



Human Rights Commission Meeting Agenda Packet
August 20, 2026
6:00pm
Electronic/Virtual

Index

- I. Agenda**
- II. Martha's Rules (for reference)**
- III. 07/16/2026 DRAFT HRC Regular Meeting Minutes**
- IV. OHR Monthly Report**
- V. HRC Work Plan**

Attachment I



Human Rights Commission Meeting Agenda
August 20, 2026, 6:00pm
Electronic/Zoom

Regular Meeting

I. WELCOME

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

II. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- Public Comment
 - i. Webinar attendees can provide verbal public comment using the “raise hand” function and phone attendees can press *9.
 - ii. To provide written public comment, please email humanrights@charlottesville.gov.

III. MINUTES

- 07/16/2026 HRC Regular Meeting Minutes*

IV. BUSINESS MATTERS

- Chair update
- OHR staff report

V. WORK SESSION

- Annual legislative agenda recommendations*
- Work Plan check-in
- New business
- Decision regarding next Work Session on 09/03/2026

VI. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- Public comment
 - i. Webinar attendees can provide verbal public comment using the “raise hand” function and phone attendees can press *9.
 - ii. To provide written public comment, please email humanrights@charlottesville.gov.
- Commission response to Matters by the Public

VII. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- Free Bridge encampment

VIII. NEXT STEPS & ADJOURN

*** ACTION NEEDED**

Please take Notice that this meeting of the Human Rights Commission is for the purposes of planning, developing, and drafting management and administration documents for the Human Rights Commission. This meeting will be a limited public forum to discuss the agenda items presented and to ensure the continuity of services provided by the Commission. The Commission Chair may limit public comments or discussion points that are unrelated to agenda items or that pertain to topics outside the scope of this Agenda.

The Commission welcomes comments and questions and commits to listening carefully and thoughtfully to what is presented. A maximum of sixteen public comment time slots are allotted per meeting. Each speaker will have three minutes to speak. The Commission requests that members of the public refrain from engaging in personal attacks against Commissioners and staff members and asks that comments and questions focus on matters related to human rights within the City.

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.

Attachment II

Martha's Rules of Order
As adopted by the HRC on February 20, 2020

1. The proposal is presented. Clarifying questions are taken.
 - a. Proposal should always be in writing.
2. Friendly amendments are offered. Discussion is allowed only on the amendments.
 - a. Amendments should be prepared in advance when possible.
3. Speakers in favor of the proposal present their views.
 - a. This is not a time for debate.
 - b. Time limits should be set and enforced.
4. Speakers in opposition to the proposal present their views.
 - a. This is not a time for debate.
 - b. Time limits should be set and enforced.
5. General discussion and/or debate OR small group discussion time on the proposal is allowed.
 - a. Time limit on discussion is set by the group.
 - b. Facilitator helps group identify key issues.
 - c. Motion to table or refer is in order and requires $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.
6. First vote is taken.
 - a. People vote
 - i. In favor of the proposal, or
 - ii. Can live with the proposal, or
 - iii. Opposed to the proposal.
 - b. If a majority of those present votes "in favor" or "can live with," proceed to Step 8.
 - c. If less than a majority of those present votes "in favor" or "can live with," proposal dies.
7. Those voting in opposition are allowed to state their objections and concerns.
 - a. No discussion is allowed, only clarifying questions.
8. The second vote is taken as in Step 6.
 - a. It takes a majority of those present to override objections and pass the proposal.

Attachment III



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
July 16, 2026
City Space, 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902
6:00 pm**

1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
 - i. Chair, Heather Roberson Gaston, called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Present
 - 1. Heather Roberson Gaston, Chair
 - 2. Elizabeth Stark, Vice Chair
 - 3. Dawn Lawson
 - 4. Emily Currier
 - 5. Jessica Cocciolone
 - 6. Suzanne Lynn
 - ii. Absent
 - 1. Callum McCain von Schill
 - 2. Mariane Asad Doyle
- c. MISSION (recited by all): Act as a strong advocate for justice and equal opportunity by providing citywide leadership and guidance in the area of civil rights.

2. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None.
- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
 - i. None.

3. MINUTES

- a. Review of minutes from June 18, 2026.
 - i. Vote:
 - 1. In favor: 6
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 0
 - ii. Motion to approve minutes passed.

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. CHAIR UPDATE
 - i. Commission Vacancy
 - 1. The chair reported that Jayson Whitehead has stepped down from the Commission, creating a vacancy.

2. The Commission noted that the vacancy is expected to be included in a later boards and commissions appointment cycle.
- ii. Stakeholder Outreach and Legislative Recommendation Timing
 1. The chair reported that the Commission is working through a list of stakeholders to inform state legislative and local policy recommendations.
 2. Stakeholder outreach discussed included meetings or outreach with Virginia Poverty Law Center, Region Ten, the Disability Law Center, Cville Pride, Alexandria ARISE, Fifeville Neighborhood Association, and 10th and Page Neighborhood Association.
 3. The Commission discussed whether the state legislative recommendation timeline should be adjusted so recommendations can better reflect stakeholder priorities and language from partner organizations.
 4. The chair noted that the Commission had heard from the Fifeville Neighborhood Association and wanted to hear from 10th and Page Neighborhood Association because of overlapping concerns about development impacts on historically Black neighborhoods.
- b. OHR STAFF REPORT
 - i. Hiring and Staffing
 1. Staff reported that hiring remains underway and that the candidate pool has been narrowed toward finalists.
 - ii. Community Outreach Events
 1. Staff reported that the Office of Human Rights expects to table at Soul of Cville, Cville Sabroso, and Pride, in coordination with Albemarle County partners.
 2. Commissioners were invited to participate in outreach opportunities as available.
 - iii. Summer Point-in-Time Count
 1. Staff encouraged commissioners to consider participating in the summer point-in-time count to help better understand homelessness outside of the winter count period.
 - iv. Intern Support and Research
 1. Staff reported that an intern presentation may be moved to the August meeting to support transition into local policy discussion, including mental health services.
 2. An intern provided a brief update on research related to the historical and current policy implications of development issues affecting Fifeville.
 - v. Ordinance Amendments
 1. Staff reported that the Human Rights Ordinance amendments were expected to be before City Council on July 20, 2026, likely on the consent agenda.

5. WORK SESSION

a. Panelist Discussion

i. Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC) - Catherin Cone (presentation attached)

1. Newly Enacted Housing Laws

- a. The Commission heard an overview of new tenant-protection laws that took effect July 1, 2026, including the 14-day pay-or-quit notice, limits on dividing possession and damages issues in contested nonpayment cases, appeal-bond reform for indigent tenants, and a warranty of habitability defense in nonpayment eviction cases.
- b. The speaker explained that the 14-day pay-or-quit law gives tenants additional time to resolve rent balances before an eviction filing.
- c. The Commission heard that courts can no longer enter possession first and defer damages when a tenant appears and contests the amount owed in a nonpayment case.
- d. Appeal-bond reform was described as removing a significant barrier for indigent tenants seeking to appeal eviction decisions from general district court to circuit court, while still requiring ongoing rent payments during the appeal.
- e. The warranty of habitability defense was described as allowing tenants to raise serious unsafe or hazardous housing conditions in nonpayment eviction cases when proper written notice or code enforcement documentation exists.

2. Implementation Questions and Gaps

- a. Commissioners asked about how the rent-payment requirement during an appeal interacts with reasonable accommodation requests for tenants who receive disability benefits later in the month.
- b. The speaker stated that fair housing law should still require reasonable accommodations, but acknowledged that the issue may present an implementation gap.
- c. Commissioners asked about evidence needed to establish unsafe or hazardous conditions, and the speaker recommended documentation such as photographs, code-inspection reports, medical records when relevant, and written notices to landlords.
- d. The Commission also discussed the limits of retaliation protections where Virginia law still generally

allows lease nonrenewal without just cause.

3. Future Laws and Legislative Priorities

- a. The speaker previewed additional laws taking effect in 2027, including expanded retaliation protections and tenants assertion reform.
- b. Proposed legislative priorities included anti-rent-gouging enabling legislation, stronger regulation of junk fees, increased housing affordability funding, the 5000 Families proposal, class-action authority, and lower housing barriers for people with criminal legal system involvement.
- c. The speaker noted that LAJC is working with partners through the Allies for Housing Action and will continue refining legislative priorities with coalition partners.

ii. 10th and Page Neighborhood Association - James Bryant, Zyahna Bryant

1. Development History and Community Concerns

- a. Representatives described long-standing ties to the 10th and Page neighborhood and concerns arising from development activity affecting historically Black neighborhoods.
- b. The Commission heard concerns that earlier Dairy Central commitments related to affordable units and parking did not result in the expected neighborhood benefits.
- c. Representatives described concerns about a proposed Dairy Central expansion that may include a Marriott hotel and questioned how that use would benefit the neighborhood.
- d. Representatives stated that development pressure is affecting Fifeville, 10th and Page, Rose Hill, and potentially the former Carver Inn site, and that residents feel their neighborhoods are being targeted for high-end student or luxury development.

2. Displacement, Neighborhood Character, and Community Benefits

- a. Representatives raised concerns about increased property taxes, homeowners insurance, rents, traffic, parking, street closures, and loss of neighborhood culture.
- b. The Commission heard that renters, seniors, and residents with limited incomes may be particularly vulnerable if owners pass increased costs on to tenants.
- c. Representatives expressed concern that proposed community benefits agreements may not meaningfully

benefit the neighborhood if residents are asked to sign before full community discussion or without sufficient leverage.

3. Policy Requests and Advocacy Priorities

- a. Representatives discussed creating neighborhood-specific development impact funds funded by revenue or contributions from major development projects affecting core neighborhoods.
- b. Representatives requested expanded property tax relief, noting that current income limits may be too low relative to area median income and cost of living.
- c. Representatives requested a stronger City commitment to mixed-income and deeply affordable housing, including housing affordable at approximately 15 to 20 percent of area median income.
- d. Representatives asked that City Council reopen zoning discussions and revisit the radius provision related to student housing and affordable-housing fund contributions.

4. Wertland Street Project

- a. A representative asked for follow-up on the Wertland Street project, which residents had supported because it included community engagement and a mix of affordability levels, but which appears to have stalled.

iii. Blue Ridge Area Coalition for the Homeless (BRACH) - Shayla Washington (additional information provided after the meeting is attached)

1. Continuum of Care Role and Local Homelessness Data

- a. The Commission heard that BRACH serves as the lead agency for the local homelessness continuum of care and as a backbone support agency for organizations providing direct services to people who are unhoused.
- b. The speaker described housing as foundational to dignity, health, community safety, and human rights.
- c. The speaker reported that, as of July 16, 2026, there were 241 individuals on the local by-name list, including 16 veterans, 15 youth or young adults ages 18 to 24, and 70 people ages 55 and older.

2. Policy Priorities

- a. BRACH recommended expanding affordable and supportive housing, strengthening homelessness prevention, increasing rental assistance, mediation, and legal support, and improving cross-system

collaboration among local government, healthcare providers, behavioral health agencies, law enforcement, housing providers, nonprofits, and people with lived experience.

- b. BRACH recommended prioritizing outreach, engagement, and housing solutions over punitive approaches to unsheltered homelessness.
- c. BRACH also recommended maintaining equitable access to public services, identification assistance, healthcare, sanitation, and transportation, and ensuring people with lived experience are included in policy development and evaluation.
- d. The speaker emphasized sustainable local funding that can leverage state and federal resources, including the Virginia Housing Trust Fund and continuum of care investments.

3. Homelessness Funding, Encampments, and Holiday Drive

- a. Commissioners asked about state funding for homelessness services and how funding may be used locally.
- b. The speaker stated that BRACH had heard different descriptions of how the funding may be allocated, including possible uses for transitional housing with workforce development requirements (per new HUD priorities), but permanent supportive housing would be more valuable because sometimes people need more time to stabilize.
- c. Salvation Army shelter renovations, and the Holiday Drive low-barrier shelter project funding were also being considered, but the final allocation remained unclear.
- d. The Commission heard that the City is moving quickly toward closing the Free Bridge and O East High Street encampments by September 1, 2026, and that more coordinated stakeholder meetings are needed.
- e. The speaker discussed plans for assessments and a summer point-in-time count from July 20 through July 31, 2026, to better understand the needs of people living outside and the types of housing and supports that may be appropriate.

iv. Sin Barreras - Javier Raudales

1. Organizational Role and Community Context

- a. The speaker described Sin Barreras as an organization that has served the Latino and immigrant community for approximately 14 years through education, legal services, advocacy, welcoming

navigation, cultural events, and health and wellness efforts.

- b. The Commission heard that enforcement activity in surrounding counties affects the Charlottesville and Albemarle community because residents, workers, parishioners, and families move across locality lines.
 - c. The speaker expressed appreciation for local statements of support and encouraged continued solidarity and leadership from local government.
- 2. Language Access and Civic Participation
 - a. The speaker identified timely sharing of information in Spanish and other language-access improvements as important ways to reduce barriers and help residents feel included as civic members of the community.
 - b. The Commission heard that progress has been made, but that residents still face barriers when interacting with institutions, understanding public information, and accessing services without relying on family members or children as interpreters.
- 3. Housing, Affordability, and Workplace Issues
 - a. The speaker stated that immigrant community members face the same broader affordability pressures as other residents, including housing costs, food access concerns, tenant rights issues, and additional landlord fees.
 - b. The Commission heard that language barriers and limited education can make detailed leases, billing, late fees, and landlord communications difficult to navigate.
 - c. The speaker also described persistent wage-theft concerns, including contractors or workers not being paid for services rendered and having limited practical recourse because of language, immigration status, lack of identification, or fear of retaliation.
- 4. Court Access and Immigration Enforcement
 - a. Commissioners asked about the effect of immigration enforcement activity on residents willingness to use courts or other public institutions.
 - b. The speaker stated that anxiety remains around courthouses, clerks offices, public buildings, food banks, churches, and other institutions, and that clear local communication about protections and procedures would help build trust.
 - c. The Commission discussed the importance of making public institutions accessible and safe for community members who need to seek help or comply with legal

processes.

- b. Work Plan check-in
 - i. Tabled.
- c. New Business
 - i. Tabled.
- d. Next work session on August 6, 2026
 - i. The Commission decided not to hold the August 6, 2026, work session and will proceed to the next regular meeting unless another need arises.

6. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

a. PUBLIC COMMENT

i. Mary Carey

1. Mary Carey spoke about conditions at Midway Manor and described concerns affecting senior residents, particularly Black senior residents and residents with mobility needs.
2. Issues raised included changes in property management, reduced laundry access, increased laundry costs, pest concerns, security and entry-door problems, alleged delays in repairs, accessibility barriers for residents using wheelchairs, walkers, canes, or other mobility devices, and concerns about resident safety.
3. Ms. Carey stated that residents have contacted multiple offices and organizations and expressed frustration that residents feel they lack effective support or accountability for out-of-state or private property owners.
4. Commissioners asked clarifying questions about building conditions, accessibility barriers, documentation, possible legal resources, and the status of fire marshal involvement.

ii. Deborah Booker

1. Deborah Booker spoke about conditions and billing concerns at Blue Ridge Crossings, formerly Barracks West Apartments, where she stated she lives with a City-issued Section 8 voucher in Albemarle County.
2. Issues raised included parking and towing practices, charges for regular and accessible parking, mandatory internet fees, renters insurance requirements, maintenance concerns, construction or site work, and confusion over account balances and multiple ledgers.
3. Ms. Booker stated that she had sought assistance from multiple entities and remained uncertain how to resolve billing and lease concerns.
4. Commissioners noted that the property appears to be outside Charlottesville City limits but discussed possible referrals and follow-up avenues related to housing stability, junk fees, and tenant support.

- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
 - i. The Commission indicated that it would review available information, discuss possible follow-up with staff, and consider appropriate referrals or advocacy options within the limits of its jurisdiction.
 - ii. Commissioners encouraged public commenters to provide documentation and contact information so that concerns can be better understood and, where possible, shared with appropriate partners.

7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- a. No commissioner updates were recorded apart from the discussion and follow-up items already captured above.

8. NEXT STEPS

- a. Key Decisions
 - i. The June 18, 2026, regular meeting minutes were approved by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained.
 - ii. The Commission will use stakeholder input from the panel discussion to inform upcoming state legislative and local policy recommendations.
 - iii. The Commission will continue investigating whether the state legislative recommendation timeline can be adjusted without missing the City Council legislative process.
 - iv. The Commission will not hold the August 6, 2026, work session and will proceed to the next regular meeting unless another need arises.
- b. Action items
 - i. Heather Roberson Gaston
 - 1. Continue stakeholder outreach and coordination, including outreach to Cville Pride, Alexandria ARISE, the Disability Law Center, and other stakeholder organizations identified by the Commission.
 - a. Deadline/timing: Ongoing; before the next regular meeting where feasible.
 - 2. Coordinate with staff on whether the state legislative recommendation timeline can be adjusted to allow additional stakeholder input.
 - a. Deadline/timing: Before the August regular meeting.
 - ii. Todd / staff
 - 1. Send commissioners dates and times for upcoming outreach events, including Soul of Cville, Cville Sabroso, and Pride.
 - a. Deadline/timing: As soon as dates and tabling schedules are confirmed.
 - 2. Forward information about the summer point-in-time count and related volunteer opportunities.
 - a. Deadline/timing: Before the July 20-31, 2026, count and assessment period.

3. Continue the hiring process and update the Commission once the finalist process advances.
 - a. Deadline/timing: Ongoing.
 4. Track the Human Rights Ordinance amendments expected for the July 20, 2026, City Council meeting and update the Commission if needed.
 - a. Deadline/timing: After the July 20, 2026, City Council meeting or sooner if questions arise.
 5. Confirm the City Council legislative recommendation timeline, including whether the prior August 30 deadline remains in effect.
 - a. Deadline/timing: Before the August regular meeting.
- iii. Elizabeth Stark
1. Meet with Virginia Poverty Law Center representatives to discuss legislative priorities and housing-related recommendations.
 - a. Deadline/timing: Virtual meeting scheduled for Monday, July 20, 2026, at 3:00 pm.
 2. Begin cross-referencing housing priorities raised during the stakeholder discussion with prior Commission recommendations.
 - a. Deadline/timing: Before the August regular meeting.
- iv. Suzanne Lynn
1. Begin compiling the policy issues raised by panelists into potential state legislative and local policy recommendation categories once the minutes or notes are available.
 - a. Deadline/timing: Before September discussion, if feasible.
- v. Legal Aid Justice Center / Catherin Cone
1. Provide follow-up information on tenant-protection laws, effective dates, code sections, and potential implementation gaps, including habitability-defense issues not clearly covered by the current statutory language.
 - a. Deadline/timing: After the meeting; timing to be determined.
- vi. 10th and Page Neighborhood Association / James Bryant and Zyahna Bryant
1. Share written information or proposed language regarding development impact funds, expanded property tax relief, deeply affordable housing, zoning concerns, and neighborhood-specific development impacts.
 - a. Deadline/timing: After the meeting; before recommendations are finalized if feasible.
- vii. BRACH / Shayla Washington
1. Email BRACH policy priorities and any follow-up information about homelessness funding, Holiday Drive, encampment

transition planning, and assessment data as available.

- a. Deadline/timing: After the meeting; before recommendations are finalized if feasible.

viii. All commissioners

1. Review stakeholder input and share any additional legislative or local policy ideas with Commission leadership and staff.
 - a. Deadline/timing: Before the August regular meeting.
2. Send follow-up questions for panelists or public commenters to staff or Commission leadership so they can be routed appropriately.
 - a. Deadline/timing: As soon as possible after the meeting.

c. Items to verify

1. Verify statutory details and effective dates for the tenant-protection laws summarized by LAJC before using them in formal recommendations.
2. Verify the affordable-housing fund contribution requirement and radius provision discussed in relation to student housing development projects.
3. Verify the status of the Wertland Street project.
4. Verify the allocation and restrictions associated with state homelessness funding discussed in relation to the Salvation Army, Holiday Drive, and other local shelter or housing projects.

9. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.



Newly Enacted Housing Legislation and Proposed Housing Legislative Priorities

A Presentation to the Charlottesville Human Rights Commission, July 16, 2026

Catherine Cone, Director, Housing and Consumer Justice Program

New Tenant Protections Effective July 1, 2026

- 14-day Pay or Quit
- Limited Bifurcation in Eviction Cases
- Appeal Bond Reform
- Warranty of Habitability
- Locality Enforcement
- A/C = Essential Service
- Eviction Protections for DV Survivors
- Service Members Civil Relief Act
- Method of Payment/
Maintenance Fees
- Eviction Diversion Program
- Virginia Eviction Reduction Program
- Rights of Mobile Home Residents



14 Day Pay or Quit Notice

Va. Code § 55.1-1245(F)

- Landlords are required to give tenants a written notice of the amount due and 14 days to pay or leave before filing an eviction lawsuit.
- If notice gives the tenant less than 14 days to pay OR leave, tenant has defense to the eviction.



Limit Bifurcation in Eviction Cases

Va. Code § 8.01-128(B)

- Courts cannot bifurcate evictions cases when the tenant appears at court and contests the amount of rent and damages owed.
- This will ensure that tenants have the opportunity to fully defend themselves in court before their landlords can evict them.

“The plaintiff may, alternatively, receive a final, appealable judgment for possession of the property unlawfully entered or unlawfully detained and be issued an order of possession at the initial hearing on a summons for unlawful detainer, upon evidence presented by the plaintiff to the court. At the initial hearing, upon request of the plaintiff, the court shall bifurcate the unlawful detainer case and set a continuance date no later than 120 days from the date of the initial hearing to determine final rent and damages. ***If, however, at the initial hearing the defendant contests the amount of rent and damages alleged to be due and owing to the plaintiff, the court shall not bifurcate the case.***”



Appeal Bond Reform

- Indigent tenants don't have to pay an appeal bond when appealing their eviction case from General District Court to Circuit Court.
- “Indigency” is determined by guidelines set forth in §19.2-159.
- Appeal bond is limited to an amount deemed sufficient by the judge or her clerk, or an amount sufficient to satisfy the judgment, including attorney's fees.
- During an appeal, a tenant must pay rent to the landlord on or before 5th day of the month. If a tenant misses a payment, the landlord can file a motion for judgment and possession, which the court must grant. §16.01-107(C).



Warranty of Habitability Defense

Va. Code § 55.1-1241

- This bill strengthens tenants' rights to a habitable property by allowing tenants to raise unsafe and hazardous conditions as a defense in a nonpayment of rent eviction case. Prior law did not allow courts to consider unsafe conditions when determining how much rent a tenant owed unless the tenant pre-paid all rent alleged due into escrow.
- This bill would allow courts to resolve conditions and rent issues at the same time by removing the escrow requirement, leading to more efficient and fairer results.
- To utilize the defense, however, tenants must:
 - Prior to eviction filing, notify the landlord in writing of condition (or a state or local agency must have issued a violation or condemnation notice); and
 - The condition must be a fire hazard or serious threat to life, health, or safety of the occupants.

New Tenant Protections Effective January 1, 2027

- Protections against landlord retaliation
- Tenant's assertion reform
- Rights in event of fire or mass casualty

New Tenant Protections Effective July 1, 2027

- Ledger transparency
- Transparency in tenant screening
- Payment plan
- Notice of rent increase

Proposed Legislative Priorities for 2027

- ***Anti-rent gouging***: allows localities to limit rent increases
- ***Regulation of junk fees***: limits junk fees, including security deposit caps and other fee limits
- ***Increased funding for housing affordability***: 5,000 families rental assistance subsidy program
- ***Authority to file class actions***: expands meaningful access to our courts by allowing many individuals to bring their claims together as a single lawsuit, supporting the cost of litigation
- ***Lowered barriers for tenants with criminal legal system involvement***
- ***Allies for Housing Action priorities*** (forthcoming)

How to reach LAJC and other legal services providers:

LAJC:

1000 Preston Avenue, Suite A
Charlottesville, VA 22903
Phone: 434-977-0553

Central Virginia Legal Aid Society:

Phone: 434-296-8851 or toll free at 800-390-9983

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia:

Phone: 804-354-0641
(referral source for fair housing cases)

Policy Recommendations to the Charlottesville Human Rights Commission on Homelessness and Housing

July 16, 2026

The Blue Ridge Area Coalition for the Homeless (BRACH) encourages the Charlottesville Human Rights Commission to recognize that access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is fundamental to the dignity, health, and human rights of every resident. As homelessness continues to impact our community, especially in light of recent news regarding a specific homeless encampment, local policy should prioritize solutions that are evidence-based, collaborative, and centered on long-term housing stability.

Virginia has continued to invest in homelessness response through expanded Virginia Housing Trust Fund Homeless Reduction Grants and increased support for innovative housing programs for underserved populations. BRACH is also appreciative of the state passing legislation concerning eviction notice periods increasing from five days to 14 days, as this will allow closer coordination with landlords to resolve arrears before eviction filings, more effective use of flexible financial assistance during the extended notice period, and most importantly, potential decreases in inflow to homelessness if households receive timely support before formal eviction proceedings.

These investments and supports reinforce what communities across the Commonwealth have learned: homelessness is best addressed through coordinated systems that combine affordable housing with supportive services rather than relying solely on emergency responses.

Locally, there are 241 individuals on our community's By-Name List, 16 of whom are military veterans, 15 youth ages 18-24, and 70 (or 29%) ages 55 and older.

To strengthen Charlottesville's local response, we recommend the following policy priorities, in addition to uplifting all of the proposed legislative priorities proposed by Legal Aid Justice Center:

1. Expand the Supply of Affordable and Supportive Housing

- Incentivize the development and preservation of affordable housing across all income levels.
- Increase local investment in permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, especially with new uncertainty in investments of this programming at the federal level
- Encourage zoning and land use policies that expand housing opportunities, including mixed-income and supportive housing developments.

2. Strengthen Homelessness Prevention

- Invest in eviction prevention, rental assistance, mediation, and legal support before households lose their housing.

- Expand flexible financial assistance for households experiencing temporary crises.
- Coordinate prevention efforts with schools, healthcare systems, and community organizations to identify housing instability early.

3. Improve Cross-System Collaboration

- Continue strengthening partnerships among local government, healthcare providers, behavioral health agencies, law enforcement, housing providers, nonprofits, and people with lived experience.
- Support the Continuum of Care's coordinated entry system as the central access point for housing resources.
- Ensure policy decisions are informed by local HMIS data and measurable outcomes.

4. Promote Human Rights Through Compassionate Community Responses

- Prioritize outreach, engagement, and housing solutions over punitive approaches to unsheltered homelessness. For those of you unaware, the City of Charlottesville is officially working to close the encampments at Free Bridge and 0 East High Street by September 1, in advance of flood season and in light of increasing public pressures
- Ensure individuals experiencing homelessness maintain equitable access to public services, identification assistance, healthcare, sanitation, and transportation.
- Include people with lived experience in policy development and evaluation.

5. Invest in Sustainable Funding

- Expand local funding that can leverage state and federal resources.
- Support initiatives that maximize Virginia Housing Trust Fund and Continuum of Care investments while maintaining flexibility to address emerging community needs. Virginia continues to prioritize these funding streams as core components of its statewide homelessness strategy.

Finally, Charlottesville should continue advocating for policies that recognize homelessness as both a housing issue and a community health issue. Stable housing improves health outcomes, increases employment opportunities, reduces strain on emergency systems, and strengthens neighborhoods. By aligning local policy with proven practices and Virginia's continued investments in housing stability, our community can make meaningful progress toward ensuring every resident has the opportunity to live safely, with dignity, and in permanent housing.

Housing is not simply shelter—it is the foundation from which individuals and families can rebuild their lives. Thoughtful, data-informed, and collaborative policy decisions today will help create a more equitable and resilient Charlottesville for generations to come.

Attachment IV



City of Charlottesville Office of Human Rights Monthly Report: August 2026

HRC Work Summary

The table below provides an overview of the work done by the Human Rights Commission in the current calendar year.

Date	Roles (Sec. 433)	Primary Action	Summary & Analysis
2/9/2026	Sec. 2-433. (b) Community Outreach & Engagement	Public Poll	The HRC released a public poll to solicit feedback on human and civil rights issues that are important to the community. The poll ran from 02/09/26 to 02/23/26 and received 103 responses. Commissioners will use this information to inform their annual planning for CY2026.
2/19/2026	Sec. 2-433. (a) Individual Assistance	Public Discussion	The HRC voted to hold the Appeal Hearing for case 2025-2 by a panel of 3 Commissioners.
4/16/2026	Sec. 2-433. (f) Commission Policies	Policy Review	The HRC reviewed proposed amendments to the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance and voted unanimously to adopt the amendments for recommendation to City Council. The amendments included minor wording changes for clarity, changes to membership criteria, updates to the complaint process procedures, clarification on contracted services for housing cases, and the addition of a conflict-of-interest clause to the Commission enforcement section. These changes will be presented to City Council on June 15, 2026.
4/16/2026	Sec. 2-433. (f) Commission Policies	Policy Review	The HRC reviewed proposed amendments to the HRC Rules & Procedures and voted unanimously to adopt the changes. The amendments included a clarification about public notice for emergency meetings and detailed protocols for the HRC public administrative hearing process.

Date	Roles (Sec. 433)	Primary Action	Summary & Analysis
4/16/2026	Sec. 2-433. (b) Community Outreach & Engagement	Public Discussion	The HRC invited Abi Matthew Wade, Economic Mobility Officer, to present a summary of her work and share data pertaining to key issues of interest to the HRC including the benefits cliff, challenges faced by asset-limited income-constrained employed (ALICE) residents, childcare accessibility, and barriers to economic stability for people with disabilities.
5/21/2026	Sec. 2-433. (f) Commission Policies	Policy Review	The HRC adopted changes to the Rule & Procedures to remove sections that duplicated language from the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance and a section about membership terms that was not part of City code.
6/18/2026	Sec. 2-433. (b) Community Outreach & Engagement	Public Discussion	Residents of the Fifeville neighborhood spoke to the HRC regarding concerns about the proposed development at the corner of 7th Street SW and Delevan Street.
6/18/2026	Sec. 2-433. (e) Legislative Program	Public Discussion	The HRC hosted a question-and-answer session with Delegate Katrina Callsen and Senator Creigh Deeds regarding legislative actions impacting economic stability.
7/16/26	Sec. 2-433. (b) Community Outreach & Engagement	Public Discussion	The HRC hosted a panel that included representatives from the 10th and Page Neighborhood Association, Blue Ridge Area Coalition for the Homeless (BRACH), Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC), and Sin Barreras. Commissioners will use the information from this panel to inform their legislative and City policy recommendations to City Council.

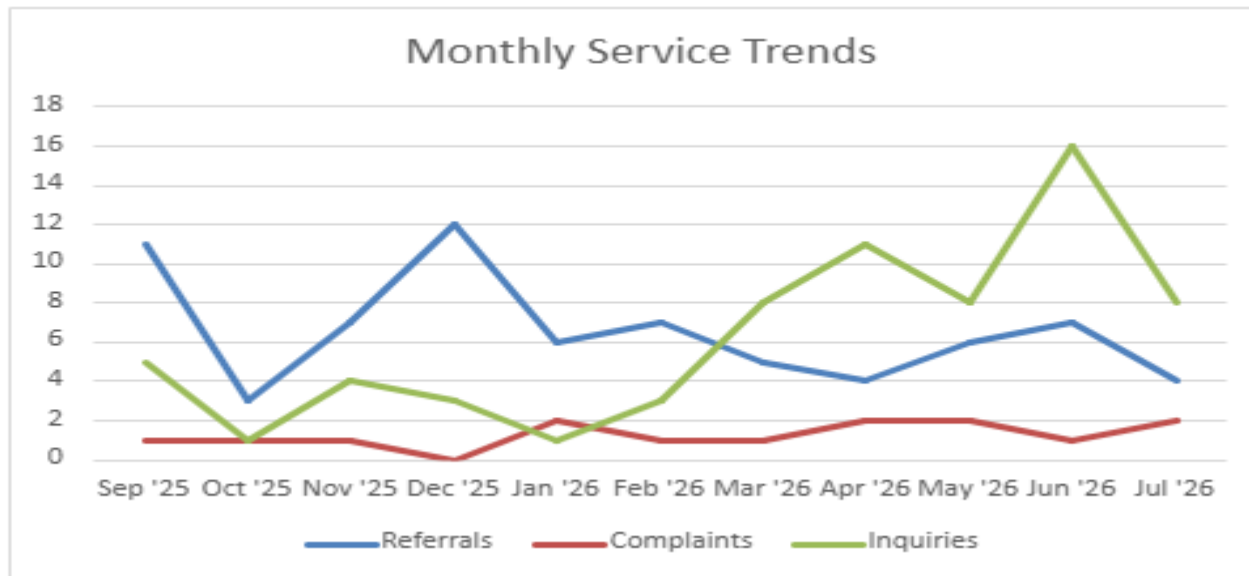
Service Provision

Intake Trends

The table below presents a snapshot of intake data trends over the last 11 months.

Service Type	Sep '25	Oct '25	Nov '25	Dec '25	Jan '26	Feb '26	Mar '26	Apr '26	May '26	Jun '26	Jul '26
Referrals	11	3	7	12	6	7	5	4	6	7	4
Complaints	1	1	1	0	2	1	1	2	2	1	2
Inquiries	5	1	4	3	1	3	8	11	8	16	8

The chart below shows the same data in the table above but in a graphic format.



Active Complaints

The table below provides a summary of the complaints currently open with the Office of Human Rights. While cases continue to move forward, the Office is currently struggling to keep up with new investigations due to the volume of cases, limited staffing, and the cost of contracted investigative services. Additionally, the Director has been pulled away from rendering determinations by the hiring process for the Policy & Impact Analyst, supporting Commission work, and responding to other requests by City Management. Once the hiring process concludes, and the new employee is onboarded, determinations will resume.

Case #	Protected Activity	Protected Class(es)	Status
2021-5	Employment	Sexual Orientation, Race	Investigation in progress.
2024-3	Public Accommodation	National Origin, Sexual Orientation	Investigation in progress.
2024-3R	Public Accommodation	Retaliation	Investigation in progress.
2024-8	Employment	Race, National Origin	Determination in progress.
2024-11	Employment	Sex, Marital Status	Determination in progress.
2025-2	Employment	Race	Appeal in progress.
2025-4	Housing	Source of Funds	Alternative dispute resolution in progress.
2025-6	Employment	Disability, Sex	Determination in progress.
2025-7	Public Accommodation	Disability, Race	Determination in progress.
2025-9	Public Accommodation	Race	Determination in progress.
2025-10	Employment	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity	Determination in progress.
2025-11	Employment	Disability	Investigation in progress.
2025-13	Housing	Disability	Determination in progress.
2025-14	Housing	Race	Determination in progress.
2025-16	Housing	Race	Determination in progress.
2026-2	Housing	Disability, Elderliness	Investigation in progress.
2026-3	Housing	Disability	Investigation in progress.
2026-4	Employment	Race, Retaliation	Alternative dispute resolution in progress.
2026-5	Employment	Disability, Sex, Marital Status	Alternative dispute resolution in progress.
2026-6	Housing	Disability, Retaliation	Alternative dispute resolution in progress.
2026-7	Employment	Disability	Investigation in progress.
2026-8	Housing	Race, National Origin	Awaiting response to offer of alternative dispute resolution.
2026-9	Public Accommodation	Disability	Alternative dispute resolution in progress.
2026-10	Housing	Disability	Alternative dispute resolution in progress.

Multi-year Complaint Case Overview

The table below provides a summary of case status over the past 8 years.

Measure	CY2019	CY2020	CY2021	CY2022	CY2023	CY2024	CY2025	CY2026	Totals
Currently open cases	0	0	1	0	0	4	10	10	25
Open cases awaiting response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Open cases in ADR	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	7
Open cases under investigation	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	3	7
Open cases pending determination	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	0	9
Open cases in HRC public hearing	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total Opened	5	2	12	9	7	13	16	11	64
Total Closed	4	1	8	5	11	7	9	4	45

Reporting

The table below provides a summary of reports submitted to City Council during the current calendar year.

Report	Status
CY2025 Fourth Quarter Report to Council	Submitted February 25, 2026.
CY2025 HRC & OHR Annual Report	Published May 20, 2026 (Presented to City Council on June 1, 2026).
CY2026 First Quarter Report to Council	Submitted April 14, 2026.
CY2026 Second Quarter Report to Council	Submitted August 11, 2026.
CY2026 Third Quarter Report to Council	To be submitted in October 2026.
CY2026 HRC & OHR Annual Report	Projected completion February 2027.

Attachment V

Human Rights Commission
Annual Work Plan: Focus and Goals
March 2026 – February 2027
Date of last revision: 08/18/2026

This document serves as a tool for use during the annual planning meeting and throughout the year to assist with the identification of focus areas and goals and the development of a monthly calendar.

Human Rights Ordinance Reference

The Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance (City Code Chapter 2, Article XV) is the roadmap for the work of both the Human Rights Commission and Office of Human Rights. Sec. 2-433. (a) – (f) of the Ordinance includes details of the roles of the Commission and Office. The subsections are given shortened titles here for easier reference.

Human Rights Commission Roles	General Actions and Timeframes
Sec. 2-433. (a) Individual assistance	• Timing is dependent upon individual complaints and findings • Could include training on: ○ Public administrative hearings ○ Human and civil rights protections
Sec. 2-433. (b) Outreach and engagement	• Timing is throughout the year in response to community issues • Could include community events, presentations, or public polls • Could include community dialogue or other informational programs • Could be expanded with additional staffing and Commission support
Sec. 2-433. (c) Systemic issues, policies, and practices	• Plan to submit recommendations to Council in October or November • Could include single events like panels, forums, and town halls • Could also include long-term multi-year research or reviews of policy • Additional staffing and Commission support could expand the work
Sec. 2-433. (d) Federal workshares	• Timing is dependent upon workshare requirements • May include review and adoption of Ordinance amendments • May include community engagement activities
Sec. 2-433. (e) Legislative program	• Plan to submit legislative recommendations to Council by August 31st • Could include public polls, panels, forums, and town halls • Could include research related to Sec. 2-433. (c)
Sec. 2-433. (f) Commission policies	• Plan to submit recommendations to Council in October or November ○ May include requests for funding for programs or staffing • Changes to the Commission's Rules & Procedures are not timebound • Changes to the Human Rights Ordinance can take multiple months

Annual Focus Areas

Each year the Commission identifies focus areas for its work from March – February. These are informed by current events, public input, data from the Office of Human Rights, and Commissioner knowledge.

Primary Focus Area(s)
1. Economic stability across protected classes.

Annual Goals and Alignment

Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals that align with focus areas and HRC roles under the Human Rights Ordinance.

Goals	Ordinance Alignment	Added to Work Plan
<i>Commission holds a stakeholder discussion at the July 16, 2026, regular meeting and one-on-one stakeholder meetings prior to August 14, 2026.</i>	Sec. 2-433. (b) Outreach and engagement	☒
<i>Commission reviews information learned regarding legislative priorities and begins drafting recommendations for City Council by August 1, 2026.</i>	- Sec. 2-433. (c) Systemic issues, policies, and practices - Sec. 2-433. (e) Legislative program	☒
<i>Commission finalizes and adopts legislative priorities recommendations for City Council by August 20, 2026.</i>	- Sec. 2-433. (c) Systemic issues, policies, and practices - Sec. 2-433. (e) Legislative program	☒
<i>Commission submits legislative recommendations to City Council by August 22, 2026.</i>	- Sec. 2-433. (b) Outreach and engagement - Sec. 2-433. (e) Legislative program	☒
<i>Commission reviews information learned regarding City policies and begins drafting recommendations for City Council by DATE</i>	- Sec. 2-433. (b) Outreach and engagement - Sec. 2-433. (c) Systemic issues, policies, and practices	☐
<i>Commission holds an additional stakeholder meeting to inform City policy recommendations on DATE</i>		☐
<i>Commission finalizes and adopts City policy recommendations for City Council on DATE</i>	- Sec. 2-433. (b) Outreach and engagement - Sec. 2-433. (c) Systemic issues, policies, and practices	☐
<i>Commission submits City policy recommendations to City Council by DATE</i>	- Sec. 2-433. (b) Outreach and engagement - Sec. 2-433. (c) Systemic issues, policies, and practices	☐

**Human Rights Commission
Annual Work Plan: Calendar
March 2026 – February 2027**

Month	Actions
March	☒ Annual Meeting (3/5: Parks & Recreation Conference Room) ☒ Actions Between Meetings ☒ Contact state legislators for May panel ☒ Contact Economic Mobility Officer for 4/16 Regular Meeting ☒ Contact Assistant to the City Manager for 4/16 Regular Meeting
April	☒ Work Session (4/2: City Space) - Not scheduled ☒ HRC Leadership Meeting (4/8 at 5:00pm) ☒ Regular Meeting (4/16: City Space) ☒ Closed session consultation with City Attorney's Office ☒ Review and potentially adopt amendments to the Human Rights Ordinance ☒ Expert panel and community engagement planning ☒ Actions Between Meetings ☒ Upload CY2025 annual report to 6/15 City Council agenda (on or before 5/18) ☒ Upload Ordinance amendments to 6/15 City Council agenda (on or before 5/18) ☒ Expert panel collaborative planning document to identify possible panelists ☒ Reach out to content experts for June or July panel ☒ Review HRC Rules & Procedures for any language changes per 2-432 ☒ Plan next steps and timeline with hearing panel
May	☒ Work Session (5/7: City Space) – Not scheduled ☒ HRC Leadership Meeting (5/13 at 4:00pm) ☒ Regular Meeting (5/21: City Space) ☒ Review list of possible panelists for June or July ☒ Actions Between Meetings ☒ Contact potential panelists by June 1st ☒ Questions for Legislators ☒ Present CY2025 annual report to City Council (6/1) ☒ Present Ordinance amendments to City Council (6/15)
June	☒ Work Session (6/4: City Space) – Not scheduled ☒ HRC Leadership Meeting (6/10 at 4:00pm) ☒ Regular Meeting (6/18: City Space) ☒ Legislator Dialogue ☒ Actions Between Meetings ☒ 2:1 Stakeholder meetings
July	☒ Work Session (7/2: City Space) – Not scheduled ☒ HRC Leadership Meeting (7/8 at 4:00pm) – Not convened ☒ Regular Meeting (7/16: City Space) ☒ Stakeholder Panel ☒ Actions Between Meetings ☒ 2:1 Stakeholder meetings (to be completed by 8/14) ☒ Begin Draft of Legislative Recommendations

Month	Actions
August	☒ Work Session (8/6: City Space) – not scheduled ☒ HRC Leadership Meeting (8/12 at 4:00pm) ☐ Regular Meeting (8/20: City Space) ☐ Review, revise, and adopt state legislative recommendations ☐ Actions Between Meetings ☐ Case 2025-2 Public Administrative Appeal Hearing (8/27 at 6:00pm: City Space) ☐ Draft and submit state legislative recommendations to City Council by 8/30 ☐ Review HRC application for any language changes per 2-432
September	☐ Work Session (9/3: City Space) ☐ HRC Leadership Meeting (9/9 at 4:00pm) ☐ Regular Meeting (9/17: City Space) ☐ Discuss City policy recommendations ☐ Discuss potential second stakeholder meeting ☐ Intern presentations ☐ Actions Between Meetings ☐ City policy stakeholder outreach
October	☐ Work Session (10/1: City Space) ☐ HRC Leadership Meeting (10/7 at 4:00pm) ☐ Regular Meeting (10/15: City Space) ☐ Form Officer Nomination Committee (minimum of three Commissioners) ☐ City Policy stakeholder meeting ☐ Actions Between Meetings ☐ Nominating Committee begins nomination process ☐ Chair begins draft of City policy recommendations to Council
November	☐ Work Session (11/5: City Space) ☐ HRC Leadership Meeting (11/11 at 4:00pm) ☐ Regular Meeting (11/19: City Space) ☐ Adopt City policy recommendations ☐ Actions Between Meetings
December	☐ Work Session (12/3: City Space) ☐ HRC Leadership Meeting (12/9 at 4:00pm) ☐ Regular Meeting (12/17: City Space) ☐ Officer Nominating Committee presents slate of nominees (or in January?) ☐ Actions Between Meetings
January	☐ Work Session (1/7: City Space) ☐ HRC Leadership Meeting (1/6 at 4:00pm) ☐ Regular Meeting (1/21: City Space) ☐ Officer elections ☐ Plan date for Annual Meeting in March ☐ Actions Between Meetings

Month	Actions
February	☐ Work Session (2/4: City Space) ☐ HRC Leadership Meeting (DATE) ☐ Regular Meeting (2/18: City Space) ☐ Planning for Annual Meeting ☐ Actions Between Meetings ☐ HRC leadership begins draft of annual focus and goals