



Human Rights & Equity Commission

2023 – 2024 Work Plan



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Executive Summary

The Human Rights and Equity Commission (HREC) has been tasked with establishing an action plan to achieve an equitable society, where our diversity is celebrated, and all are included. As the City's subject matter experts on diversity, equity, and inclusion, the HREC submits an ambitious agenda for our 2023 – 2024 work plan that takes both leading and supporting roles to foster outcomes rooted in racial and social equity, civil rights, and human rights.

In developing this work plan, HREC drew upon three avenues of input: community and commissioner input; the City's Equity Department priorities; and City Council goals. After drafting our original set of priorities, the Commission engaged in a community input process to gain further community guidance. At our November 2022 meeting, the Commission reviewed engagement results, utilized a strategy screening process, and voted to submit our final work plan priorities for Council's consideration.

HREC's work plan includes four goals:

- **Resources in Response to Discrimination** | Establish a process for community members to have an avenue to *share acts of discrimination* while offering resources, navigation, and appropriate triaging.
- **Developing an Equity Framework** | Develop an *equity framework* to be utilized by all City departments in all stages of policy development and decision-making processes.
- **Equity in Council's 2023-24 Goals** | Create community engagement in *City Council's goal setting process*.
- **Policy Feedback** | Provide advice and direction to City Council on policy decisions that align with the mission of HREC. This includes advice on legislative agendas and funding priorities.

Once adopted by Council, HREC will establish work groups, designate liaisons/leads, and engage with Equity Department leadership to solidify milestones and short-term priorities for each goal.

It is important to remember that HREC members are volunteers who act as advisors and subject matter experts in the equity field, elevating recommendations to be implemented by the City of Bend. With this work plan, HREC also formally submits a request for Council and City leadership to review budgetary and staffing needs to ensure the success of our work plan and community priorities. We look forward to partnering to assess needs and co-develop funding priorities in the next biennial budget cycle.

Respectfully,

City of Bend's Human Rights & Equity Commission

Acknowledgements

We would like to express deep gratitude to all the community members and past commission members who gave their time and experiences to guide this plan and shape the future of equity within the City of Bend.

Current Human Rights & Equity Commission Members:

Council Liaison, Manoj Alipuria
Commissioner, Brittany Brown
Communications Lead, Olivia Dudo
Commissioner, Cameron Fischer
Safety Lead, Cassandra Kehoe
Vice Chair, Joanne Mina
Commissioner, Carolyn Peacock-Biggs
Chair, Jasmine Wilder

Looking Back: Our Accomplishments (2020-2022)

Since being established, the HREC has been working to define ourselves and our purpose, while building a sound foundation for future commission members to work from.

Accomplishments include:

- Established a Governance and Guidelines Work Group
- Established a Communications Work Group
- Engaged in the hiring process for the City's first-ever Equity and Inclusion Director
- Developed and adopted our HREC Guidelines
- Formalized a recommendation to City Council on the Unsanctioned Camping Code Policy
- Hosted a community gathering to gain diverse input on our future priorities

City of Bend, Human Rights and Equity Commission Strategy Screen:

What is a Strategy Screen? A strategy screen is a tool for decision-making that outlines criteria HREC will consider when choosing or evaluating a new program, project, or partnership through the lens of your overall strategic plan or priorities.

The Human Rights and Equity Commission (HREC) will ensure historically marginalized and underrepresented people and communities in Bend have equal access to City programs and services, representation in City decision-making, and a venue to raise concerns and complaints about discrimination.

When making decisions around WHAT to take on as priorities, HREC members should consider the following questions before voting on a new initiative:

1. Does **it** fit within the HREC's purpose, responsibility, and role as the City's advisory body on addressing and advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives?
2. Is the HREC the best group to take this on or does **it** overlap with the scope of work of another City department or advisory body?
3. Does the HREC currently have the capacity to take **it** on and if so, what are the resources required to move it forward?
4. What are **its** potential and unintended impacts on community members? And do those impacts score high in the equity assessment rubric?

It = Opportunity, initiative, goal, strategy, recommendation, etc.

Goal 1 (Community Oriented): Co-create a reporting tool for community members to safely record acts of discrimination, bias or hate that occur within the City of Bend. In addition to reporting, victims of discriminatory conduct will be provided with resources, community support and options for enforcement.

Why: Historically excluded people living in Bend experience acts of prejudice. This is an unsafe and unjust environment. Additionally, Institutions like the City of Bend are difficult to navigate. They lack the understanding to be culturally responsive to the needs of our diverse communities.

Key milestones may include:

Item	Description
1.1	Establish a subgroup of the HREC to work with City staff to guide and inform the process of developing appropriate systems and practices, including identifying short-term goals and steps.
1.2	Collaborate when appropriate with the Oregon DOJ statewide Bias Response Hotline, and other relevant organizations with a goal of establishing resource navigation practices when responding to victims or witnesses of a bias incident or a hate crime.
1.3	Dedicate a clear and consistent space for community members who experience discriminatory conduct to access resources, support, and services within the City of Bend.
1.6	Establish a regular reporting process to ensure transparency with the public while keeping victims safe.

Desired Outcomes/Outputs:

- A staff-managed reporting system to support victims of discrimination, bias, and hate to report within the City of Bend.
- Annual report to be shared publicly.

Needs & Recommendations:

The City should work to ensure appropriate staffing capacity to ensure response times and processes reflect timely and culturally responsive approaches when responding to reports elevated through this newly developed process.

Goal 2 (Internal Decision-Making): Develop an equity framework to be utilized by all City departments in all stages of policy development and decision-making processes.

Why: The way the City currently make decisions often lacks diverse perspectives. This negatively impacts communities of color and other historically marginalized communities. The City of Bend is learning how its policies are equitable or inequitable. Weaving an equity framework into the planning and process at an early stage of any initiative will move all our work in the direction of fairness.

Key milestones may include:

Item	Description
1.1	Review existing and conduct new research on toolkits and frameworks utilized by other jurisdictions and organizations.
1.2	Partner with City staff to draft a document/toolkit to be utilized by City staff.
1.3	Advise City staff in developing training in relation to this initiative.
1.4	Encourage ongoing training for City staff. Sharing training or workshop opportunities when possible, to foster individual expertise around the application of equity-driven tools and frameworks in decision-making.

Desired Outcomes/Outputs:

- A tool, framework, and/or series of resources to support equitable community participation in policy development and decision-making practices and the departmental and City Council levels.
- Training for City staff on how to identify and respond to inequitable policies and practices while building skillsets to dismantle systemic harms to BIPOC and other historically marginalized communities.

Needs & Recommendations:

Executive City leadership should work closely with departmental leaders and staff to ensure buy-in and support for implementation and continued use of this equity framework at all levels of City services.

Goal 3 (Internal Priority Setting): Ground City Council’s decision and goal-setting process in equity to ensure positive systemic change that’s informed by underserved communities.

Why: City Council’s biannual goal-setting process needs to be community informed. These goals and values guide the work of each department and are carried out by the City Manager. HREC will always push for equitable and inclusive community participation in visioning and goal setting practices.

Key milestones may include:

Item	Description
1.1	City staff will share pertinent information to HREC members and communicate key dates and opportunities for engagement in the process.
1.2	Participation in Council’s public meeting(s) related to the development of organizational goals to ensure community voice and priorities are centered.
1.3	Work with council liaisons to “close the loop” after input is given around centering equity in Council’s strategic goals.

Desired Outcomes/Outputs:

- Ensuring racial, gender, and disability equity justice and human rights are adopted throughout City Council’s biannual strategic plan.

Needs and Recommendations:

Asking HREC to be engaged in Council’s goal setting process will require additional engagement and communication, outside of past practices. We encourage Council and City staff to create new avenues of communication with HREC to ensure members have a strong understanding of the process, including **how** and **when** community input is gathered.

Goal 4 (Internal Decision-Making): Advise City Council on DEIA related decisions they are faced with, and recommend new or revised initiatives for Council’s consideration that would result in more welcoming, inclusive City services.

Why: HREC serves as an advisory body and subject matter experts to City Council on initiatives related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The City of Bend plays an important role in rulemaking that impacts all Bendites. HREC should be consulted in decision-making processes that can create inequitable benefits and burdens for diverse communities.

Key milestones may include:

Item	Description
1.1	Review and revise the current process for HREC to receive, generate, and forward recommendations to City Council.
1.2	Review requests from City Council for HREC participation in providing advice on decisions and practices to guide equitable decision-making practices. Examples: The development of the Unsanctioned Camping Code; Support for legislative measures such as Measure 114 (restricting firearm sales); The development of a Language Access Program; etc.
1.3	Create new recommendations to be forwarded to City Council that would result in creating a welcoming and equitable community.
1.4	Support community engagement when able to ensure equitable community input is present prior to policy and funding decisions are made by Council.
1.5	Track and report out annually on which recommendations were adopted and implemented, including advising on community outreach strategies to ensure members of the public are informed.

Desired Outcomes/Outputs:

- Policy and funding decisions that reflect diverse community input and do not create inequitable distribution of benefits and burdens.
- Stronger community understanding of City programs and services.

Needs and Recommendations:

The City should strive to provide HREC with information and resources in a timely manner, including coordination with contractors who may be requesting City support. HREC should be engaged early in decision-making processes when related to the purpose and mission of the commission. City staff should be communicated with when HREC engagement is needed.