



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

**AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

# CONTENTS

Ames Human Relations Commission (AHRC) Introduction & Purpose .....page 1

2023 Activity Highlights .....pages 2-3

Ames Civil Rights Complaints 2023 .....pages 4-9

2023-25 Strategic Plan .....pages 10-12

# AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

*THE AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION'S (AHRC) PURPOSE IS TO STUDY THE EXISTENCE OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE COMMUNITY AND WORK TO MINIMIZE OR ELIMINATE IT, PROMOTE GOODWILL AMONG THE VARIOUS RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE CITY, AND COOPERATE WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ELIMINATE RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL, AND INTERGROUP TENSIONS.*

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

## **2023 AHRC COMMISSIONERS:**

In addition to new members of AHRC in 2023, diversified efforts in alignment with the strategic plan were pursued. While still navigating the impacts of COVID-19, the AHRC found ways to do the meaningful work set forth by the City Council, specifically around awareness and representation.

- Chunhui Chen, Vice Chair
- Wayne Clinton, Chair
- Angie DeWaard (appointed April 2023)
- Khushi Patel (January - May 2023)
- Marty Martinez (appointed April 2023)

- Casandra Eames, City of Ames Staff Liaison (March-December 2023)
- Deb Schildroth, City of Ames Staff Liaison (January - June 2023)

## **ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **JANUARY 2023**

- At the Martin Luther King Day Celebration at Ames City Auditorium on January 16, Vice Chair Clinton presented the “Humanitarian Award” to Maria Celeste Gonzalez Chaves. He also served on the organizing committee for the event.

### **FEBRUARY 2023**

- Chair Clinton attended the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet on February 16.
- Participated in the interview process for the new City of Ames Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator.

### **MARCH 2023**

- Helped promote a March 24 City Auditorium concert titled “The Healing Power of Music’ In Concert with Geneviève Salamone.” Salamone is an artist from the Huron-Wendat Nation who raises awareness for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and residential schools.
- Welcomed Casandra Eames as the new DEI Coordinator and Staff Liaison to the Commission.
- Began drafting the 2022 Annual Report.

### **APRIL 2023**

- Welcomed new Commissioners Angie DeWaard and Marty Martinez and elected Wayne Clinton as Chair and Chunhui Chen as Vice Chair.
- Participated in the “I Support Fair Housing” social media initiative organized by Housing Coordinator Vanessa Baker-Latimer to mark Fair Housing Month.
- Chair Clinton presented the “A Home for Everyone Award” to Lori Allen at the April 11 City Council meeting.
- Approved the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.

### **MAY 2023**

- Co-sponsored the 2023 Ames Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month Celebration on May 6 at Iowa State University, attended by over 400 people. Facilitated Mayor John Haila’s invitation to give opening remarks at the event. Vice Chair Chen participated in organizing the event, which included awards for a student essay contest on the topic “Bring AAPI Heritage into Real Life.”
- At the May 9 City Council Meeting, Vice Chair Chen accepted a proclamation from Mayor Haila recognizing AAPI Heritage Month.
- Approved the 2022 Annual Report and FY 2023-24 AHRC Budget at Commission meeting on May 25.

## **JUNE 2023**

- Co-sponsored the 2023 Juneteenth Celebration on June 17 at Bandshell Park. Chair Clinton, Vice Chair Chen, and Commissioner DeWaard staffed a table featuring games, snacks, and giveaways.
- Held Joint Meeting with Ames City Council on June 13 to present the 2022 Annual Report.
- Bade farewell to Staff Liaison Schildroth as she left for a different job.

## **JULY 2023**

- No activity to report.

## **AUGUST 2023**

- Participated in National Night Out on August 1. Commissioners staffed a table featuring games, snacks, and giveaways.
- Approved the FY 2023-24 Cooperative Agreement with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

## **SEPTEMBER 2023**

- Attended Pridefest on September 30.
- Began developing an internal community outreach guide and a calendar of celebrations to facilitate proactive community engagement.

## **OCTOBER 2023**

- Held a Meet and Greet event for the Commission and DEI Coordinator on October 7 at RAYGUN.

## **NOVEMBER 2023**

- Co-sponsored the Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations 2023 on November 15. Staff Liaison Eames served on the event's planning committee, and Chair Clinton and Commissioner Martinez attended the event.

## **DECEMBER 2023**

- Selected the 2024 "Humanitarian Award" Recipient: Cari McPartland.

## AMES CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINTS TO THE IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION 2023

Citizens can 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 ICRC 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 to understand the areas of complaints and concerns identified. Results of this request are provided below.

### Figures 1 & 2. Discrimination Complaint Categories

There was a total of 23 complaints from Ames in 2023 to the ICRC, which are grouped in the following three categories: Employment, Housing, and Public Accommodation. No complaints were filed in the categories of Education and Credit.

As indicated in the charts below, the vast majority of complaints were in the area of Employment (20 complaints), followed by Public Accommodation (2 complaints) and Housing (1 complaint). The trend of declining numbers of complaints from 2020 to 2022 leveled off in 2023, with a slight increase from 22 to 23 complaints.

Figure 1

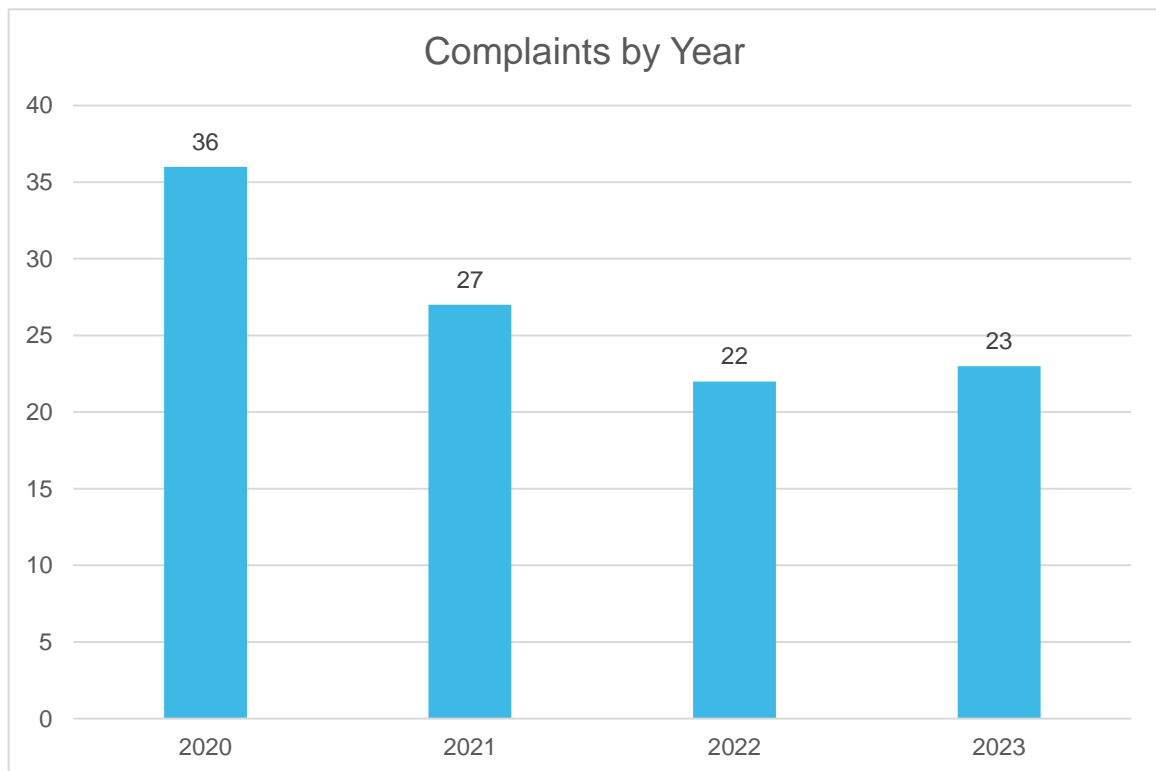
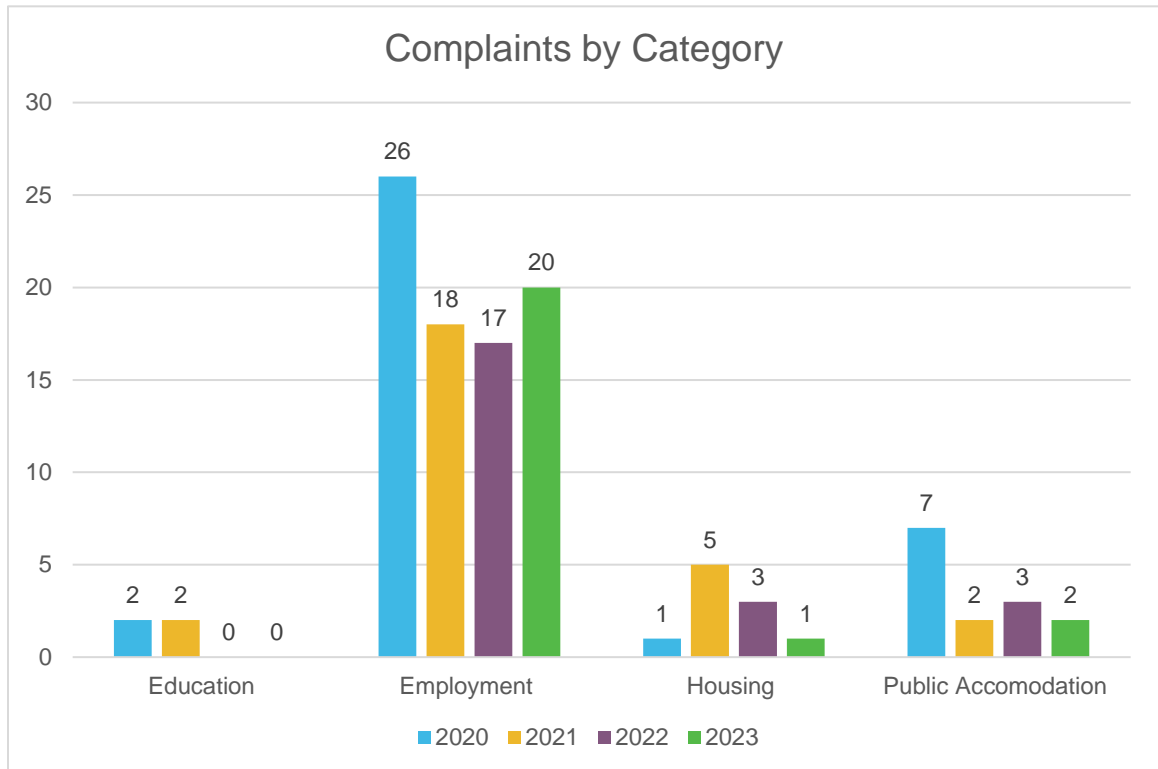


Figure 2



The category of Employment remains the basis for the majority of complaints in 2023, comprising 87% of complaints.

#### Notable Changes Between 2022 and 2023

- There was a 4.5% increase in total complaints.
- Employment increased from 17 to 20 complaints.
- Housing decreased to 1 complaint from 3.
- Public Accommodation decreased from 3 to 2 complaints.

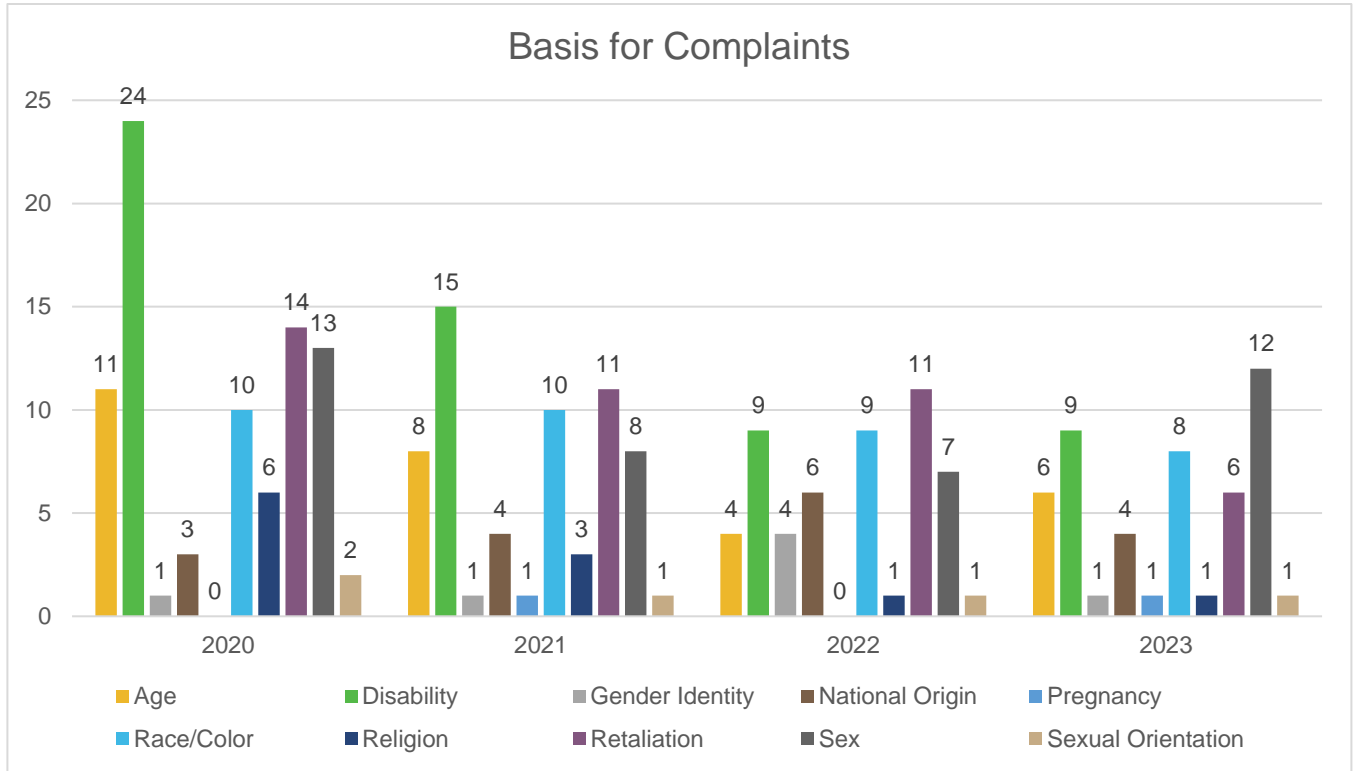
#### Figures 3 & 4. Basis for Complaints and Cause of Action

The following graph illustrates the basis for the complaint areas in Figure 1. The categories included are Age, Disability, Gender Identity, National Origin, Pregnancy, Race/Color, Religion/Creed, Retaliation, Sex, and Sexual Orientation.

It should be noted that individuals may file complaints for more than one area simultaneously. In 2023 there were 4 complaints using just one area, 8 complaints involving two areas, and 11 complaints involving three or more areas.

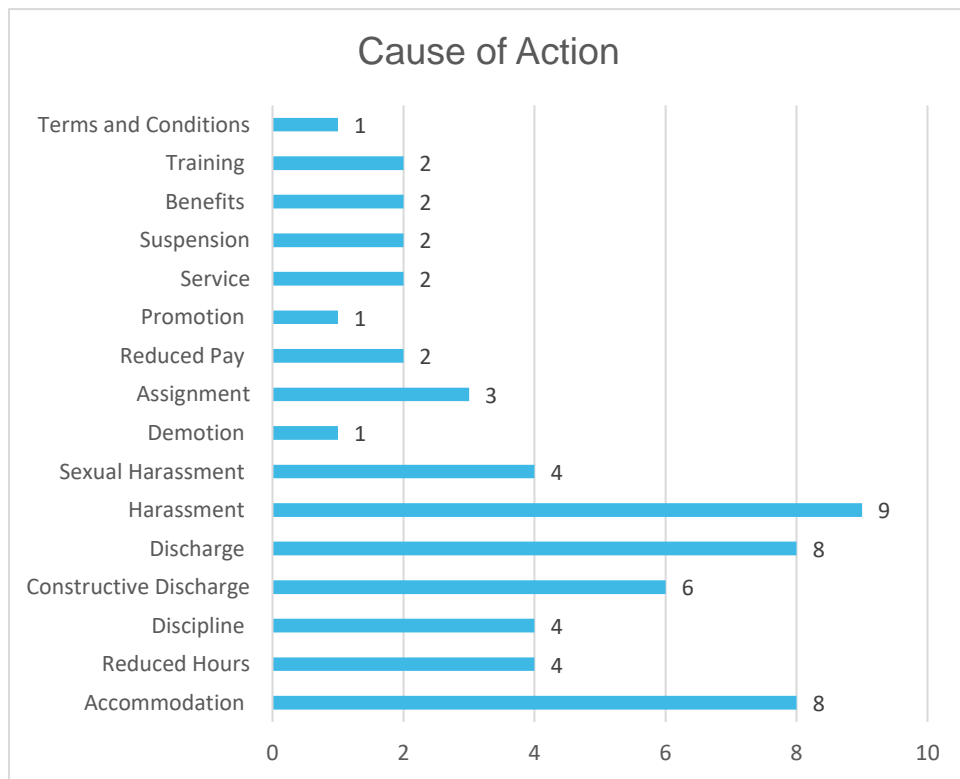
The 2023 data reflects an increase in complaints involving Sex and a decrease in complaints involving Gender Identity, National Origin, and Retaliation as compared to 2022.

Figure 3



Individuals may select multiple Causes of Action in their complaints. The complaint form lists 22 Causes of Action as options to be selected. In 2023 there were five complaints citing one Cause of Action, eight complaints citing two, and ten complaints citing three or more.

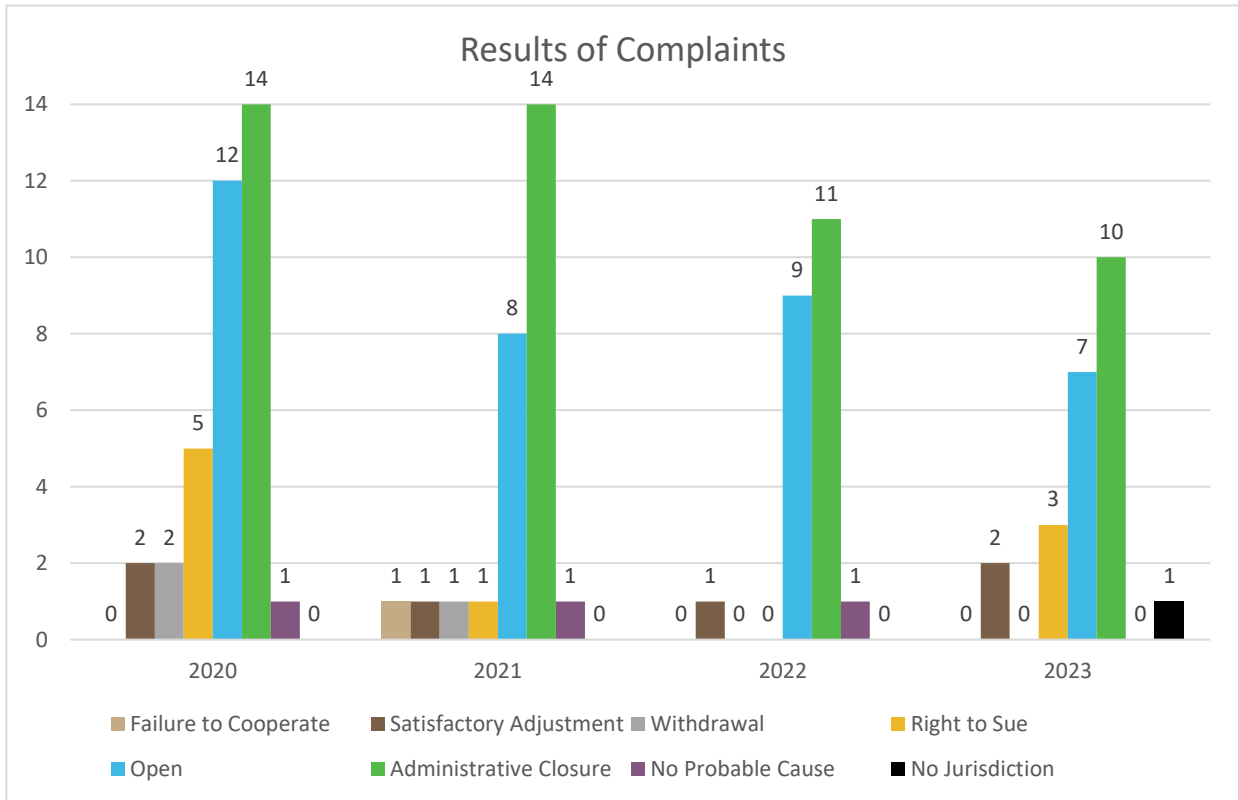
Figure 4



## Figure 5. Results of Complaints

The following chart reviews the results of the complaints to the ICRC in the past four years. In 2023, ten complaints resulted in Administrative Closure, seven remain Open, three resulted in a “Right-to-Sue” finding, two resulted in Satisfactory Adjustment, and one resulted in a finding of No Jurisdiction.

Figure 5



### Summary

- The number of complaints increased by one between 2022 and 2023.
- Of the 23 complaints in 2023, the majority (20) were in the category of Employment, and the most common basis for complaints was Sex with a total of 12.
- The most frequent outcome was Administrative Closure (10). For the ICRC, the Administrative Closure category encompasses three scenarios:
  - Further investigation is not warranted.
  - When the Commission issues a “right-to-sue” letter, the Commission administratively closes the complaint and will take no further action on the complaint.
  - If conciliation fails, the complaint will be reviewed to determine whether it should proceed to public hearing. If the complaint is not selected for public hearing, the complaint will be administratively closed.



# AMES COMPLAINTS (JANUARY 2023 – DECEMBER 2023)

## Full 2023 Information shared by Iowa Civil Rights Commission

Area	Basis	Cause of Action	Result
Employment	Race (Other), Sex (Female), Disability	Reasonable Accommodation	Open (EEOC investigating)
Employment	Sex (Female), Sexual Orientation (homosexual)	Reduced Hours, Discipline, Discharge, Constructive Discharge	Administrative Closure
Employment	Race (Black), Sex (Female), Color, Retaliation	Harassment, Constructive Discharge	Administrative Closure
Employment	Sex (Female), Age (Older)	Demotion, Assignment, Harassment, Reduced Pay, Promotion	Open
Public Accommodation	Disability	Denied Accommodation, Service	Satisfactory Adjustment
Employment	Race (Black), Sex (Male), National Origin	Discipline, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Assignment, Discharge	Administrative Closure
Employment	Sex (Male), National Origin	Suspension, Discharge	Administrative Closure
Employment	Race (Other), National Origin (Hispanic), Age (Older), Disability	Denied Accommodation, Benefits, Discharge	Administrative Closure
Employment	Age (Older), Disability	Harassment, Training	Administrative Closure
Employment	Sex (Female)	Discipline, Harassment, Suspension	Right to Sue
Employment	Race (Black), Sex (Female), Color, Religion (Other)	Denied Accommodation, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Training, Discharge	Administrative Closure
Employment	Age (Younger), Disability	Denied Accommodation, Discharge	Administrative Closure
Employment	Sex (Female)	Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Denied Accommodation, Reduced Hours, Reduced Pay, Assignment	Open
Employment	Race (Black), Color, Retaliation	Harassment	Satisfactory Adjustment
Employment	Retaliation, Disability	Denied Accommodation, Constructive Discharge	EEOC – Administrative Closure
Employment	Sex (Female), Pregnancy	Reduced Hours, Discharge	Right to Sue
Employment	Race (Black), Color, National Origin, Retaliation	Reduced Hours	Administrative Closure
Housing	Disability	Terms and Conditions	Open
Employment	Disability, Retaliation	Denied Accommodation, Sexual Harassment, Constructive Discharge	Open (EEOC investigating)
Employment	Gender Identity, Retaliation	Harassment, Constructive Discharge	Open (EEOC investigating)

Area	Basis	Cause of Action	Result
Employment	Race (Other), Sex (Female), Age (Older)	Benefits, Discipline, Constructive Discharge	Open
Employment	Sex (Female), Age (Older)	Discharge	Right to Sue
Public Accommodation	Disability	Service	No Jurisdiction

# AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

## 2023-25 STRATEGIC PLAN

### **Strategic Goal A – Advocacy**

The Ames Human Relations Commission (AHRC) values a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community and will function as an advocacy group for the citizens of the City of Ames. The Commission will undertake activities to discover, conduct analysis on, and circumvent instances that may lead to prohibited discrimination so that the community can be educated and assisted in preventing it. Commission members will be active participants in the city and will develop and follow a protocol to handle discriminatory incidents in the Ames community and will report and make recommendations directly to the City Council to ensure all voices are heard.

### **Strategic Goal B – Information & Analysis**

The Ames Human Relations Commission (AHRC) will study the existence, character, causes and extent of discriminatory practices in the community while using resources to gain information and work with community partners, leaders, and report directly to the City Council.

#### **OBJECTIVE 1: AHRC will maintain objective knowledge related to claims of discrimination.**

- AHRC will work directly with the Iowa Civil Right Commission and will collaborate annually with a representative to better understand the complaint process.
- AHRC will obtain and review reports from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission on claims of discrimination in relation to types and probable cause.
- AHRC will obtain and review reports from the City on types of claims made locally in writing, or on the website and report of Discriminatory Claims to the City, and any concerns expressed through HumanRelations@cityofames.org.
- AHRC will obtain and review formal and informal reports that will be used to determine priority areas of focus and will share with City Council and community stakeholders annually and as needed.

#### **OBJECTIVE 2: AHRC will partner with the City and community members to learn about discrimination and how to decrease the risk.**

- AHRC will partner with community employers and human resource specialists to identify concerns and opportunities for non-discriminatory workplace cultures as needed.
- AHRC will summarize and share qualitative and quantitative findings with City Council relating to claims of discrimination.
- AHRC will work with the City to identify public reporting related to inclusion and anti-discriminatory practices.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** AHRC will identify opportunities for obtaining information related to community member perceptions and experiences in relation to housing, employment, public accommodation, race and ethnicity, gender identity, religion, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or familial status.

- AHRC will reach out to community partners or populations to identify concerns or successes in the areas mentioned above.
- AHRC will collect and summarize findings to be used for future planning, i.e., Community Demographics, CyRide or City Surveys.

**OBJECTIVE 4:** AHRC will be an active presence in providing community education and deterring discrimination.

- AHRC will increase engagement and community interactions.
- AHRC will monitor and report contacts or participation in relation to social media and public engagement activities.

### **Strategic Goal C – Public Awareness & Effective Communication**

AHRC strives to be a central location for the citizens of the City of Ames to advocate for, build awareness of, and communicate with. Commission members will connect with their community through public awareness and effective communication.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Help improve communication effectiveness with the general public through media outlets and active presence in the Ames community. The following are examples of possible actions:

- Provide materials for educational press releases or social media on topics related to diversity, housing, employment, public accommodations, or services, etc.
- Co-sponsor and have commissioners attend community events with aligned organizations and individuals throughout the City, such as but not limited to the annual awarding of the Humanitarian award (January-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday), Fair Housing Award (April at City Council), AAPI Heritage Month Celebration event (May), Juneteenth (June).
- Help provide information on community events for Ames City's online event calendar and have commissioners attend the events.

### **Strategic Goal D – Management Excellence**

AHRC will work towards this strategic plan for the betterment of our community in an ethical and fiscally responsible way.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** AHRC will strive to keep this strategic plan at the forefront of all its decisions and activities and within our areas of focus and expertise.

- Commission Members will work with community partners who specialize in areas of expertise.

- Commission Members will represent AHRC with respect, recognize and celebrate the strength of the City of Ames' greatest asset, the value of all people, via diversity and inclusion. They will be respectful of opinions, customs, and individual preferences to help build strong relationships.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** AHRC will manage the annual budget in a fiscally responsible manner.

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