

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CITY OF AMES MUNICIPAL CODE, CHAPTER 14

The purpose of this chapter is to implement the provision of the Iowa Civil Rights Act and to further provide for the general welfare of persons in the City of Ames, Iowa, by prohibiting certain discriminatory practices, and to establish a commission for the investigation of complaints of discrimination; and, to undertake projects of education to prevent discrimination; and, to establish procedures for the conciliation of such complaints; and to enforce the provisions hereof.

At an August 2018 city council workshop, council members directed the AHRC to not adjudicate cases and instead refer all cases to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. At this workshop, Council also discussed various methods of gathering additional information to inform an adjusted or revised ordinance and directed the AHRC to review data available (including the Campus Climate Survey, Municipal Equality Indexes) and other available data; interact with ISU, ACSD, and any others well-positioned to give input on diversity, inclusion and equity in the community in order to recommend action items and changes to the ordinance.

2019 COMMISSIONERS:

- Liming Pals
- Wayne Clinton
- Joel Hochstein (Chair)
- Jill Crosser
- Madesh Samanu
- Deb Schildroth (City staff)

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ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS:

JANUARY 2019:

- Approved to co-sponsor a poverty simulation in cooperation with **Inclusive Ames**.
- Discussed the success of its partnership with the 2018 **Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations**. Wrote letter to City Council supporting funding request from Dan Culhane at the Chamber of Commerce for the 2019 Symposium.

FEBRUARY 2019:

- Reviewed and approved our annual report for submission to City Council.
- Update on planning for **2019 Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations**.

MARCH 2019:

- Approved changes to the **“A Home for Everyone”** Award.

APRIL 2019:

- Discussed the March joint meeting with City Council.
- Discussed and approved additional changes to the **“A Home for Everyone”** Award.

MAY 2019:

- Scheduled and approved June retreat.
- Selected Joel Hochstein to serve as Chair.

JUNE 2019:

- Held special meeting (retreat) to discuss outreach plan for soliciting information from various groups throughout the community.
- Discussed **Source of Income Discrimination in Housing** as referred by the City Council.

JULY 2019:

- Authorized Chairperson Hochstein to draft a memo supporting the Council’s discussion of Source of Income Discrimination in Housing.
- Approved FY 19/20 budget.

AUGUST 2019:

- Chairperson Hochstein updated the commission on on-going planning for the 2019 Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations.
- Discussed proposal by Inclusive Ames to collaborate on a program also sponsored by the Story County Democrats and Story County Republicans. AHRC discussed and ultimately did not co-sponsor the event at risk of having the Commission be involved in structured political activity.

SEPTEMBER 2019:

- No September meeting.

OCTOBER 2019:

- Worked with city staff to inquire about the possibility of conducting an electronic survey in lieu of focus groups.
- Approved **Humanitarian Award** application materials and referred city staff to post on AHRC website.
- Approved Commissioner Clinton to serve on behalf of the AHRC on the **Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Planning Committee**.
- Approved Commissioner Crosser to serve on next year’s Symposium planning group and commissioners attended the **Building Inclusive Organizations Symposium**.

NOVEMBER 2019:

- Reviewed and approved questions for online survey being conducted through the City’s website.
- Approved and sent memo to Council outlining various suggestions to enhance the City’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for Council’s goal setting retreat.

DECEMBER 2019:

- Telephonic meeting conducted due to commissioner schedule conflicts.
- Selected **Janet Hopper** as the Humanitarian Award recipient.
- Approved language and nomination form for the “**A Home for Everyone**” award.

AMES CIVIL RIGHT COMPLAINTS TO THE IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION 2019:

Citizens are able to initiate complaints to the City via the City Manager’s Office or make them directly to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC). As a matter of procedure, reports made to the City are sent to the ICRC for investigation and are tracked by the ICRC. Reports have been made to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission involving Ames of which the Ames Human Relations Commission is not notified. The Commission requested aggregate summaries of the Ames complaints made to the ICRC for the purpose of understanding the areas of complaints and concerns identified. Results of this request are provided below.

Figure 1. Areas of Discrimination Complaints

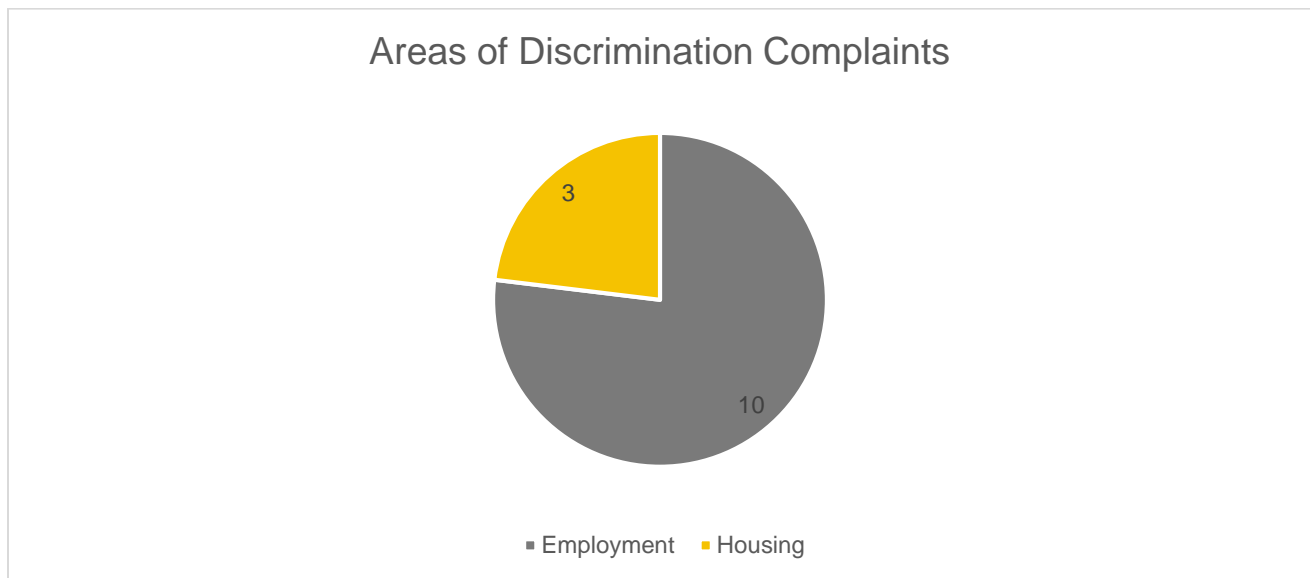


Figure 2. Basis for Complaint (Consolidated)

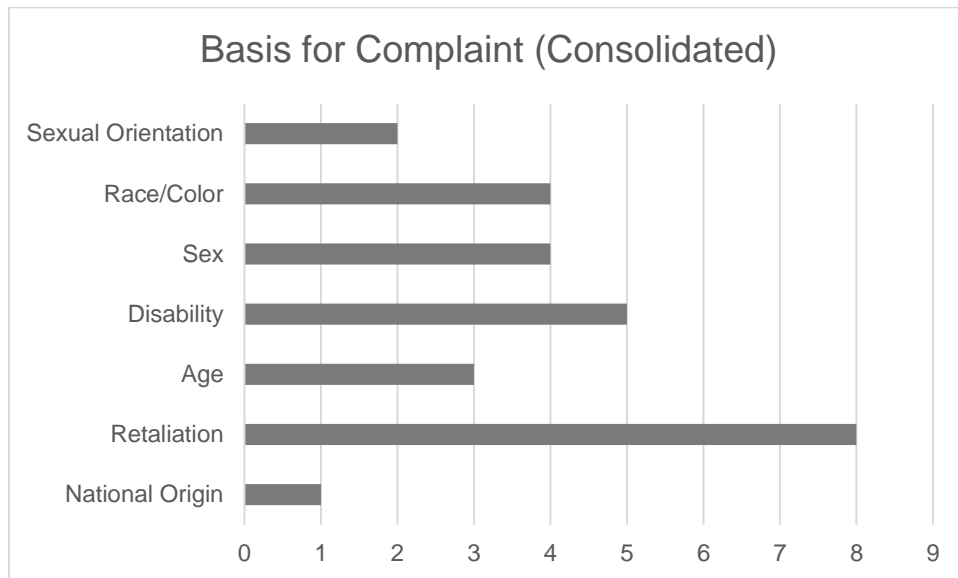
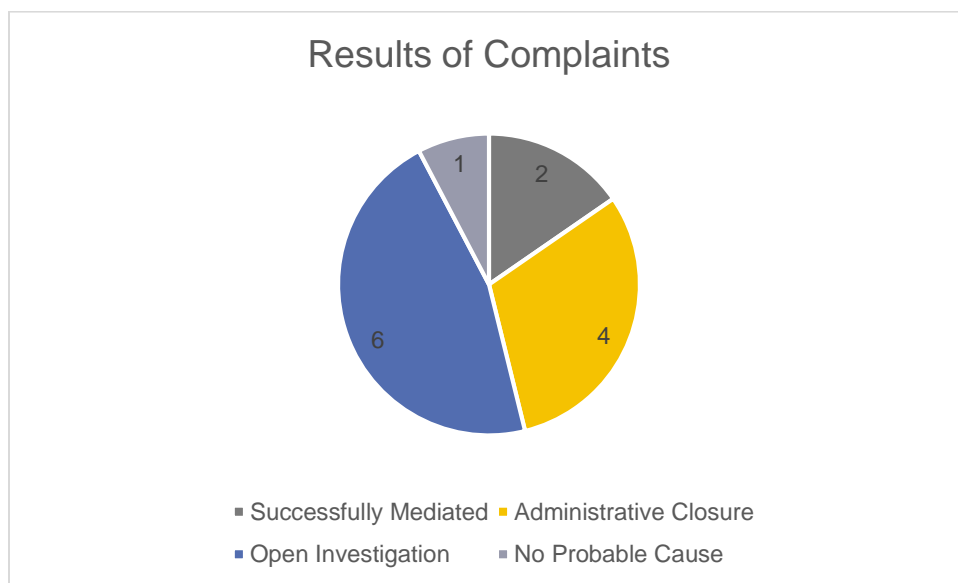


Figure 3. Results of Complaints



For comparison, in calendar year 2018, there were 31 complaints filed from Ames. Of these, 81% (25) were related to employment, while the remaining 19% (6) were related to housing, public accommodation or education. The bases or basis for the complaints was race/color (12 complaints), age (4 complaints), Sex (12 complaints), retaliation (2 complaints), disability (12 complaints), religion (2 complaints), “national origin” (2 complaints). Note that individuals may file complaints in more than one area simultaneously. Five (5) of these complaints received administrative closure, one (1) was deemed “no probable cause”, while nineteen (19) were under open investigation, two (2) issued a Right-to-Sue letter, and four (4) were satisfactorily adjusted at the time of the request.

Full 2019 Information shared by Iowa Civil Rights Commission

Area	Basis	Cause of Action	Result
Housing	Disability	Failure to accommodate, terms and conditions	Successfully mediated
Employment	National origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, retaliation	Harassment, undesirable assignment, constructive discharge	In investigation
Employment	Retaliation	Harassment, discharge	Administrative closure by EEOC
Employment	Race, sex, color, retaliation	Discharge, constructive discharge	Administrative closure
Employment	Sex, retaliation	Failure to train, undesirable assignment, other adverse actions	Open with EEOC
Housing	Race	Harassment	No probable cause
Employment	Race, color, disability	Discharge	Awaiting investigation
Employment	Sex, retaliation	Failure to promote, discharge, undesirable assignment, unequal pay	Administrative closure
Employment	Sex, age, retaliation	Harassment, reduction in hours	Successfully mediated
Employment	Race, retaliation	Terms and conditions of employment	Administrative closure by EEOC
Employment	Age, sexual orientation	Discipline, discharge	Awaiting investigation
Employment	Disability, retaliation	Discipline, failure to promote, failure to train, harassment, undesirable assignment	Awaiting investigation
Housing	Disability	Failure to accommodate, terms and conditions	In screening

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION 2017-19 STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction:

Since establishment by City Ordinance in 1974 the Ames Human Relations Commission has been charged with the responsibility of investigating, reporting, and making recommendations to the City Council on civil rights and human relations issues. The establishing ordinance prohibits specified discriminatory practices. It is the duty of the Commission to put in place and oversee, consistent with the City Ordinance, a process by which complaints of such discrimination are received, investigated and resolved in a manner that enforces those prohibitions. Additionally, the Commission has a duty to produce research, investigations, reports and publications to promote goodwill among the diverse citizens of Ames. What follows is a broadly stated strategic plan to guide the Commission in meeting its responsibilities in 2017-2019.

Strategic Goal A – Watchdog

The Human Relations Commission will function as an alert and energetic watchdog. A watchdog is sensitive to approaching danger and barks a warning before harm happens. To that end, the Commission will undertake activities to discover conduct or circumstances that may lead to prohibited discrimination so that the community can be warned and assisted in preventing it. The Commission will develop and follow a protocol to handle discriminatory incidents in the Ames community.

Strategic Goal B – Information & Analysis

The Commission will study the existence, character, causes and extent of discriminatory practices in the community.

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures
Maintain objective knowledge related to claims of discrimination.	Obtain reports from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission on claims of discrimination in relation to types and probable cause.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually review and trend reports.
	Monthly receive reports from the City on types of claims made locally in writing, or on the website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly agenda report of Discriminatory Claims to the City, and any concerns expressed on the Human Relations@cityofAmes.org.
	Formal and informal reports will be used to determine priority areas of focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review reports and share with City Council and Community leaders annually and as needed.
City and Community employers will be knowledgeable regarding workplace discrimination and how to decrease the risk.	Partner with community employers and human resource specialists to identify concerns and opportunities for non-discriminatory workplace cultures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Cyclone Society for Human Resource Management (CySHRM) to identify their concerns and opportunities to promote non-discriminatory cultures and practices. Summarize and share qualitative and quantitative findings with City Council relating to claims of discrimination.
Support accurate reporting of City activities related to inclusion and anti-discrimination practices.	Work with City to identify public reporting related to inclusion and anti-discriminatory practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipality Equality Index. Research potential rubrics for inclusion for City Services/Municipalities.
Identify opportunities for obtaining information related to community member perceptions and experiences in relation to housing, employment, public accommodation, race and ethnic minority, gender identify, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or familial status.	Reach out to community partners or populations to identify concerns or successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-annually, collect and summarize findings to be used for future planning, i.e. Community Demographics, CyRide or City Surveys.

The Commission will be an active presence in providing community education and deterring discrimination.	The Commission will increase engagement and community interactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and report contacts or participation in relation to social media and public engagement activities.
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Strategic Goal C – Public Awareness & Effective Communication

The Human Relations Commission will work to improve its profile and effectiveness in communicating with the general public as follows:

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures
Raise public awareness of the Commission's work	Expand media outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an educational press release (on housing, employment, education/training, public accommodations or services, credit) to CitySide, the Ames Tribune, Iowa State Daily, and/or KHOI Radio station at least 4 x per year, ideally every 3 months. • Develop a protocol to communicate with the press following discriminatory incidents in the Ames community.
	Maintain an active presence in the Ames community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have at least one commissioner attend each of the events listed in the Commission's annual calendar, with visible identification (t-shirt, name-tag) • Co-sponsor community events with aligned organizations and individuals • Develop a list of, and work with, aligned organizations and individuals to provide links from their websites to the AHRC website.
	Keep the AHRC website current and easy to navigate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a link to any AHRC educational pieces and resolutions, Iowa Civil Rights Commission documents, etc. from the website • Provide and update the annual calendar of events
	Use social media to communicate with the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the City of Ames Facebook page.
Improve access to AHRC publications and dissemination of information for all persons	Revise website and documents to provide accessibility to those persons with limited English proficiency	<p>On the website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide translated bolded/large print directions (in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean) on (a) how to translate the web contents on the City

		<p>site; (b) how to file a complaint; (c) how to access interpretation for other City services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide link to Iowa Civil Rights Commission Complaint Form directions in Spanish <p>On AHRC documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide translated bolded/large print directions (in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean) on how to obtain interpretive services for assistance in understanding discrimination laws and filing complaints <p>Bi-annually, review Ames City (Cy-Ride) demographic data to determine if translation is needed for other languages</p>
Improve communication with transgender, gender-nonconforming, and gender-questioning persons within the Ames community	Revise City website and brochures to include gender neutral language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove his/her language from AHRC-specific literature • Explore the possibility of removing such language from other City documents.
Raise public awareness of community organizations, activities, and individuals that exemplify inclusivity and a non-discriminatory approach	List these organizations, activities, and individuals on the AHRC website	Annually, award the Humanitarian Award and Fair Housing Award

Strategic Goal D – Management Excellence

The Human Relations Commission will strive to keep this strategic plan at the forefront of all its decisions and activities. In the spirit of that objective, the Human Relations Commission agenda will reflect the strategic plan by indicating a section for each strategic goal. All business of the commission should be placed under a subheading in the agenda for each meeting and if a business item is linked to more than one goal, each goal should be identified beside the business item [ie: Commission Response to White Nationalist Remark (SG-A, SG-C)]

The Human Relations Commission will strive to effectively spend the budgeted monies from the Ames City Council. Monies allocated for the Commission should only be used in ways what advance these strategic goals. During its annual report, the Commission should describe the ways in which its monies were used and in what ways its use advanced the goals described above.