



**Human Rights Commission
Special Meeting
Monday, March 10, 2025
In-person Meeting
City Space, 100 5th St NE Charlottesville, VA 22902
6:00pm**

Agenda Packet Attachments

1. Agenda
2. HRC Service Description
3. New Commissioner Orientation Slideshow
4. 2024 HRC Work Plan (for reference)

Attachment 1



**Human Rights Commission
AGENDA
Special Meeting
March 10, 2025
In-person Meeting**

Please take Notice that this in-person meeting of the Human Rights Commission is for the purposes of orienting new Human Rights Commissioners. This in-person meeting will be a limited public forum to discuss the agenda items presented and to ensure the continuity of services provided by the Commission.

Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the public meeting may call the ADA Coordinator at (434) 987-1267 or submit a request via email to ada@charlottesville.gov. The City of Charlottesville requests that you provide a 48-hour notice so that proper arrangements may be made.

1. WELCOME

- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Mission (recited by all): *Act as a strong advocate to justice and equal opportunity by providing citywide leadership and guidance in the area of civil rights.*

2. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. Public Comment

3. WORK SESSION

- a. Orientation Presentation for New Human Rights Commissioners

4. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. Public Comment
- b. Commission response to Matters by the Public

5. NEXT STEPS & ADJOURN

Attachment 2

Charlottesville Human Rights Commission Service

The intent of this document is to provide prospective Human Rights Commissioners a sense of what to anticipate should they be appointed by Council. Below is a general summary of duties held by Human Rights Commissioners, which may average 5 to 8 hours per month. This is not an exhaustive list, and duties may vary based upon the annual priorities of Council or the Commission. Applicants may reach out to the Director of the Human Rights Commission with any additional questions: 434-970-3027 or humanrights@charlottesville.gov.

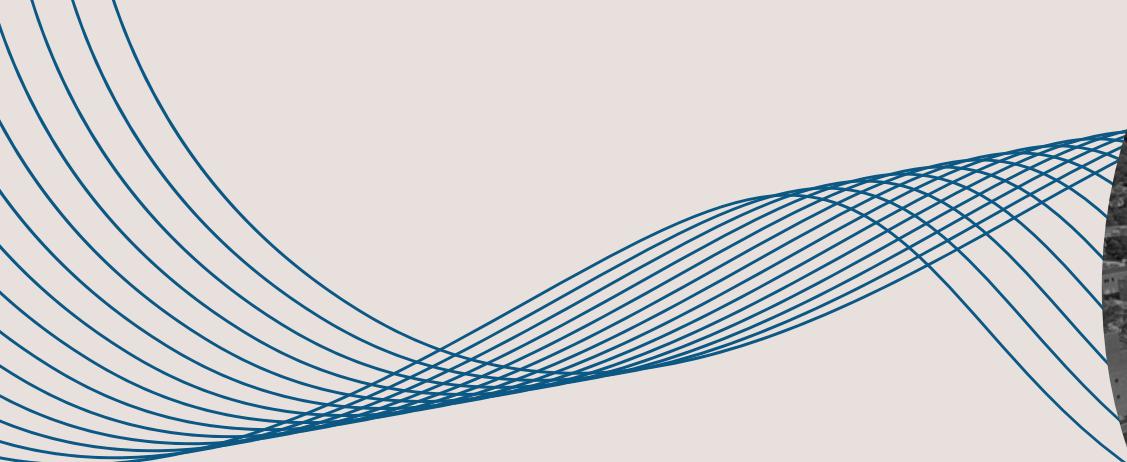
- Attending an initial orientation meeting that includes IT security training and opening a City email account (approximately 1.5 hours, one time).
- Regularly (at least twice weekly) checking a City email account and responding to requests for information and action (approximately 1 hour weekly).
- Attending monthly regular meetings of the Human Rights Commission (approximately 2 hours monthly).
 - The full Commission meets every third Thursday at 6:30pm
- Attending Commission work sessions (approximately 1-2 hours monthly).
 - Commission work sessions occur every first Thursday at 6:30pm
- Engaging in the review and editing of documents between regular meetings of the Commission and work sessions to further the work of the Commission (approximately 1-2 hours monthly).
- Attending community outreach and engagement events outside of regular monthly meetings and work sessions (approximately 1-2 hours, every 2-3 months).

Charlottesville Human Rights Commission Annual Calendar

Actual activities may vary, but the table below presents a general summary of activities that occur throughout the year.

Month	Activities
January	• Officer Elections • Begin compiling HRC/OHR previous calendar year annual report
February	• New Commissioner orientation • Finish HRC/OHR previous calendar year annual report
March	• Start of new Commissioner terms • Commission Annual Planning Meeting (generally on a Saturday)
April	• Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Conflict of Interest Act (COIA) training • Focus area expert panel outreach
May	• Legislative agenda expert panel outreach
June	• Focus Area Expert Panel • Present HRC/OHR previous calendar year annual report to City Council
July	• Legislative Agenda Expert Panel
August	• Finalize legislative recommendations to City Council
September	• Adopt and submit legislative recommendations to City Council
October	• Finalize City policy recommendations based on focus areas
November	• Adopt and submit City policy recommendations to City Council • Officer nomination committee formation
December	• Officer nomination slate presented

Attachment 3



CHARLOTTESVILLE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ORIENTATION





1. Staff Introductions
2. How should we refer to you?
 - a. Names and pronouns to be printed on name placard



PART ONE

EMAIL ACCESS

- Setting up City email
- Use of City email
- IT security training

HRC EMAIL GROUP

All emails to the Human Rights Commission email list go to:

- the members of the HRC
- the staff members of the OHR
- the Deputy City Attorney that works with the OHR/HRC
- the Deputy City Manager for Social Equity
- the City Manager
- the Administrative Assistant of the City Manager's Office



PART TWO

CONTEXT

- What are human rights?
- What is the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance (CHRO)?
- Roles of the OHR and HRC

WHAT LAWS PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS?

- 1963: Equal Pay Act
- 1964: Federal Civil Rights Act
- 1967: Age Discrimination in Employment
- 1968: Federal Fair Housing Law
- 1972: Virginia Fair Housing Law
- 1973: Rehabilitation Act
- 1987: Virginia Human Rights Act
- 1990: Americans with Disabilities Act
- 2008: Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act
- 2023: Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

WHAT PROTECTS HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHARLOTTESVILLE?

In 2013, Charlottesville's City Council adopted the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance, which safeguards people from unlawful discrimination in the City.



The Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance...

- Is based on federal and state human and civil rights law
- Specifies what and who is protected
- Provides a process for addressing unlawful discrimination within the city
- Specifies duties of Human Rights Commission and Office of Human Rights



The Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance...

- Amended four times since 2013, with the most recent amendment passed in January 2025:
 - Fair Housing Assistance Program eligibility.
 - Refining the complaint handling process.
 - Refining the Commission's role in complaints.





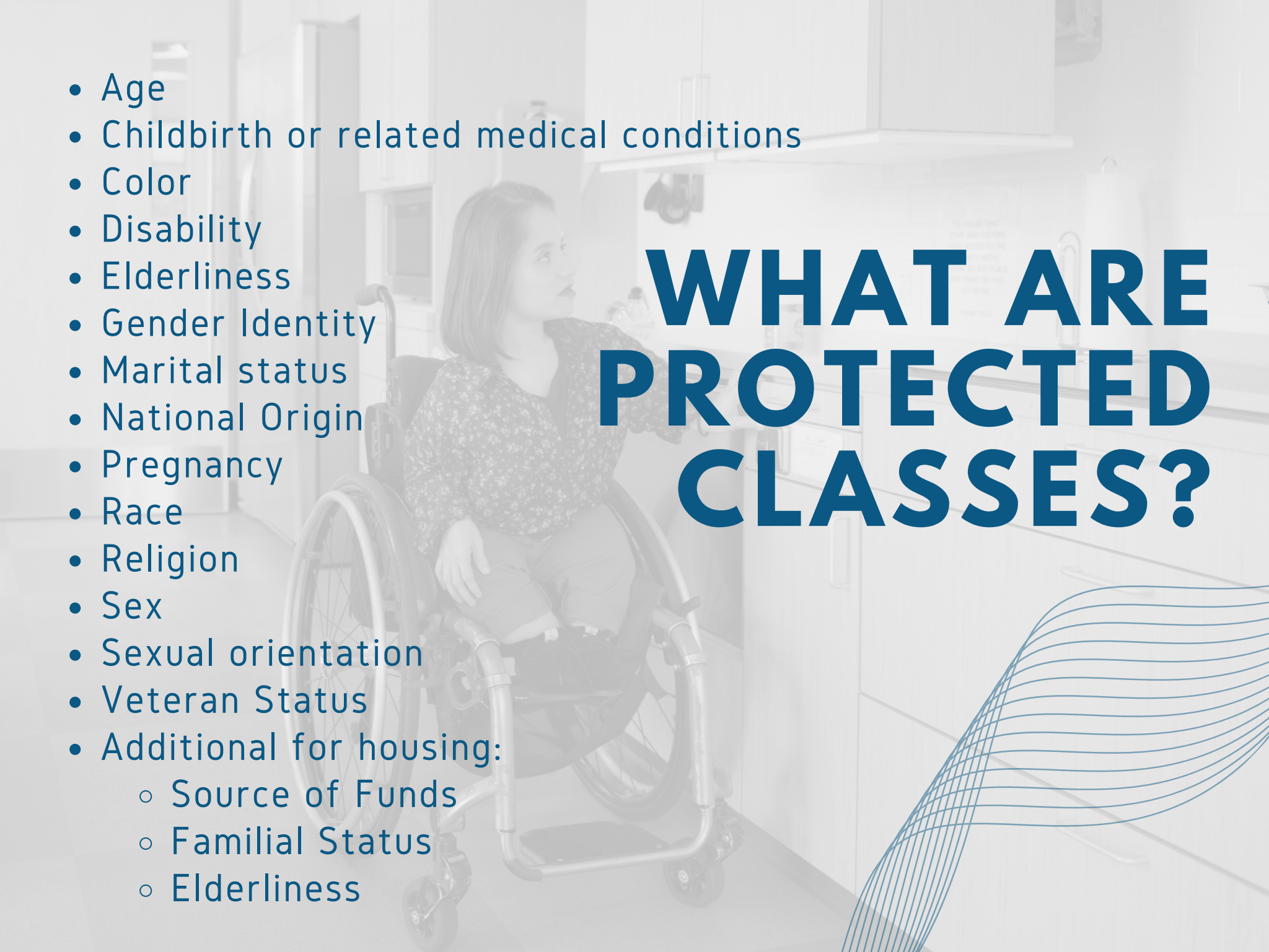
WHAT IS UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION?

The denial of a person's opportunity to engage in a protected activity, when that person is a member or perceived member of a protected class.

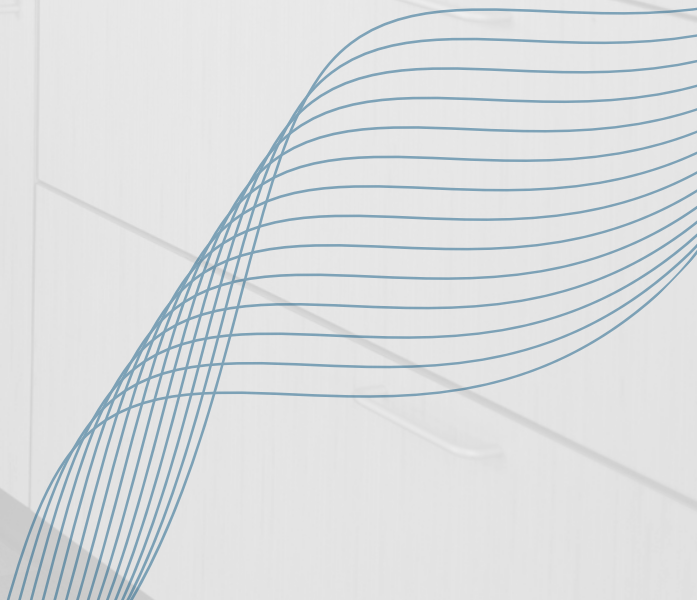
WHAT ARE PROTECTED ACTIVITIES?

- Employment
- Credit
- Housing
- Public Accommodations
- Private Education



- 
- A woman with dark hair, wearing a patterned top, is seated in a wheelchair in a clinical or hospital setting. She is looking towards the right. The background shows medical equipment and a clean, modern environment. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.
- Age
 - Childbirth or related medical conditions
 - Color
 - Disability
 - Elderliness
 - Gender Identity
 - Marital status
 - National Origin
 - Pregnancy
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
 - Veteran Status
 - Additional for housing:
 - Source of Funds
 - Familial Status
 - Elderliness

WHAT ARE PROTECTED CLASSES?

A series of blue, wavy, horizontal lines that curve upwards from the bottom right corner of the slide, adding a decorative element to the design.

The background of the slide features a grayscale photograph of three women. On the left, a woman with curly hair and sunglasses stands. In the center, a woman is seated in a wheelchair. On the right, another woman with curly hair and glasses is seated. Overlaid on the top of the image are several thin, blue, wavy lines that create a sense of movement and flow.

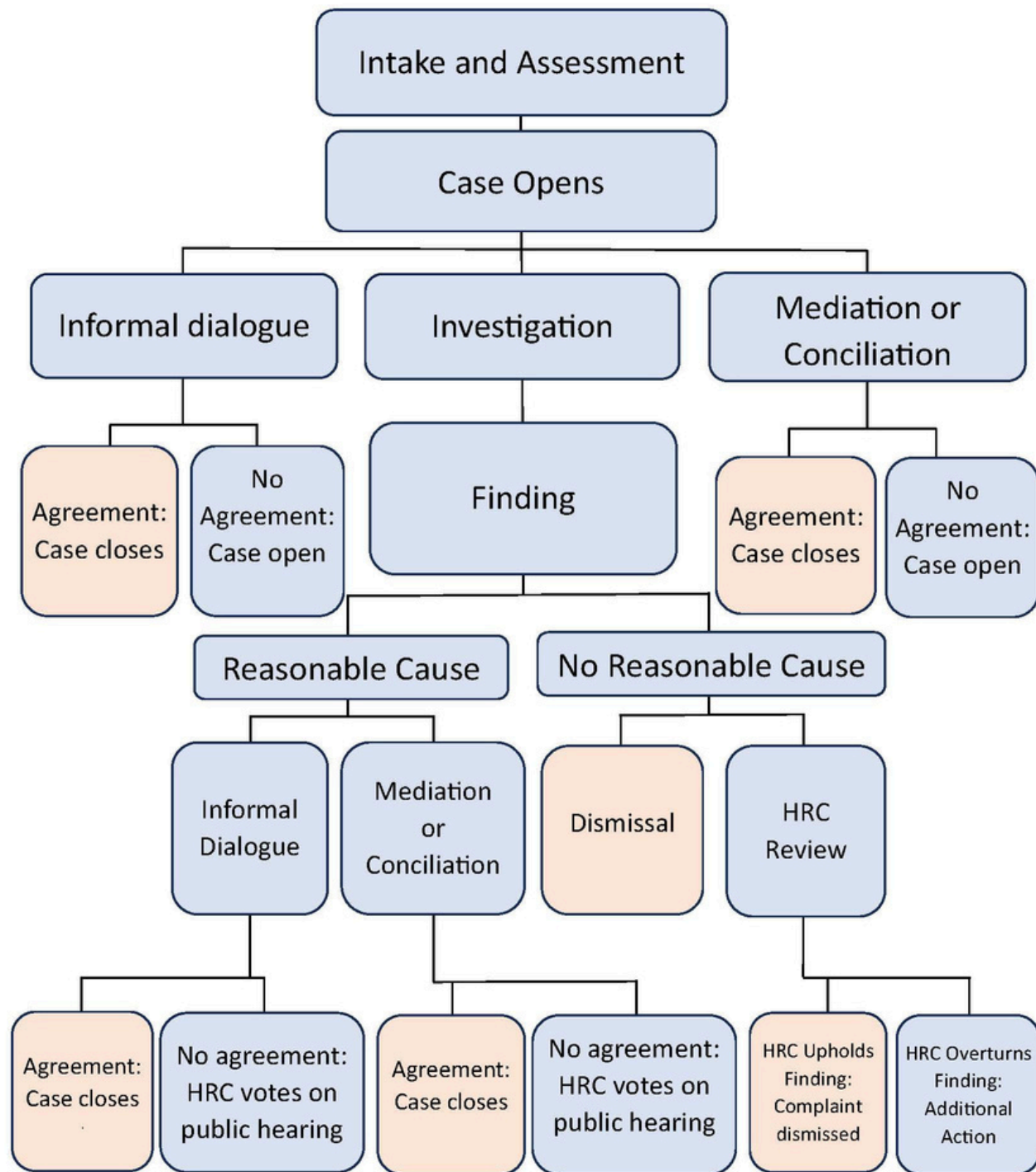
WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (OHR)?

The OHR is a division of the City Manager's Office and has three main roles:

1. Receives and addresses individual complaints of discrimination
2. Conducts community outreach
3. Supports Human Rights Commission

There are currently 4 full time positions at the Office.

OHR Complaint Process



CURRENT OHR DATA

2025

- **2** complaints filed
- **13** cases currently open
 - Protected activities identified in currently open cases: **housing, public accommodation, and employment**
 - Protected classes identified in currently open cases: **age, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, and sexual orientation**
- Total individuals: **roughly 77**
- Total incoming contacts: **257**

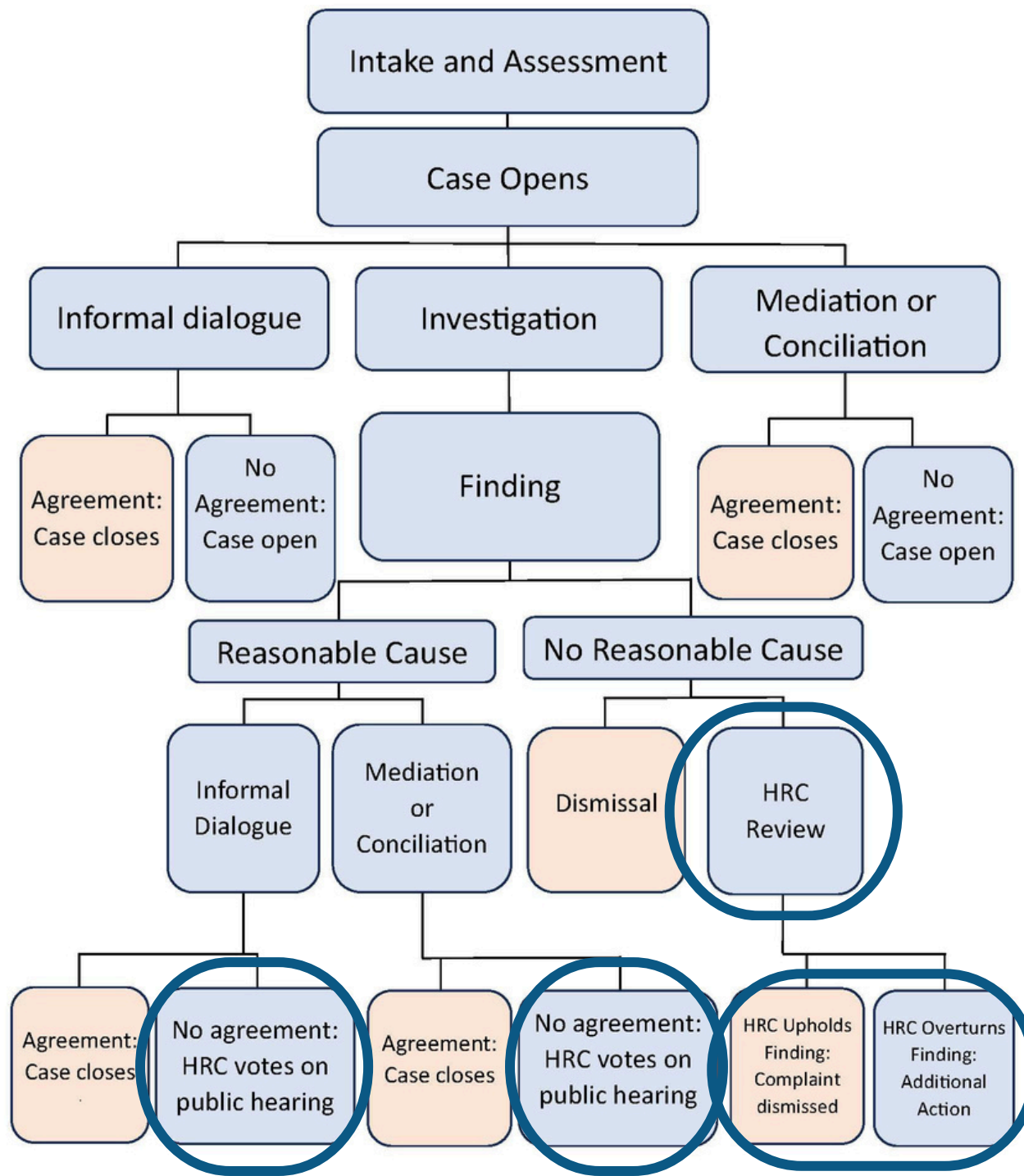
Point in Time: 03/05/2025

WHAT IS THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC)?

The HRC is a City Council-appointed body with three main roles:

- Advises City Council on human rights issues
 - with regard to City policies and practices
 - with regard to Council's Annual Legislative Agenda
- Conducts community outreach
- Assists the OHR with individual complaints of discrimination

OHR Complaint Process



PUBLIC COMMENT

HRC meetings usually include two opportunities for attendees to provide public comment. Each person will have up to 3 minutes to speak.

Examples of public comment:

- Someone suspects that a certain policy or practice is leading to the systemic discrimination of a protected group
- Someone would like to provide input on a topic discussed by the HRC

The HRC does not receive individual complaints of discrimination during public meetings. To file a complaint of individual discrimination, individuals can contact the Office of Human Rights.



PART THREE

COMMISSIONERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- What do commissioners do?
- How much time does it take?



MAIN INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Attend meetings

a. Regular Meetings

i. Third Thursday of the month at 6:30pm, usually at City Space.

b. Work Sessions (for existing projects or relevant trainings)

i. First Thursday of the month at 6:30pm, usually at CitySpace.

ii. At each regular meeting, the Commission decides whether or not it should convene for the next month's work session.

2. Check and respond to emails at least twice weekly



OTHER INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Attend outreach events as you are able.
2. Draft, review, and edit letters and other documents between meetings as needed.
3. Read agenda packets and other materials ahead of meetings.

ATTENDANCE

- Attendance Policy
 - Per City policy, Commissioners will be removed from office if they are absent from three consecutive meetings, or any four meetings within any twelve month period.
- Quorum
 - A majority of currently serving Commissioners (“quorum”) must be in attendance at a meeting of the Commission in order for business to be legally transacted. Currently, that means there must be 5 commissioners present.
- Remote Participation
 - Per City Policy No. 100-02 and Va. Code § 2.2-3708.3.B., only certain reasons for remote participation are allowable.
 - If you have a qualifying reason, submit the form found on the Human Rights Commission website in advance of the meeting for which you would like to participate remotely.



PART FOUR

HOUSEKEEPING

- Guiding documents
- Next steps

FOIA KEY POINTS

- Public meetings
 - Meetings of more than 2 commissioners must be publicly noticed and have published minutes.
- Public records and emails.

More complete training on this with City Attorney's Office soon

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Annual Work Plan
- Human Rights Ordinance
- Rules and Procedures
- Resolutions
- Policy Review Work
- Meeting Materials
 - Agendas
 - Minutes

OTHER NOTES

- Dinner is provided at regular meetings and work sessions
 - Usually sandwiches.
 - Let us know if you have a dietary restriction.
- Meetings are audio-recorded and may be broadcasted live! Broadcasted meetings use microphones in the ceiling that are very sensitive.
 - Please keep this in mind when you are engaging in conversations at meetings.
 - OHR staff arrives around 6pm if you would like to eat dinner before the meeting and off camera.
- We validate parking for the Market and Water Street garages.
- If you have children, you are welcome to bring them.

WHAT'S GOING ON NOW?

- On January 16, 2025, the HRC elected Heather Roberson Gaston (she/her) as Chair and Jason Melendez (he/him) as Vice Chair
- On February 20, 2025, HRC passed Resolution HR25-1 in support of gender-affirming medical care as a human right and sent it to City Council, the UVA Board of Visitors, and the UVA Health System Board.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Saturday, March 22nd, 10:30am-4:30pm
HRC Annual Planning Meeting at CitySpace
(100 5th St NE)

Internal focus area poll for commissioners:



Attachment 4

**Human Rights Commission
Annual Focus Areas, Goals, & Work Plan
March 2024 – February 2025**

Primary Focus Area(s):

1. Housing
 - a. Homelessness
 - i. City policies
 1. Shelter
 2. Wraparound services
 - ii. Expert panel and fact gathering to determine current trends
 - b. Systemic Barriers
 - i. Restrictive housing access policies based on criminal records
 - ii. Excessive rental costs
 - iii. Excessive application fees
 - iv. Source of funds
 1. Rents for market rate units above HUD voucher payment standards
 2. Rental properties in states of disrepair that can't pass HUD voucher inspections

Secondary Focus Area(s):

1. Legislative recommendation
 - a. Removing voter exclusion from state constitution
 - b. Rental application fees
 - c. Rental registry
 - d. Proactive rental inspections
 - e. Legal representation for people facing eviction
 - f. Anything housing related the emerges from primary focus areas
 - g. Amplifying local food justice initiatives
2. Ally/Safe Space training program development – to be considered in 2025
3. Reparations – to be revisited in December
 - a. Public discussion to determine public interest and priorities of impacted communities

Annual Goals and Ordinance Alignment

Consider developing goals that align with the primary and secondary focus areas, where applicable.

Goals	Human Rights Ordinance Alignment
Adopt an amended draft of the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance for presentation to City Council by June 2024.	• Sec. 2-433. (a) Individual Assistance • Sec. 2-433. (d) Federal Workshares • Sec. 2-433. (f) Commission Policies • Sec. 2-439.1. Enforcement Authority

Complete public hearing training following the adoption of the revised Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance.	• Sec. 2-433. (a) Individual Assistance • Sec. 2-433. (d) Federal Workshares • Sec. 2-433. (f) Commission Policies • Sec. 2-439.1. Enforcement Authority
Plan and hold a public panel with experts in housing to focus on homelessness (shelter and wraparound services) and barriers to entering stable housing during the June 6, 2024 HRC Work Session.	• Sec. 2-433. (b) Awareness and Guidance • Sec. 2-433. (d) Federal Workshares • Sec. 2-434. Community dialogue and engagement
Submit policy recommendations to City Council pertaining to housing issues by October. <i>Note: budget-related recommendations should be made by October 2024 for fiscal year 2026.</i>	• Sec. 2-433. (c) City Policies • Sec. 2-435. Systemic Issues
Submit a letter with legislative recommendations focused on homelessness and systemic barriers to housing to City Council by August 20, 2024.	• Sec. 2-433. (e) Legislative Program

March 2023 – February 2024 HRC Work Plan

Actions should support the goals identified above.

Month	Actions
March	• Annual Meeting (3/9)
April	• Work Session (4/4: Carver Rec.) ◦ Finalize 2024 Annual Goals and Work Plan • Regular Meeting (4/18: City Space) ◦ Training: FOIA/COIA/VPRA ◦ Expert panel planning discussion • Actions Between Meetings ◦ June expert panel outreach (OHR staff to work with Chair and Vice Chair to identify panelists) -- DONE ◦ Prepare draft ordinance for review – DONE
May	• Work Session (5/2: City Space) ◦ Review proposed ordinance amendments • Regular Meeting (5/16: City Space) ◦ (Open) • Actions Between Meetings ◦ Finalize June expert panelist list - DONE ◦ Outreach for July Legislative agenda expert panel – Staff working on this ◦ Commissioners talk to individuals in the community regarding work done on reparations – Chair will work on this ◦ OHR staff will collaborate with partners to develop Ally/Safe Space training – in progress ◦ Chair and OHR staff prepare to present CY2023 annual report to Council - DONE

Month	Actions
June	• Work Session (6/6: Carver Rec.) ◦ Expert Panel: Housing, homelessness, and wraparound services. - DONE • Regular Meeting (6/20: City Space) ◦ Proposed: Adopt ordinance amendments – DONE ◦ HRC Research Presentation (Ginny Helmandollar) - DONE • Actions Between Meetings ◦ June 3: Present CY2023 Annual Report to Council (Chair and Director) - DONE ◦ Tentative: VAHR Conference
July	• Work Session (CANCELED) ◦ (Note: the first Thursday in July is July 4th) • Regular Meeting (7/18: City Space) ◦ Expert Panel: Focus Area Legislative Priorities - DONE • Actions Between Meetings ◦ Proposed: Present Ordinance Revisions to Council - DONE ◦ OHR staff finalize training opportunities for HRC public hearings – pending ordinance changes
August	• Work Session (8/1: City Space) ◦ Draft legislative recommendations • Regular Meeting (8/15: City Space) ◦ Proposed: Adopt legislative recommendations - DONE ◦ Revisit HRC annual calendar • Actions Between Meetings ◦ Proposed: Present Legislative Recommendations to Council - SENT
September	• Work Session (9/5: City Space) ◦ Tentative: Public Hearing training - Postponed • Regular Meeting (9/19: City Space) ◦ Discuss focus area City policy recommendations based on earlier panels and research • Actions Between Meetings ◦ Amend HRC Rules & Procedures regarding elections and language around annual meetings
October	• Work Session (10/3: City Space) ◦ Fill in remaining months of 2024 HRC Work Plan ◦ City policy recommendations • Regular Meeting (10/17: City Space) ◦ Form Officer Nomination Committee ◦ Finalize policy recommendations for submission to City Council • Actions Between Meetings ◦ Submit additional recommendations to Council ◦ Nominating Committee begins nomination process ◦ Staff prepare redacted case file for Case 2020-2 for 10/17 agenda packet ◦ HRC reviews Case 2020-2 case file ahead of public hearing vote during 11/7 work session
November	• Special Meeting (11/7: City Space) ◦ Vote on whether to hold public hearing on Case 2020-2 - DONE • Regular Meeting (11/21: City Space) ◦ Finalize effective right to counsel letter • Actions Between Meetings ◦ Nomination committee will send out a call for nominations

Month	Actions
December	• Work Session (12/5: City Space) ◦ Public Hearing preparation with City Attorney's Office (tentative) • Regular Meeting (12/19: City Space) ◦ Officer Nominations ◦ Amend Rules & Procedures to reflect new election timeframe ◦ Review amended Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance • Actions Between Meetings ◦ Chair to provide update on reparations ◦ Vice Chair to send out Doodle poll for date for annual meeting in March
January	• Work Session (1/2: City Space) • Regular Meeting (1/16: City Space) ◦ Officer elections ◦ Plan date for Annual Meeting in March • Actions Between Meetings
February	• Work Session (2/6: City Space) • Regular Meeting (2/20: City Space) ◦ Planning for Annual Meeting • Actions Between Meetings