

2024-2026

Terre Haute Human
Relations Commission

STRATEGIC PLAN



City of Terre Haute
Human Relations Commission

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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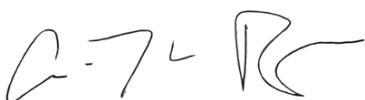
To the Terre Haute Community,

When I began in my role as Executive Director this past November, I met with many community members and key stakeholders to discuss what they would like to see from the Human Relations Commission moving forward. A common theme throughout the conversations was a need for this commission to establish a strong stronger presence in the community and be goal-oriented with our approach to how we work toward building a more vibrant and unified community.

I want to thank the commissioners, especially the strategic planning committee for their time and effort put into building this strategic plan. It is an honor to work alongside such dedicated community members.

We invite you, the Terre Haute community, to join us on our mission and help us work toward our goals.

Thank you,



Anne-Therese Ryan
Executive Director
Human Relations Commission



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE



Sandy Mutchler
Commission Chair



Dana Simons
Commission Vice-Chair



Uzziah Hutchinson
Commission Secretary



Nichelle Campbell-Miller
Commissioner



Katie Lugar
Advisory Member



Anne-Therese Ryan
Executive Director



The strategic planning committee was comprised of four commissioners, one advisory member, and the Executive Director. The group met throughout the process to reflect on the history of the commission, analyze data, and develop the goals and objectives laid out in this plan.



ABOUT THE PLAN

The Human Relations Commission has faced several years of disruption due to staff and commissioner turnover and the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2024, the commission has been in a moment of 'rebirth.' Within just a few months, a new director was hired, three new commissioners were appointed, and a new Mayoral administration took office. With the intersection of many new beginnings, the commission wanted to have a clear direction for the next three years. The group embarked on the development a strategic plan that would help the group refine their focus and determine the best course of action moving forward.

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COMMISSION HISTORY

The Terre Haute Human Relations Commission was created by the Common Council in April of 1968. Mayor Leland Larrison approved the creation of the commission. The commission consisted of 15 appointed individuals, six from the mayor, three from the common council, and six named by specific organizations such as the local school district, the Terre Haute Police, and the NAACP. No funds were made available to the commission in its first year.

For the first full year of operations the commission requested a modest budget of \$18,802 to hire an Executive Director, a secretary, and pay for general office supplies. The commission was allocated only \$800. Reverend Elmer Arnold served as a volunteer Executive Director for the commission. The group faces many challenges beyond its lack of financial resources. It struggled to conduct its regular meetings due to a lack of quorum. Rev. Arnold stated in the 1969 annual report that the one of the biggest obstacles was lack of community awareness and apathy around the commission.

The City's Office of Redevelopment had long been a supporter of the commission through providing secretarial support and office supplies to the group. Rev. Arnold continued to serve as volunteer Executive Director until the end of 1971. Upon his resignation, the Office of Redevelopment took on operations for the group.

The group continued to operate throughout the early and mid 1970s, but records of its activity waned. It is unknown to the current leadership when the group dissolved, but it is estimated that the group ceased operations in the late 1970s due to its continued struggles to establish quorum.

In the late 1990s, several community members and groups, including the local NAACP decided to revive the commission. The Common Council formed a new Human Relations Commission in April 1999 and approved by Mayor Judy Anderson.

COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES

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Photo: Brendan Kearns

The Terre Haute City Code outlines the responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission. Those responsibilities are:

- Collect, study, and analyze data relating to the experiences of persons of various races, sexes, creeds, abilities and nationalities within the City in order to advise and assist various City departments in developing evidence-based initiatives and solutions that promote accessibility, equity, opportunity, and belonging;
- Identify and recommend ways to eliminate barriers such as prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, and discrimination based upon gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, ancestry, national origin or place of birth in education, employment, public accommodations, and housing.
- Provide guidance, education, and technical assistance to other city departments, boards and commissions, the common council, and the mayor to assist in eliminating systems-level barriers and build equitable outcomes and services;
- Institute and conduct community educational programs and activities intended to celebrate culture and heritage, and promote accessibility, equity, opportunity, and belonging for all persons;
- Solicit the cooperation of the various racial, ethnic, disability, women's rights, veteran, and religious groups within the community to promote accessibility, equity, opportunity, and belonging as a means of improving the quality of communications and understanding within the community; and
- Stimulate private and governmental departments and agencies to develop and foster meaningful programs in support of the objectives and purposes of the Terre Haute Human Relations Commission.

MISSION

To promote better human relations in Terre Haute and help build a vibrant, thriving, and unified community by working to transform injustice into equity, inaccessibility into opportunity, and intolerance into acceptance and belonging.

VISION

We envision a vibrant and safe Terre Haute community where all people have equitable access to opportunities and a strong sense of belonging.

This looks like a community where:

- Relations within and across communities are at their best because fundamental human rights have been met for everyone and all groups, including equitable access and opportunity to meet basic human needs for, safety, food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, free expression, and participation in governance.
- All people in our Terre Haute community will value and embrace the diverse mosaic of individuals who live work and enjoy Terre Haute and they will enjoy greater harmony in our intergroup and interpersonal relations.
- All people and communities will enjoy equal opportunity to realize our full potential to do good for ourselves and our communities, unfettered by personal, institutional, or structural prejudice or discrimination, or abuse of power.
- All people will experience community and a positive quality of life. People will access to experiences and opportunities that enrich their lives. People will not only know their neighbors, but will feel connected to those around them.
- It will be the norm for our community to value and draw upon cultural diversity to enrich all aspects of our lives, and to understand and appreciate individual differences and commonalities as well, so that everyone feels a sense of belonging.
- Our city government will lead and model the highest level of respect for civil liberties, human rights, and the intrinsic dignity of every human being through its policy and budgetary priorities and practices.

CORE VALUES

Strengthening Community: We work against apathy and indifference in our community. We assume responsibility for our collective strength by developing relationships, building diverse and inclusive coalitions, and challenging one another to be our best. We will work to elevate all voices and strengthen voices that are underrepresented.

Fairness and Equity: We value actions that are consistent, impartial and fair. We work against implicit and explicit bias to ensure our community is free from prejudices. We also recognize that we must make appropriate and reasonable accommodations and modifications to ensure all people have equitable and fair experiences.

Accessibility and Opportunity: We believe all people should be able to experience a community where accessibility is at the forefront of all decisions which will enable everyone to have access to what they need. We recognize that we must remove barriers and obstacles that inhibit individuals from enjoying our community. We know that when people have access, they are afforded more opportunities.

Acceptance and Belonging: We must continue to move beyond tolerance as a goal. We celebrate the splendid diversity of human cultures, identities, and expressions. We seek mutual understanding and the full acceptance and inclusion of everyone in the essential aspects of community life.

Commitment to Learning: We seek to improve ourselves and our work to reflect our ever evolving and changing world. We acknowledge the limitations of our perspectives. We seek different points of view and historical context to evolve our thinking. We operate with curiosity embrace new ideas to innovate and constantly improve.

Respect and Dignity: We value and respect the dignity of all people. We know that if we seek to understand the perspective of others, if we listen intently, try to “walk in their shoes”, our compassion for others will grow.

Practice and Promote Resiliency: We see every challenge as an opportunity to think expansively about solutions. When faced with obstacles, we deepen our resolve, adapt, and persist with optimism. We also help our community and neighbors overcome obstacles when challenges arise.

We believe that by embracing these values we will provide the highest quality service to all people.





Goal 1

Promote and publicize the mission and vision of the Human Relations Commission so that community members will be informed and engaged in our work.

Objectives

- Finalize mission, vision, and values.
- Solicit community feedback.
- Publish our mission, vision, and values in print and digitally.
- Develop list of current and potential community partners.
- Develop and implement PR strategy utilizing, digital media, traditional media, community partnerships, and grassroots organizing.

Goal 2

Build a coalition of community influencers, engaged volunteers, and action-oriented change makers.

Objectives

- Establish our ability to identify and create sub-committees that can consist of both HRC appointed and non-appointed individuals.
- Recruit committee chairs and members to lead. Enroll participants in the mission and vision of the organization.
- Provide oversight and support to committees.
- Facilitate cross-committee dialogue
- Plan and host annual community engagement workshops.
- Develop a community resource hub to support the work of the committees and connect people to important resources in our community.

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Photo: Brendan Kearns

Goal 3

Cultivate better communication among stakeholders and build connections between diverse groups.

Objectives:

- Leverage coalition through committees.
- Create a consistent communication tool.
- Develop a method for call to action.

Goal 4

Continue to enhance and develop new educational programs and activities.

Objectives

- Identify and prioritize the maximum number and type of educational programs.
- Identify and collaborate with partners.
- Develop and review programming curriculum.
- Review and evaluate programming in order to have maximum impact.



Goal 5

Conduct and partner on research that identifies barriers to equity, opportunity, accessibility, and belonging in our community.

Objectives:

- Identify measurable topic and goal for research utilizing input from broader coalition.
- Identify partners to facilitate research – universities, professors, research non-profits.
- Direct and participate in research projects.
- Publish findings and utilize in future goal setting.



Goal 6


Increase human capital and financial support to the Human Relations Commission.

Objectives:

- Assure HRC Executive Director receives adequate compensation commensurate with their role and responsibilities.
- Increase overall HRC budget in order to accomplish all stated goals in strategic planning.
- Seek out grants and other funding opportunities needed to fund additional programs and initiatives.
- Increase volunteer network.
- Increase administrative support.
- Maintain and increase commissioner engagement and involvement.



THANK YOU



This plan will act as a guide for the commission for the next three years. We invite and encourage the community to give us feedback, suggestions, and recommendations on how we work toward meeting these goals.



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<https://www.terrehaute.in.gov/departments/human>