

FARGO HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

2010 STRATEGIC PLAN AND 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

The Mission of the Fargo Human Relations Commission is to promote acceptance and respect for diversity and discourage all forms of discrimination.

The City of Fargo values human diversity and works to promote equal opportunities in housing, employment, and social climate. The Fargo Human Relations Commission is committed to working in the area of human relations development in the community. The purpose of this document is to provide the Fargo Human Relations Commission a course of action to best communicate human relations issues to individuals and groups in Fargo.

Background

In May 2000, Mayor Bruce Furness organized a group of residents for a series of meetings to discuss the need for an organization that would address human relations issues in Fargo. Over that period of time, the study group met with a number of local stakeholders in addition to specialists at the state and national level.

The study group found that a human relations commission in Fargo would be beneficial. On October 16, 2000, the Fargo City Commission created the Fargo Human Relations Commission to serve as an advisory board to the Fargo City Commission. Shortly after, nine commissioners were appointed and formally met for the first time in November, 2000.

Currently, the Fargo Human Relations Commission members are:

- Prairie Rose – **Chair**
- Joy Rice – **Vice Chair**
- Fowzia Adde
- Waseem Altaf
- Josh Boschee
- Lori Brownshield
- David Danbom
- Amy Jacobsen
- David Lanpher

The Strategic Plan

Outlined in this document are a specific set of objectives and strategies that are built on three main goals:

1. **Measure and monitor community relations and civil rights issues.**
2. **Educate the community on civil rights.**
3. **Encourage adherence to federal and state civil rights laws.**

FARGO HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

2010 STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: Measure and monitor community relations and civil rights issues.

Like many other communities in the nation, Fargo is not immune from issues concerning discrimination. It is critical to track instances of discrimination; especially those that may otherwise go unreported. In order to accomplish that goal, the FHRC will routinely measure and monitor community relations and report the status of human relations to the City Commission. This goal seeks to provide a means for gathering and sharing information in order to encourage human relations development in Fargo.

Objective 1A: Community assessment. Continue to collect data that gives the Fargo Human Relations Commission the information needed to prioritize and evaluate activities.

Objective 1B: Operating procedures. Maintain a process that the FHRC can use to conduct its business in an open and understandable manner.

Objective 1C: Evaluation. Evaluate annually the progress of the FHRC's activities.

Goal 2: Educate the community on civil rights.

In the metropolitan area there are a number of individuals and organizations that work to provide citizens with the opportunity to live unhampered by unlawful discrimination. The Fargo Human Relations is part of that effort. This seeks to provide all members of the community (including individuals, the business sector, faith community, universities, youth and underrepresented populations) with resources and activities that will strengthen efforts to increase acceptance and build inclusion.

Objective 2A: Understanding and Acceptance. Promote awareness by educating the community on human relations issues and increasing available resources.

Objective 2B: Appropriate Response. Promptly respond to critical human rights issues and incidents as they arise in the community.

Objective 2C: Events and Activities. Participate in events that emphasize strength in diversity and the positive aspects of the community.

Goal 3: Encourage adherence to federal and state civil rights laws.

The most effective way to address divisiveness is to build coalitions and formulate widespread support for policies that promote inclusiveness. This goal seeks to address the needs of those who are becoming increasingly isolated because of unlawful discrimination. To do this, the FHRC should help to secure effective avenues for community sustainability and adherence to civil rights laws.

Objective 3A: Stakeholders. Identify and build partnerships with existing human relations resources.

Objective 3B: Record keeping. Document existing civil rights resources and determine if they are sufficient.

Objective 3C: Recognition. Recognize good human relations practices.

FARGO HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION 2010 STRATEGIC PLAN ACTIVITIES

The Fargo Human Relations Commission promotes equal opportunities and works to create a climate where differences are valued. It is dedicated to the principle that, as a city, we must nurture and facilitate an environment that is respectful to the rights, dignity and individuality of each member of the community. The following is a list of activities (and corresponding objective numbers) the Fargo Human Relations Commission is committed to working on in the area of human relations development in 2010.

| Activities | Goal 1: Measure and monitor community relations and civil rights issues | | | Goal 2: Educate the Community on civil rights | | | Goal 3: Encourage adherence to federal and state civil rights laws | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | <i>Community Assessment</i> | <i>Operating Procedures</i> | <i>Evaluation</i> | <i>Understanding/Acceptance</i> | <i>Appropriate Response</i> | <i>Events/Activities</i> | <i>Stakeholders</i> | <i>Record Keeping</i> | <i>Recognition</i> |
| | 1A | 1B | 1C | 2A | 2B | 2C | 3A | 3B | 3C |
| ▼ | | | | | | | | | |
| Continue to monitor, address and publicize public inquiries and discrimination complaints <i>Lead: Executive Committee</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Continuously analyze previous inquiries and complaints, and address systemic inequality issues | X | | | | | | | | |
| Investigate ways to strengthen follow-up in complaint resolution, keep affected parties and stakeholders involved and informed | | X | | | | | | | |
| Continue to monitor discrimination complaints using the HRC Inquiry Database and utilize this data in the annual report on the state of human relations in the FM area | X | | X | | | | | | |
| Engage with the Department of Labor and Equal Employment Opportunities Commission to ensure collaboration and consistency | | X | | | | | X | | |
| Review annually the FM Hate Crime Response Plan, including the Response Network list | | | | | X | | | X | |

(Continued on next page)

| Activities | Goal 1: Measure and monitor community relations and civil rights issues | | | Goal 2: Educate the Community on civil rights | | | Goal 3: Encourage adherence to federal and state civil rights laws | | |
|--|---|----------------------------|------------------|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------------|-------------------|
| | Community Assessment 1A | Operating Procedures 1B | Evaluation 1C | Understanding/Acceptance 2A | Appropriate Response 2B | Events/Activities 2C | Stakeholders 3A | Record Keeping 3B | Recognition 3C |
| ▼ | | | | | | | | | |
| Make a determined effort to learn more about the community's needs by encouraging the discussion of human relations issues. Lead: Publicity and Marketing Committee | | | | | | | | | |
| Solicit community input into human relations issues through various means, including public forums, informational flyers and posters, newspaper advertisements and via the website | X | | | X | | | | | |
| Promote acceptance and respect for diversity – Take diversity to the mainstream Lead: All HRC Members, MLK Committee | | | | | | | | | |
| Sponsor an annual community-wide commemoration on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and plan for the event throughout the year | | | | X | | X | | | |
| Continue implementing Fargo's annual Human Relations Awards, define criteria and consider new categories as appropriate | | | | | | | | | X |
| Continue to focus on pertinent topics, including those that may be periodically revealed in the discrimination complaints | | | | X | X | | | | |
| Continue to recognize organizations and individuals who make significant contributions to the area of human rights | | | | | | | | | X |
| Continue collaborative efforts with individuals and organizations interested in human rights | | | | | | | X | | |

Ongoing Staff Responsibilities

- Gather research data from public and private organizations, in addition to local, state and federal government resources
- Network with other HRC's and advocacy organizations to identify "best practices"
- Respond to complaints and questions
- Track and repeat baseline assessments
- Coordinate data sharing and gather feedback from stakeholders
- Monitor human relations issues in the community by collecting correspondence of HRC importance (i.e. letters to the editor, newspaper articles, TV news stories)
- Monitor outcomes and follow-up on public inquiries
- Work to promote diversity in the community
- Collect and distribute materials relating to civil rights
- Meet acts of hate with messages of unity by working with affected individuals and organizations in a timely manner
- Assist in the resolution of civil rights related tensions
- Assist in the creation and implementation of human relations awareness events and cultural festivals
- Coordinate community awareness efforts and recognition with the Moorhead Human Rights Commission, ND Fair Housing Council and ND Labor Department
- Identify who enforces existing civil rights laws and how
- Tie existing laws and enforcement mechanisms to HRC procedures
- Recognize and encourage positive human relations acts and activities

Ordinance 4081, Article 15-02 – Fargo Human Relations Commission

Section:

15-0201 -- Creation of Human Relations Commission.

15-0202 -- Number of members--Term of members--Appointment of members--Filling vacancies.

15-0203 -- President of commission--Meetings--Record to be kept.

15-0204 -- Goals of the Human Relations Commission

15-0205 -- Powers and duties of commission.

15-0206 -- Commission advisory in nature.

15-0201. Creation of Human Relations Commission -- There is hereby created and established a body to be known as the Human Relations Commission, whose purpose is to promote the acceptance and respect for diversity through educational programs and activities and to discourage all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, the presence of any mental or physical disability, status with regard to marriage or public assistance, participation in lawful activity off the employer's premise during nonworking hours which is not in direct conflict with the essential business-related interests of the employer or sexual orientation. (2000).

15-0202. Number of Members--Term of Members--Appointment of Members--Filling Vacancies -- The Human Relations Commission shall consist of nine members, who shall be appointed by the president of the board of city commissioners, subject to confirmation by the Board of City Commissioners. The terms of office of such commissioners shall be as follows, to wit: three members who shall serve until July 1, 2001; three members who shall serve until July 1, 2002; and three members who shall serve until July 1, 2003. At the expiration of the terms of the members as aforesaid, members shall be appointed for three-year terms. If a vacancy occurs otherwise then by expiration of a term, it shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired portion of the term. Notwithstanding the expiration of a member's term, such member may serve until his or her successor has been appointed and qualified. (2000).

15-0203. President of commission--Meetings--Record to be kept -- The Human Relations Commission shall elect its president for a term of one year from among the appointed members and shall hold regular monthly meetings. The commission shall keep a record of its resolutions, findings and the determinations and such record shall be a public record. The commission may appoint such subcommittees from among the appointed members as it may be necessary for its work. (2000).

15-0204. Goals of the Human Relations Commission -- The goals of the Human Relations Commission are:

- A. To provide leadership in the areas of civil rights.
- B. To encourage and educate the public in the promotion of civil rights.
- C. To identify issues of principal concern to members of the community in the area of civil rights and to recommend priorities and objectives to the board of city commissioners.
- D. To encourage adherence to federal and state laws regarding civil rights, including Chapter 14-02.4 of the North Dakota Century Code, through education, conciliation and mediation. (2000).

15-0205. Powers and Duties of Commission -- The Human Relations Commission shall:

- A. Recommend to the board of city commissioners, from time to time, action and programs in furtherance of the purpose of the Human Relations Commission as described in this article.
- B. Consult and advise with public officials and agencies and with private individuals and organizations to provide education regarding civil rights. The commission may, in its discretion, assist aggrieved individuals, but such assistance shall consist of information, guidance and, in its discretion, conciliation and mediation services. (2000).

15-0206. Commission advisory in nature -- The Human Relations Commission shall be advisory in nature and shall submit all reports and determinations to the board of city commissioners of the city of Fargo. Final authority shall be in the board of city commissioners. (2000).

FARGO HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

The following is a breakdown of Fargo Human Relations Commission's accomplishments in 2009.

Goal 1: *Measure and monitor community relations and civil rights issues*

- Conducted regular monthly meetings which included opportunities for public comment on diversity and discrimination issues in Fargo
- Continued to inventory discrimination inquiries (198 total, 8 in 2009)
- Regularly attended the Fargo Native American Commission meetings
- Continued to gather human relations related materials from public and private organizations, in addition to local, state and federal government resources
- Responded to complaints and questions about discrimination law in ND
- Monitored human relations issues in the community and collected correspondence (letters to the editor, newspaper articles and TV news stories)
- Worked closely with the Fargo Police Department to assure that human relations issues were given appropriate attention where the involvement of the police was necessary
- Held an annual planning meeting to assess goals and achievements of the Human Relations Commission

Goal 2: *Educate the community on civil rights*

- Hosted the annual community-wide event to honor the life, work and vision of Martin Luther King Jr. (over 500 people in attendance)
- Reached out to the community by utilizing a newspaper ad campaign made possible by donated ad space from the Forum
- Served as a resource for speakers on various topics dealing with diversity and discrimination
- Supported the work of community members to assist the "Cass 23" in obtaining temporary protective status. The Cass 23 is a group of 23 East Indian men who arrived in the United States to work on recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina. They were promised permanent residency in the US. They later took jobs in the Fargo-Moorhead area and were apprehended as illegal workers
- Presented information on the FM Hate Crime Prevention and Response Plan before the State/Tribal Relations Committee. The Committee is made up of Senators and Representatives within the ND legislature
- Chair Prairie Rose spoke about The Fargo Human Relations Commission at a number of local events/meetings, including the New Leadership Institute, Boy Scouts of America and members of the New American Community community
- Participated in a number of local radio shows to promote human rights in the FM area.
- Coordinated community awareness efforts and public meetings with:
 - David Ideele and the People's Diversity Forum
 - Barry Nelson with an update to the Cass 23 situation
 - Amy Nelson, Fair Housing of the Dakotas 2008 Annual Report
 - Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch
 - Nealul Andrew, Project to send locally donated items to Sudan

- ND Division of Human Rights, Annual Report
- Bekah Krueger and the FM Coalition for Homeless Persons
- Marty Aas with the ND Job Service
- Assigned working groups to:
 - Plan an annual event to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 - Review and recommend recipients for the Fargo Human Relations Awards
 - Continue with the *Know Your Rights* Campaign, promoting Fargo as a welcoming community and providing equal opportunity information on housing, employment, and public accommodations
 - Focus on publicity and marketing in order to increase community-wide awareness of the Human Relations Commission
 - Work to sustain the Commission's ability to support area events and organizations interested in human relations through efficient and realistic budgeting processes
- Participated in and/or supported events that promote diversity and discourage discrimination:
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day Commemoration (January 2009)
 - Cultural Diversity Resources, Cultivate Our Cultures (October 2009)
 - Woodlands/Highplains Powwow (April 2009)
 - Metro Area Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Annual Awards Banquet
 - Building Bridges Conference, Lutheran Social Services
 - Legislative work on SB 2278, a ND bill proposing to include "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the list of protected classes in the state
 - Grand opening of the Native American Center under Cultural Diversity Resources (December 2009)

Goal 3: *Encourage adherence to federal and state civil rights laws*

- Continued work with the ND Department of Labor to provide in-person complaint acceptance in Fargo
- Collected and distributed materials relating to civil rights
- Continued to develop and strengthen relationships with stakeholders, including the ND Department of Labor, Fargo Public Schools, NDSU, Mercare Health System, ND Human Rights Coalition, Fair Housing of the Dakotas and the Moorhead Human Rights Commission
- Worked closely with the Fargo Police Department to ensure that civil rights laws were adhered to
- Worked with Fair Housing of the Dakotas, the ND Division of Human Rights and other local and State organizations to seek solutions to incidents reported to the FHRC
- Publically supported state legislation to extend housing rights to all citizens, including those who identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or trans-gender.

**FARGO HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
INQUIRIES
JANUARY 1, 2009 – DECEMBER 31, 2009**

When an inquiry is filed with the Fargo Human Relations Commission (FHRC), the City's assigned staff person takes initial action by making a referral and recording the complaint. The recorded complaint is categorized by legal basis (protected class) and coverage (equal opportunities that apply to everyone, i.e., equality in housing, employment and public services/accommodations). An Executive Committee meets once a month to review comments and complaints and discusses further action. The Executive Committee provides periodic updates to the full board and public at its regularly scheduled meetings.

The ND Department of Labor (DOL), Division of Human Rights is responsible for investigating and enforcing illegal discrimination in North Dakota. As such, the Fargo Human Relations Commission refers complaints to the ND Department of Labor Division of Human Rights, when appropriate. The ND Department of Labor also provides in-person complaint acceptance in Fargo on the first Wednesday of each month. In addition, the FHRC keeps active relationships with Fair Housing of the Dakotas, Moorhead Human Rights Commission and the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition.

The following summary includes charts highlighting all inquiries beginning from 2001 (when the FHRC began its work) and inquiries by Coverage and Basis for the last 3 years. Also included are the written inquiry reports for 2009.

| Discrimination Inquiries 2001-2009 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Coverage (Rows) Basis (Columns) | Age | Disability | Gender | Marriage/Family | National Origin | Race/Color | Religion | Sexual Orientation | Other | Public Assistance | Lawful Activity | TOTAL |
| Credit | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Education | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Employment | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 47 |
| Hate Crime | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 14 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Housing | 3 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| Public Accommodation | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 |
| Public Services | 1 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 16 | 33 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 76 |
| Voting | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| TOTAL | 6 | 34 | 7 | 3 | 47 | 82 | 17 | 6 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 228 |

| Inquiries by Coverage 2007-2009 | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| Coverage | 2009 Avg | 2008 Avg | 2007 Avg | Total Average 2007 - 2009 |
| Credit | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Education | 0% | 6% | 0% | 2% |
| Employment | 13% | 19% | 29% | 20% |
| Hate Crime | 0% | 19% | 14% | 11% |
| Public Accom | 13% | 0% | 14% | 9% |
| Public Services | 50% | 31% | 0% | 27% |
| Housing | 25% | 25% | 43% | 31% |
| Voting | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

| Inquiries by Basis 2007-2009 | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| Basis | 2009 Avg | 2008 Avg | 2007 Avg | Total Average 2007 - 2009 |
| Age | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Disability | 13% | 11% | 23% | 16% |
| Gender | 0% | 6% | 8% | 5% |
| National Origin | 38% | 28% | 16% | 27% |
| Race/Color | 50% | 22% | 38% | 37% |
| Religion | 0% | 22% | 0% | 7% |
| Sexual Orientation | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Marriage/Family | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Other | 0% | 11% | 15% | 9% |

FARGO HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION SUMMARY OF 2009 INQUIRIES

- 09-01** 5/7/09 - A Fargo man feels he is being discriminated against by potential employers based on his mental disability. He says he has applied for a number of jobs in the Fargo area. In many cases, he presents them with his disability papers, and the employers tell him there is no job available or that the job vacancy has already been filled. He reports that a number of years ago he was fired from a position out of state and was committed to a mental rehab program. Since then, his label as "disabled" has prevented him from obtaining employment. He feels he was wrongly certified as disabled.
Referred to: ND Division of Human Rights
- 09-02** 5/7/09 - An African American resident of Fargo reports that he has been continually harassed by Fargo Police for many years. He says that they pull him over without giving him tickets, call him names and drive past his home checking up on him. At one point, a parent at his son's school tried to run down his son, and the police did nothing about it when it was reported.
Referred to: Jennifer Ring, ACLU
- 09-03** 6/18/09 - An African American man reports that he was driving South on University and another driver pulled out in front of him. He says he threw up his hands in frustration and then continued driving South. The other driver reportedly followed him into the Burger King Parking Lot and called him nigger and used other racial slurs. The police were called, and reportedly cited the African American man for disorderly contact without adequately hearing his side of the story.
Referred to: Shannon Ruziska, FPD Office of Professional Standards
- 09-04** 7/23/09 - A Somali woman reports that her Landlord altered the duration of her lease, which later led to an inability to obtain housing due to a bad reference from her old landlord. The lease was extended to 12 months without her knowing it. When she moved out after 9 months, she broke the term of her lease agreement. She now is having difficulty finding a place to live, and needs to leave her current apartment by August 31, 2009. It is also reported that leases have been similarly altered for 28 other Somali families.
Referred to: Fair Housing of the Dakotas
- 09-05** 9/16/09 - An Iraqi translator brought 3 new Iraqi Refugees to a cell phone company to buy cell phones. The Company asked where one of the women worked, and she did not know the name of the employer because of her language barriers. The salesman reportedly expressed displeasure and lack of understanding for her. The translator tried to convey that he did not need to be so hard on her. The back-and -forth discussion resulted in an altercation with the salesman asking the translator and three women to leave, and the translator became upset. The salesman pushed the translator, and the translator slapped the salesman. Police were called to the scene, and the translator was taken to Jail. The translator feels that the women were discriminated against based on their national origin.
Referred to: ND Division of Human Rights
- 09-06** 11/30/09 - A Native American couple says that they have been treated unfairly by Cass County Social Services (CCSS). They took away their 17 month old daughter after their 2 month old was accidentally killed by a babysitter who had passed out and suffocated the child after consuming alcohol. The couple reports that CCSS claimed the 17 month old was deprived neglected and had no parents. The couple strongly refutes this, and feels that they provide for their child very well.
Referred to: Native American Commission, Human Relations Commission

- 09-07** 12/4/09 - A man reports that two foreign exchange students (who are roommates) are being discriminated against by their landlord. The students are nearing the end of their lease, and have just been informed that a 60 day notice is required.
Referred to: Fair Housing of the Dakotas
- 09-08** 12/10/09 - An African American man feels he was discriminated against by a Fargo police Officer. He was in a car accident on 12-2-09 in which an oncoming vehicle reportedly lost control, entered his path of travel and ran into him. He reported that the police officer (who arrived in approximately 2 minutes) favored the owner of the other vehicle (a white woman) and did not appropriately consider his side of the story.
Referred to: Shannon Ruziska, FPD Office of Professional Standards