



CITY OF COLUMBIA

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Members

Scott Dean
 Dalton Calcote
 Elizabeth Miller
 Amanda Andrade
 Meghanne Zimmerman
 Stacye Smith
 Persephone Dakopolos

Chair
Vice-Chair

Term Expiration

March 2016
 March 2017
 March 2017
 March 2016
 March 2017
 March 2015
 March 2018

Past Members (2014 & 2015)

Virginia Law
 Gina Long
 Matt Mazick

Term Expiration

March 2014
 March 2015
 March 2014

Staff Liaison

Adam Kruse

Assistant City Counselor, Law Department

City Ordinances – Human Rights Violations

The city ordinances prohibiting human rights violations are in Chapter 12, Art. III of the City Code of Ordinances. These prohibit discrimination in **Employment, Housing, and Public Accommodation** based on an individual's status in a protected category (*race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age* (as it relates to employment) or *familial status* (as it relates to housing)).

About the Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) is dedicated to minimizing or eliminating discriminatory practices made unlawful by Chapter 12. It is comprised of seven (7) volunteer members, each appointed by Council to three (3) year terms. The HRC receives discrimination complaints from the public for investigation, mediation or referral to a state or federal agency. It also participates in outreach activities to raise awareness and improve human relations in the community.

History of the Formation of the Columbia Human Rights Commission

The City of Columbia first established the Human Rights Commission in 1974. The HRC was originally given powers to conduct administrative hearings and redress violations by ordering appropriate relief (including cease and desist orders, reinstating employment or granting back pay). In 1990, the Missouri Supreme Court issued an opinion which made it clear the City's HRC was operating beyond its constitutional limits. The City Council established a task force to make recommendations on the future of the HRC. In 1991, City Council restructured the HRC based on the recommendations of the task force. The new HRC no longer had the sole authority to redress violations; instead, it would seek to eliminate discriminatory practices by educational programs and by conciliating and mediating individual complaints.

Complaints Received by Columbia Human Rights Commission - 2014

- E-01/14 Complaint filed on January 22, 2014, alleging employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. The complaint was not timely as it alleged discrimination that occurred over 180 days prior to filing. The complaint was forwarded on to the EEOC for consideration under a limited exception for complaints filed beyond the 180 day filing period.
- E-02/14 Complaint filed on February 10, 2014, alleging employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. In April 2014, the complainant voluntarily withdrew the complaint. After its investigation and review, the HRC administratively closed the complaint.
- E-03/14 Complaint filed on February 27, 2014, alleging employment discrimination based on race and color. After its investigation and review, the HRC made a finding of no probable cause.
- PA-04/14 Complaint filed on March 4, 2014, alleging public accommodation discrimination based on race, color. Mediation was not available to the parties. Complainant wished the complaint be forwarded to the state. HRC investigation suspended and complaint forwarded to the state for their investigation on April 29, 2014.
- H-05/14 Complaint filed on March 7, 2014, alleging housing discrimination based on a disability. Case sent to mediation at the University of Missouri School of Law Dispute Center. Mediation was not successful. Complainant wished the case be forwarded to the Missouri Commission on Human Rights for investigation and hearing . HRC investigation suspended and complaint forwarded to state on May 7, 2014 pursuant to complainant's wish.
- H-06/14 Complaint filed on April 25, 2014, alleging housing discrimination based on a disability. Conflict of interest in this case based on Respondent's relationship with the City. Case forwarded to the Missouri Commission on Human Rights on April 25, 2014.
- PA-07/14 Complaint filed on October 15, 2014, alleging public accommodation discrimination based on gender identity. Complaint was insufficient to allege a violation of Chapter 12 of the Code of Ordinances. Complaint closed for insufficient information.

Inquiries Received by the Columbia Human Rights Commission - 2014

An inquiry is when a member of the public has an allegation or a question about discrimination but that person never filed a formal written complaint. Each inquiry is handled by the staff liaison with an in-person meeting or a telephone conversation (depending on what the inquirer is most comfortable with). Inquirers are provided with personal responses specific to their questions, informed of their options for filing a complaint, and provided contact information for any future questions.

In 2014, the Human Rights Commission received twenty-four (24) inquiries: five (5) involved Employment, ten (10) involved Housing, eight (8) involved Public Accommodations, and one (1) involved Other. The discrimination alleged in these inquiries included age, disability, race, national origin, familial status, and/or race.

Human Rights Enhancement Program - 2014

The HRC's aim is to minimize or eliminate discriminatory practices, to carry out educational programs and to cooperate with other organizations to further this purpose. To that end, the HRC recommends Human Rights Enhancement activities in our community to be sponsored by the City and assists in coordinating these events. The following are the Human Rights Enhancement activities that were sponsored in 2014.

1. *"The Missouri Immigrant Experience: Faces & Places"* Photo Gallery
 - **Missouri Immigrants & Refugee Advocates**, April 5, 2014 to April 26, 2014
 - A photo exhibit on display for three (3) weeks in the Columbia Public Library.

In the exhibit, the curator juxtaposes historical photos of Missouri immigrants and communities with modern day photos of the same. The aim of the project was to increase mutual respect and understanding, challenge common myths and stereotypes, and to provide a cross cultural art experience.
2. *"The Human Rights Crisis in Tibet: The Venerable Champa Lhunpo"* Presentation
 - **Columbia Public Schools - Amnesty International**, November 13, 2014
 - An educational program by Tibetan Monk Champa Lhunpo at Hickman High School to discuss human rights issues in Tibet and the dangers of ignoring these issues. He presented to students at Hickman High School all day and had another presentation after school in the Theater at Hickman that was free and open to the public.

Archive of Events Attended by Commissioners and/or Staff

2014

- Neighborhood Congress Meeting (City of Columbia)
 - Thursday, 1/9/14, 6-8 PM, ARC
- MAPP Process Community Forum (CHAMP)
 - Tuesday, 1/14/14, 5-7 PM, ARC
- Columbia Values Diversity Celebration
 - Thursday, 1/16/14, 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM, Holiday Inn Expo Center
- Mayor's Presentation of MCHR Award to HRC (City Council Meeting)
 - Tuesday, 1/21/14, 7:00 PM [presentation near start of meeting]
- HREP Gender Neutral Restrooms Training [MU Student Health Center]
 - Wednesday, 2/5/14, 7:00 PM, Walton Building
- MU Off-Campus Housing Fair
 - Wednesday, 2/12/14, 10 AM – 3 PM, MU Student Center
- Columbia Disabilities Issues Forum - Candidates Forum for City Council & School Board Candidates [Disabilities Commission & Disability Service Orgs]
 - Tuesday, 3/11/14, 10:30 – 12 PM, City Hall, 1A & 1B
- Columbia Board/Commission Reception [City of Columbia]
 - Monday, 3/31/14, 5:00– 6:00 PM, City Council Chambers
- “Gen Silent” Documentary Screening & Panel [MU Healthcare]
 - Wednesday, 4/2/14, 6:00 PM, Ragtag Cinema
- 17th Annual Regional Fair Housing Training Conference [St. Louis EHOC]
 - Friday, 4/4/14, 8:15 AM - 4:30 PM, Missouri History Museum in St. Louis
- Faces & Places Photo Exhibit [MIRA] [Sat, 4/5/14 thru Sat, 4/26/14]
 - Photo Exhibit Launch & Opening Program
 - Saturday, 4/5/14, 10:00 AM, Columbia Public Library
- ACLU Meet & Greet [ACLU of Missouri]
 - Saturday, 4/19/14, 2:30 – 3:30 PM, Holiday Inn Executive Center, Truman Room
 - *ACLU of Missouri Executive Director will address issues including “a high-profile case for marriage recognition for same sex couples”
- Columbia Fair Housing Seminar [HRC]
 - Tuesday, 4/29/14, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, First State Community Bank (corner of Nifong & Bethel)
- Report to City Council on Welcoming Cities Program [City of Columbia]
 - Monday, 5/5/14, 7:00 PM – end, City Council Chambers
- Partners in Education Recognition Breakfast [Columbia Public Schools]
 - Friday, 5/9/14, 7:15 AM, Holiday Inn Expo Center
- Quarterly Stakeholders Meeting [Refugee & Immigration Services]
 - Friday, 8/15/14, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, R&IS Conference Room, 201 W. Broadway Suite 3A
- Mid-Missouri Pridefest [PROMO]

- Sunday, 8/24/14, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM, Cherry St near Flat Branch Park in front of Déjà vu
- Fair Housing Presentation [CHA – Paquin]
 - Monday, 8/25/14, 3:00 PM, Paquin Towers
- Fair Housing Presentation [CHA – Oak Towers]
 - Monday, 9/8/14, 3:00 PM, Oak Towers
- Forum on Ferguson [Mizzou Diversity]
 - Tuesday, 9/9/14, 6:00 to 7:30 PM, Hulston Hall (Law School)
- Met with a University of Missouri student to discuss political elections of minorities for their journalism class project
 - 10/16/14
- Lunch & Learn: Panel Discussion on Employment and Disabilities
 - Walton Building, 10/28/14, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
- Met with a University of Missouri student to discuss the ban-the-box ordinance for their journalism class project
 - 11/5/14
- Off Campus Housing Fair [MU]
 - Wednesday, 11/12/14, 10 – 3:00 PM, Memorial Student Union
- Quarterly Stakeholders Meeting [Refugee & Immigration Services]
 - Thursday, 11/13/14, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Library – Friends Room
- Met with a University of Missouri student to discuss marriage equality for their journalism class project
 - 11/20/14
- 3rd Annual Missouri Human Rights Conference [MCHR]
 - Friday, 12/5/14, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Harry S. Truman State Office Building, 301 W. High St, Jefferson City, MO, 65102
- Fair Housing Testing Presentation to Columbia Apartment's Association [City & Rigel Oliveri]
 - Tuesday, 12/9/14, 11:30 – 1:00 PM, Columbia Country Club
- Service Providers Merger Meeting [SIL & BCCA]
 - Wednesday, 12/17/14, 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM, Library – Friends Room
- HRC meetings were visited by invited guests, members of the public, the media, and local students (including a delegation of South Korean students enrolled in the Truman School).
 - Throughout the year

Year in Review - 2014

- The City of Columbia joined the Welcoming Cities Project.
- The HRC hosted its annual Fair Housing Seminar in partnership with Columbia Apartments Association and Columbia Board of REALTORS.
- The HRC worked with the City and Rigel Oliveri to complete Fair Housing Testing.
- The HRC was recognized for its 20-year partnership with Columbia Public Schools Partners in Education program.
- The HRC maintained a close relationship with the Disabilities Commission, including sending an HRC representative to multiple meetings. In addition, the HRC advised the City Council on proposed ordinance changes concerning brick streets, marijuana cultivation, and the ban-the-box proposal.
- The HRC maintained a liaison member to the Citizens Police Review Board.
- The HRC maintained a liaison member to the Columbia Values Diversity Celebration Planning Committee.
- The HRC conducted the following outreach: had booth displays at PrideFest and MU Off-Campus Housing Fair; created a flyer for the City's Domestic Partnership Registry; conducted two (2) Fair Housing Presentations at Paquin Towers and Oak towers in partnership with the Columbia Housing Authority.

Future Goals - 2015

- Host an annual Columbia Fair Housing Seminar.
- Maintain close ties to the Disabilities Commission. Continue to provide a liaison member to the Citizens Police Review Board and Columbia Values Diversity Celebration Planning Committee. Work with any boards or commission seeking our assistance.
- Increase the City's work with the Welcoming Cities Project.
- Continue to review the City's Score on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Index Score Test.
- Provide proactive reports to Council on human rights issues; work with the Youth Advisory Coalition to identify human rights issues of our younger citizens.
- Increase networking with the community through regular outreach at local events; look into the establishment of an email list and calendar for information and events.