



**City of Dallas**

# **Human Rights Commission Follow-up, Engagement, Findings, and Feedback**

**Workforce, Education, and Equity  
Committee  
June 10, 2024**

**Dr. Lindsey Wilson, Director  
Chris Graves, Human Rights Officer  
Office of Equity & Inclusion**

# Presentation Overview



## Section I: Recap

- WEE Memo: Human Rights Commission
- Key Questions and Themes

## Section II: Engagement

- Commissions' Input
- External Cities' Feedback and Learnings

## Section III: Findings

- Opportunities
- Considerations
- Direction from WEE





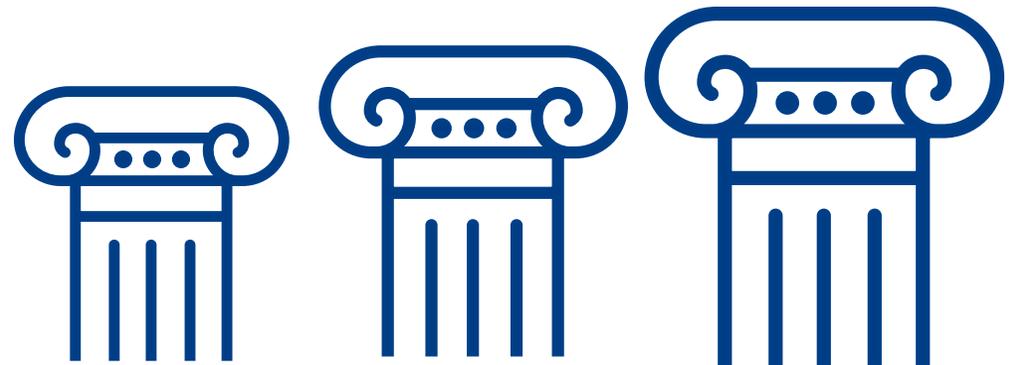
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# Recap of Human Rights Commission



## February 2024 WEE Memo Highlighted:

1. Consideration for Commission Structure
  - Human rights holders have cross-cutting identities (i.e., intersectionality)
2. The FIFA Human Rights Framework and Three Pillars:
  - Inclusion and Safeguarding
  - Worker's Rights
  - Access to Remedy



# Key Questions and Themes



- 1 Inquiries around the Structure and Council Wanting to Examine Alignment
- 2 Functions, Roles and Responsibilities
- 3 Membership Guidelines and Requirements





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# Local and National Engagement



# Engagement Summary



Our engagement efforts focused on the Veteran Affairs Commission and Commission on Disabilities and reaching other U.S. cities with Human Rights Commissions.



**Veteran's &  
Disabilities  
Commission**



**18 U.S.  
Cities**



# Existing Commissions' Feedback



Gathered input from **Veteran Affairs Commission (VAC)** and **Commission on Disabilities** in March and April 2024.

An advertisement for the City of Dallas Boards and Commissions. It features a group of diverse people smiling. The text includes: "GET ON BOARD! BECOME A VOICE FOR DALLAS", "We are looking for residents committed to improving Dallas. APPLY to join a City of Dallas Board or Commission Today!", "Boards and Commissions", "Building Inspection Advisory &amp; Examining Appeals Board bit.ly/3ANCG4V3", "Fire Code Advisory Board bit.ly/FireCodeAdvisory", "APPLY HERE bit.ly/BoardsandCommission", and "For more information about the Boards and Commissions, please visit bit.ly/CODBandC". There is also a "SCAN ME!" QR code.

## Topics included:

- Feedback on current structure
- Input on how to structure the Human Rights Commission while advancing their issues
- Identification of any issues around representation and/or effectiveness



# Commissions Feedback



## Cross-Cutting Themes from both Commissions Ranged from:

- Increasing visibility of the rights of people with disabilities by considering their multiple identities (i.e., intersectionality).
- VAC supports initiative but agreed on recommendation to stay independent to maximize effectiveness for veterans (see Appendix).
- COD saw effectiveness increased through synergy of human rights holders on key issues (i.e., LGBTQIA+).
- Consistent theme to not forget needs of unique groups if Council combines.





Engaged **18 U.S. cities** on their Human Rights - Relations Commissions (**HRCs**).

- Cities ranged from east to west coast with 3 of top 10 biggest U.S. cities engaged.

## Topics included:

- Structure and Functions
- Key Practices
- Challenges



# U.S. Cities Contacted



1) San Francisco, CA

2) Des Moines, IA

3) Iowa City, IA

4) **Chicago, IL**

5) Bloomington, IN

6) New Orleans, LA

7) Boston, MA

8) Ann Arbor, MI

9) Baltimore, MD

10) Columbia, MO

11) **New York City**

12) Durham, NC

13) **Philadelphia, PA**

14) Pittsburgh, PA

15) Charlottesville, VA

16) Tacoma, WA

17) **Fort Worth, TX**

18) **Austin, TX**



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# Findings

# Key Practices



## Several Key Themes Emerged

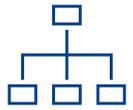
- Focus on core responsibilities
- Foster effective membership
- Maintain bi-directional communication with community to identify emerging issues
- Align the Commission with existing strategic efforts
- Stagger terms
- Housing and employment discrimination enforcement mechanisms



# Structure and Functions



Varied on size and scope of membership.



Include both community-facing programming and enforcement through HUD.



Offered know your rights awareness, co-organized forums.



Some had ability to add human rights protections beyond federal and state law.



# General Themes that Emerged



- Challenges
  - Building trust with communities.
  - Referring cases if no jurisdiction (HUD).
  - Ordinance may limit scope.
  - Balancing HRC plans with volunteer Commissioners.
  - Limited organizational capacity.
  - Fostering collaboration among Commissioners.



# General Themes that Emerged



- Effective Strategies
  - Consider addressing gaps (i.e., know your rights efforts addressing hate crimes across protected categories).
  - Foster inter-Commission collaboration.
  - Ensure equal representation of protected classes.
  - Meet public safety needs in non-law enforcement capacity.
  - Adopt innovative approaches to address human trafficking (i.e., U and T Visa).



# Opportunities and Considerations



- Opportunities
  - Potentially increase effectiveness on key issues through approach bridging multiple identities.
  - Adopt innovative focus areas aligned with WEE including veterans, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+, workers, re-entry, and hate crimes.
- Considerations
  - OEI already addresses housing discrimination through Fair Housing.
  - Developing robust community-relations structure with community buy-in.
  - Align mission of HRC with Council priorities and governing ordinance.



# Next Steps for Council to Consider



- As the City addresses human rights, who should be at the table?



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**Workforce, Education, and Equity  
Committee  
May 13, 2024**

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# Appendix – VAC Recommendation



## VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION (VAC)

APRIL 25, 2024

In its special meeting of April 25, 2004, the Commissioners of the VAC passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, While the VAC strongly supports the creation of a Human Rights Commission (HRC) for the city of Dallas; and

WHEREAS, The VAC firmly believes that maintaining its existence as a separate Commission for the City of Dallas is vital to the interests of veterans within the City of Dallas; and

WHEREAS, These statements are based on the different mission and different goals of the VAC from the proposed HRC and the belief that combining the VAC and HRC could reduce and/or dilute the effectiveness of both Commissions, thus, potentially doing a disservice to the constituencies served by both Commissions;

NOW, THEREFORE,

The VAC recommends to the Dallas City Council that the VAC remain a separate Commission for the City of Dallas; and

The VAC supports the establishment of a HRC for the City of Dallas.

