

City of Ames Human Relations Commission Strategic Plan 2023-2025

Strategic Goal A – Advocacy

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) values a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community and will function as an advocacy group for the citizens of the City of Ames. The Commission will undertake activities to discover, conduct analysis on, and circumvent instances that may lead to prohibited discrimination so that the community can be educated and assisted in preventing it. Commission members will be active participants in the city and will develop and follow a protocol to handle discriminatory incidents in the Ames community and will report and make recommendations directly to the City Council to ensure all voices are heard.

Strategic Goal B – Information & Analysis

The Human Relations Commission will study the existence, character, causes and extent of discriminatory practices in the community while using resources to gain information and work with community partners, leaders, and report directly to the City Council.

OBJECTIVE 1: HRC will maintain objective knowledge related to claims of discrimination.

- HRC will work directly with the Iowa Civil Right Commission and will collaborate annually with a representative to better understand the complaint process.
- HRC will obtain and review reports from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission on claims of discrimination in relation to types and probable cause.
- HRC will obtain and review reports from the City on types of claims made locally in writing, or on the website and report of Discriminatory Claims to the City, and any concerns expressed through HumanRelations@cityofames.org.
- HRC will obtain and review formal and informal reports that will be used to determine priority areas of focus and will share with City Council and community stakeholders annually and as needed.

OBJECTIVE 2: HRC will partner with City and community members to learn about discrimination and how to decrease the risk.

- HRC will partner with community employers and human resource specialists to identify concerns and opportunities for non-discriminatory workplace cultures as needed.
- HRC will summarize and share qualitative and quantitative findings with City Council relating to claims of discrimination.
- HRC will work with the City to identify public reporting related to inclusion and anti-discriminatory practices.

OBJECTIVE 3: HRC will identify opportunities for obtaining information related to community member perceptions and experiences in relation to housing, employment, public accommodation, race and ethnicity, gender identity, religion, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or familial status.

- HRC will reach out to community partners or populations to identify concerns or successes in the areas mentioned above.
- HRC will collect and summarize findings to be used for future planning, i.e., Community Demographics, CyRide or City Surveys.

OBJECTIVE 4: HRC will be an active presence in providing community education and deterring discrimination.

- The Commission will increase engagement and community interactions.
- Monitor and report contacts or participation in relation to social media and public engagement activities.

Strategic Goal C – Public Awareness & Effective Communication

The Human Relations Commission strives to be a central location for the citizens of the City of Ames to advocate for, build awareness of, and communicate with. Commission members will connect with their community through public awareness and effective communication.

Objective 1: Help improve communication effectiveness with the general public through media outlets and active presence in the Ames community. The following are examples of possible actions:

- Provide materials for educational press releases or social media on topics related to diversity, housing, employment, public accommodations, or services, etc.
- Co-sponsor and have commissioners attend community events with aligned organizations and individuals throughout the City, such as but not limited to the annual awarding of the Humanitarian award (January-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday), Fair Housing Award (April at City Council), AAPI Heritage Month Celebration event (May), Juneteenth (June).
- Help provide information on community events for Ames City's online event calendar and have commissioners attend the events.

Strategic Goal D – Management Excellence

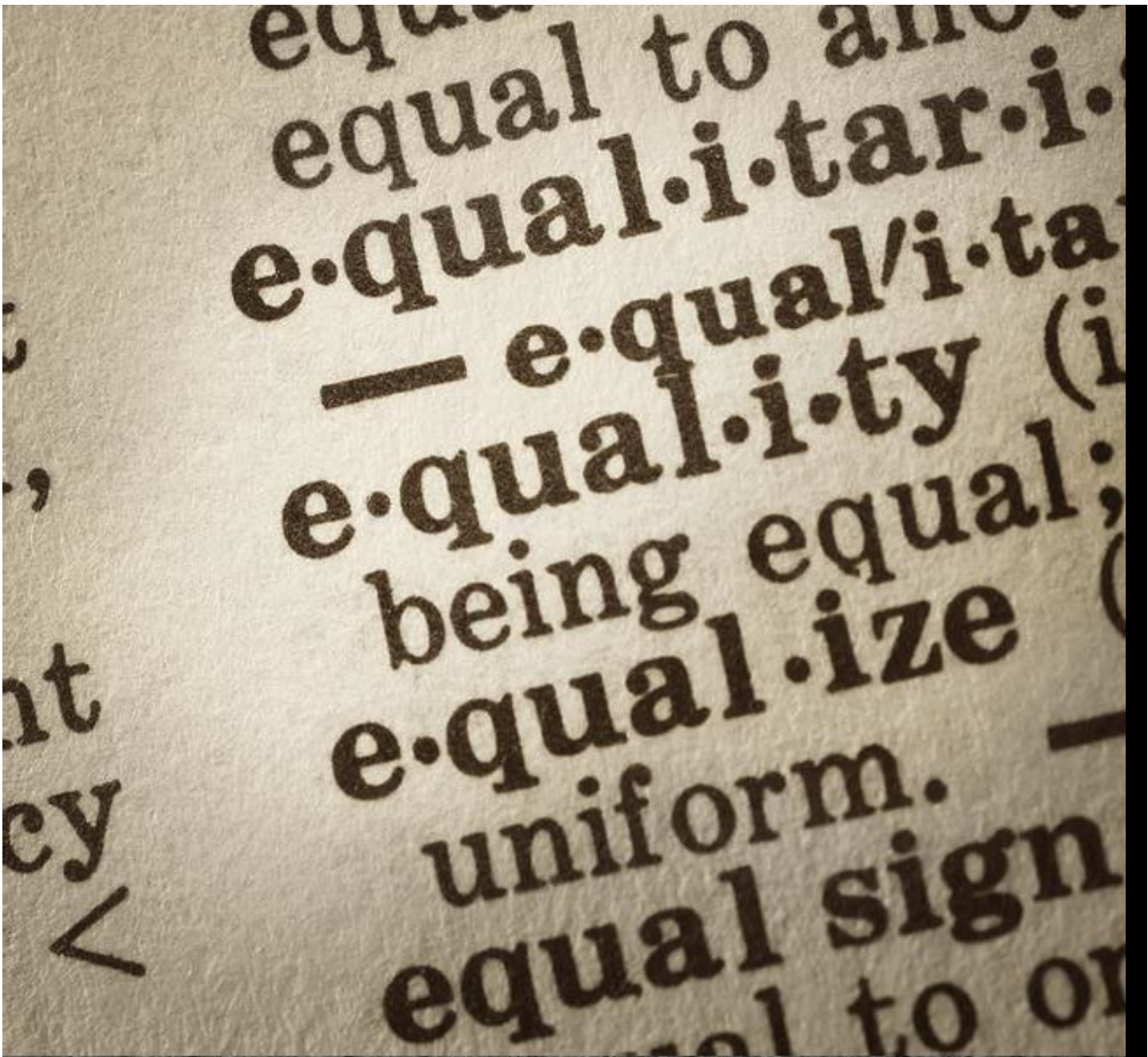
The Human Relations Commission will work towards this strategic plan for the betterment of our community in an ethical and fiscally responsible way.

Objective 1: HRC will strive to keep this strategic plan at the forefront of all its decisions and activities and within our areas of focus and expertise

- HRC Commission Members will work with community partners who specialize in areas of expertise.
- HRC Commission members will represent the HRC with respect, recognize and celebrate the strength of the City of Ames' greatest asset, the value of all people, via diversity and inclusion. They will be respectful of opinions, customs, and individual preferences to help build strong relationships.

Objective 2: HRC will manage the annual budget in a fiscally responsible manner

- HRC will strive to effectively spend the budgeted monies from the Ames City Council responsibly. Monies allocated for the Commission should only be used in ways that advance these strategic goals.
- HRC will describe the ways in which its monies were used and in what ways its use advanced the goals described above in the annual report.



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

THE AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION'S (AHRC) PURPOSE IS TO STUDY THE EXISTENCE OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE COMMUNITY AND WORK TO MINIMIZE OR ELIMINATE IT, PROMOTE GOODWILL AMONG THE VARIOUS RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE CITY, AND COOPERATE WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ELIMINATE RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL, AND INTERGROUP TENSIONS.

CITY OF AMES MUNICIPAL CODE, CHAPTER 14:

The purpose of this chapter is to implement the provision of the Iowa Civil Rights Act and to further provide for the general welfare of persons in the City of Ames, Iowa, by prohibiting certain discriminatory practices, and to establish a commission for the investigation of complaints of discrimination; and, to undertake projects of education to prevent discrimination; and, to establish procedures for the conciliation of such complaints; and to enforce the provisions hereof.

At an August 2018 City Council workshop, Council members directed AHRC to not adjudicate cases and instead refer all cases to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC). At this workshop, Council also discussed various methods of gathering additional information to inform an adjusted or revised ordinance and directed AHRC to review data available (including the Campus Climate Survey, Municipal Equality Indexes) and other available data; interact with Iowa State University (ISU), Ames Community School District (ACSD), and any others well-positioned to give input on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the community in order to recommend action items and changes to the ordinance.

2022 AHRC COMMISSIONERS:

In addition to new members of AHRC in 2022, diversified efforts in alignment with the strategic plan were pursued. While still navigating the impacts of COVID-19, the AHRC found ways to do the meaningful work set forth by the City Council, specifically around awareness and representation.

- Chunhui Chen
- Wayne Clinton, Vice Chair
- Jahmai Fisher, Chair
- Khushi Patel (appointed September 2022)
- Lynette Plander
- Madesh Samanu (January – June 2022)
- Deb Schildroth, City of Ames Staff Liaison

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ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS:

JANUARY 2022:

- At the Martin Luther King Day Celebration at Ames City Auditorium on January 16, Chair Jahmai Fisher presented the “**Humanitarian**” Award to Anneke Mundel as an individual and the COVID-19 Emergency Fund for Story County Immigrants as an organization. Vice Chair Wayne Clinton served on the organizing committee for the event.
- Chair Jahmai Fisher represented the Commission on KASI radio on January 20, highlighting the work of AHRC.

FEBRUARY 2022:

- Commissioner Chunhui Chen led a collaboration with City of Ames Media Production Services to create a video celebrating Chinese New Year. The video was posted to the City’s social media on February 1.
- At the February 8 City Council meeting, Commissioner Chunhui Chen accepted a Proclamation from Mayor Haila recognizing Chinese New Year.
- For Black History Month, Ames Public Library started an open dialogue series titled “Sharing Our Stories: Black Voices in Ames.” At the first event in the series on February 15, Chair Jahmai Fisher served as moderator and Vice Chair Wayne Clinton was a storyteller.

MARCH 2022:

- Began drafting the 2021 Annual Report.
- Co-sponsored a residency for hip hop duo The Reminders. Between March 1 and March 5, The Reminders held an interactive lecture, a songwriting and lyric workshop, and a concert at the Ames City Auditorium.

APRIL 2022:

- Partnered with City of Ames Housing Coordinator Vanessa Baker-Latimer to run a Fair Housing Month advertisement in the *Story County Sun*.
- Chair Jahmai Fisher presented the “**A Home for Everyone**” Award to Alan Christy at the April 26 City Council meeting.
- Reelected Chair Jahmai Fisher and Vice Chair Wayne Clinton to their respective roles on April 28.
- Approved updated AHRC Bookmark for printing and distribution at events.

MAY 2022:

- Co-sponsored the inaugural Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month Celebration on May 7 at Iowa State University, attended by over 300 people. Facilitated Mayor John Haila’s invitation to give opening remarks at the event. Commissioner Chunhui Chen participated in organizing the event, which included awards for a student essay contest on the theme “AAPI In My Eyes.”

JUNE 2022:

- Co-sponsored the Juneteenth Celebration on June 18 at Bandshell Park. Chair Jahmai Fisher served on the planning committee for the event, and several Commissioners attended.
- Approved FY 2022/2023 AHRC Budget at Commission meeting on June 6.
- Held Joint Meeting with Ames City Council on June 28 to present the Annual Report and approve the FY 2022-2023 Cooperative Agreement with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

- Bade farewell to Commissioner Madesh Samanu as he moved away from Ames.

JULY 2022:

- No activities to report.

AUGUST 2022:

- AHRC hosted an informational table at National Night Out on August 2 and Commissioners connected with Ames community members and educated them about the role the Commission plays within Ames.

SEPTEMBER 2022:

- Prepared a trivia question for City of Ames social media accounts recognizing Latinx Heritage Month.

OCTOBER 2022:

- Welcomed new Commissioner Khushi Patel on October 27.
- Began updates for the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.
- Promoted and attended the 10th Annual Ames Chinese Cultural Festival on October 30, organized by the Ames Chinese Language Academy and Ames Public Library. Facilitated Mayor John Haila's invitation to give opening remarks at the event.

NOVEMBER 2022:

- The 2022 Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations was held on November 1. Chair Jahmai Fisher participated in planning the event. Vice Chair Wayne Clinton and Commissioner Chunhui Chen attended the event.
- Participated in the interview process for the new City of Ames Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator position.

DECEMBER 2022:

- Selected the 2023 "Humanitarian" Award Recipient: Maria Celeste Gonzalez Chavez.

AMES CIVIL RIGHT COMPLAINTS TO THE IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION 2022:

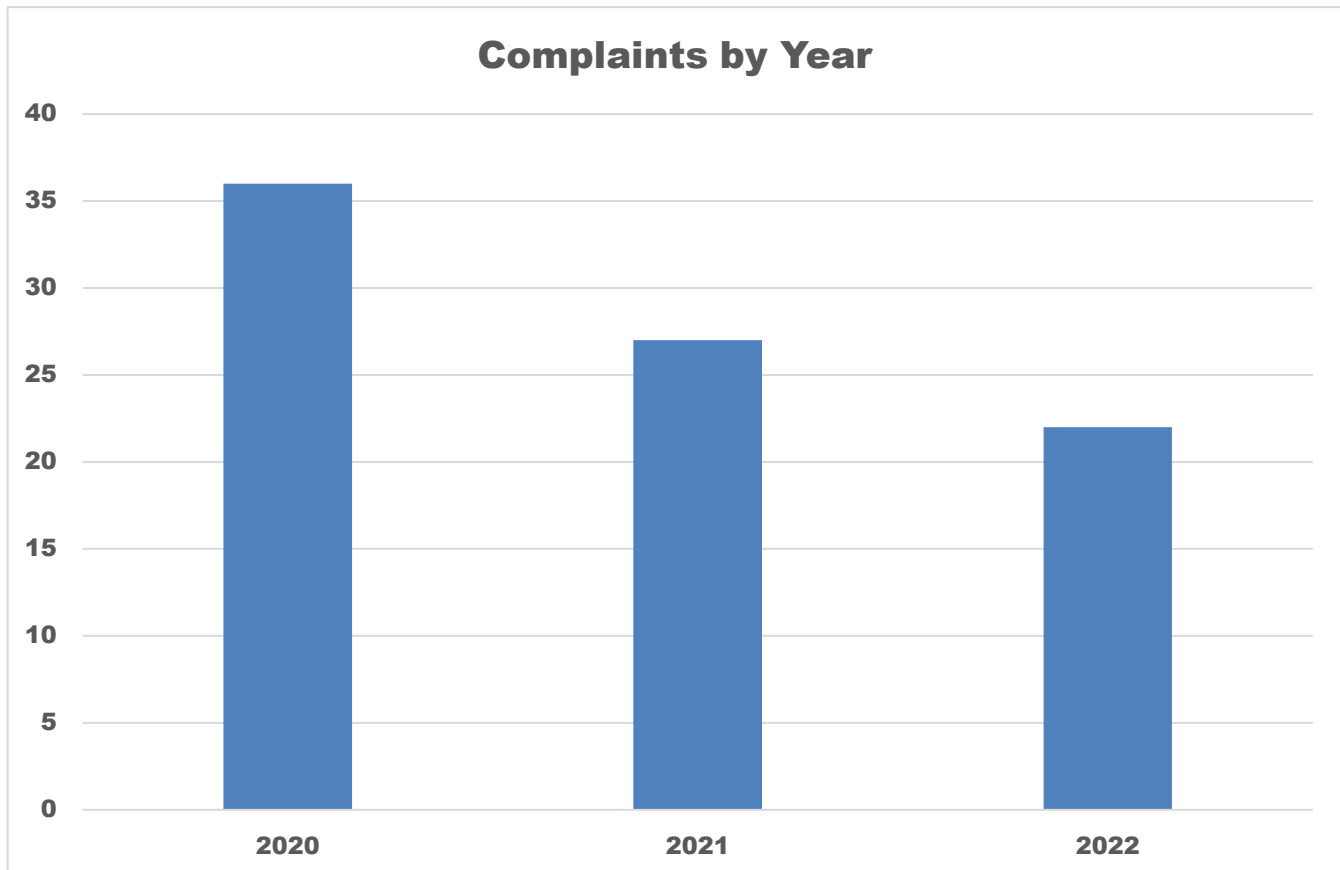
Citizens can initiate complaints to the City via the City Manager's Office or make them directly to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC). As a matter of procedure, reports made to the City are sent to the ICRC for investigation and are tracked by the ICRC. Reports have been made to ICRC involving Ames of which the Ames Human Relations Commission is not notified. The Commission requested aggregate summaries of the Ames complaints made to the ICRC to understand the areas of complaints and concerns identified. Results of this request are provided below.

Figures 1 & 2. Discrimination Complaint Categories

There was a total of twenty-two (22) complaints in 2022 to the ICRC, which are grouped in the following three (3) categories: **Employment, Public Accommodation, and Housing**. There are two additional categories, Education and Credit, that did not have complaints filed in 2022.

As indicated in the charts below, the main areas of complaints included Employment (16 complaints), Housing (3 complaints) and Public Accommodation (2 complaints) and one complaint involving both Employment and Public Accommodation. The data shows a steady decline in complaints from 2020 to 2022. The reason is unknown.

Figure 1



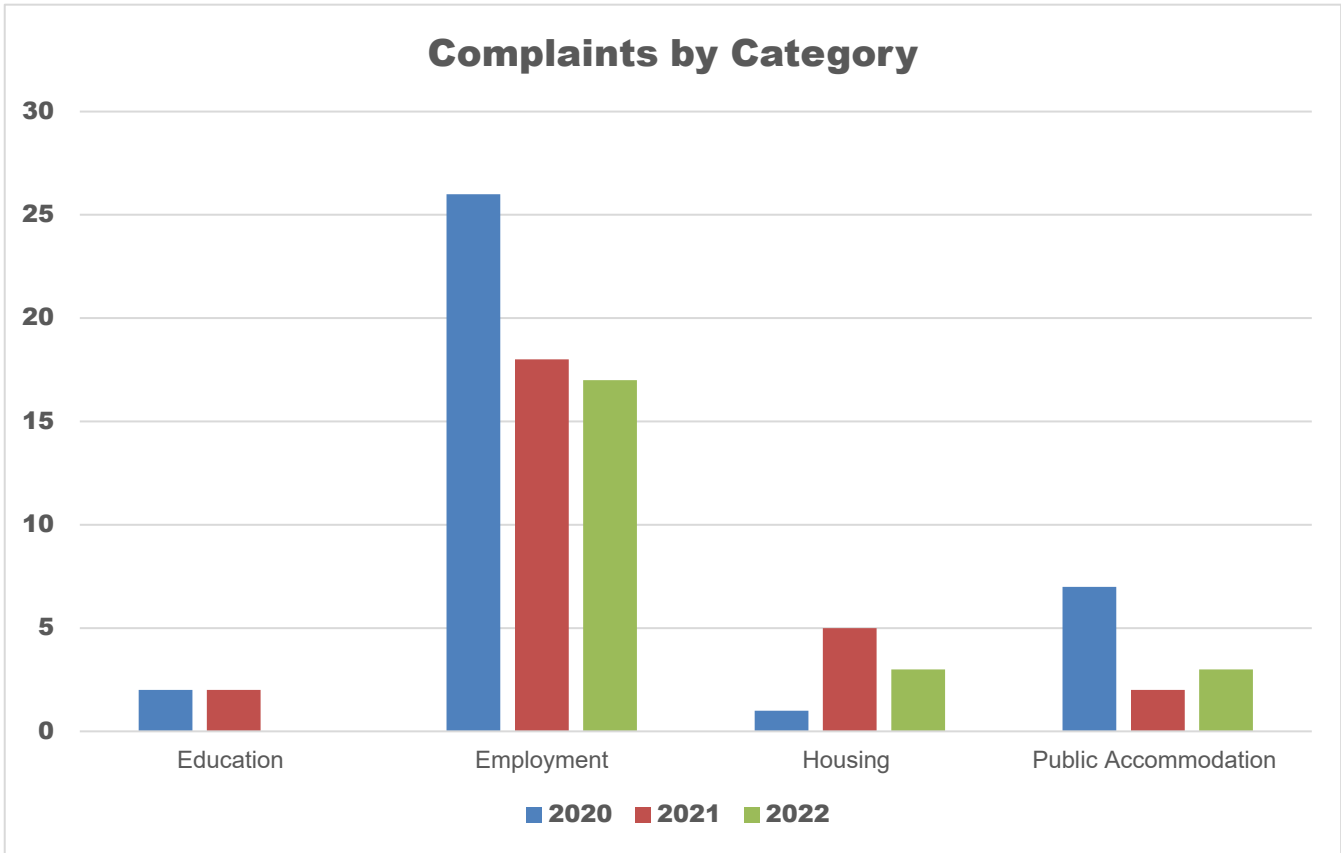


Figure 2

Although complaints in 2022 show a decrease, Employment as a category is the basis for the majority of the complaints, 17 total.

Notable Changes Between 2021 and 2022

- There was a 7.4% decrease in complaints overall.
- Education decreased from 2 to 0 complaints.
- Employment decreased from 18 to 17 complaints.
- Housing decreased from 5 to 3 complaints.
- Public Accommodation increased from 2 to 3 complaints.

Figure 3. Basis for Complaints

This graph illustrates the basis for the complaint areas in Figure 1. The categories as defined by Iowa Code are Age, Color, Creed, Familial Status, Gender Identity, Marital Status, Mental Disability, National Origin, Physical Disability, Race Religion, Retaliation, Sex, Sexual Orientation,

Please note that individuals may file complaints on more than one area simultaneously. In 2022 there were 6 complaints using just one (1) area, six (6) complaints using two areas, and nine (9) complaints using 3 or more areas.

The 2022 data reflects an increase in complaints involving National Origin and Gender Identity as compared to the 2020 and 2021 data.

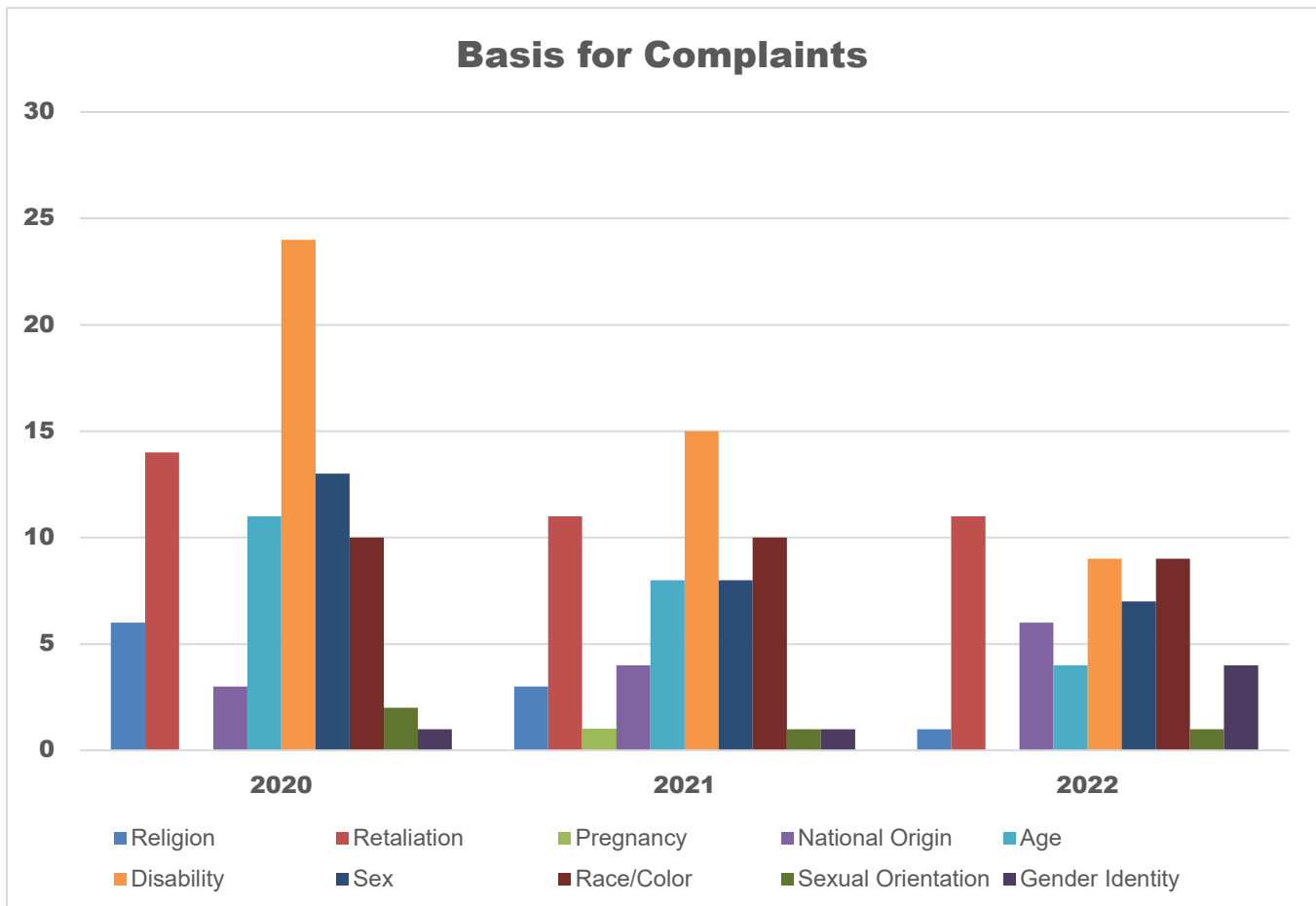


Figure 3

Figure 4. Results of Complaints

The following chart reviews the results of the complaints in the last three years, given by the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. In 2022, eleven (11) of these complaints resulted in an Administrative Closure; nine (9) remain open; one (1) was No Probable Cause; and one (1) was a Satisfactory Adjustment. The following categories had zero (0): Right to Sue, Withdrawal, and Failure to Cooperate.

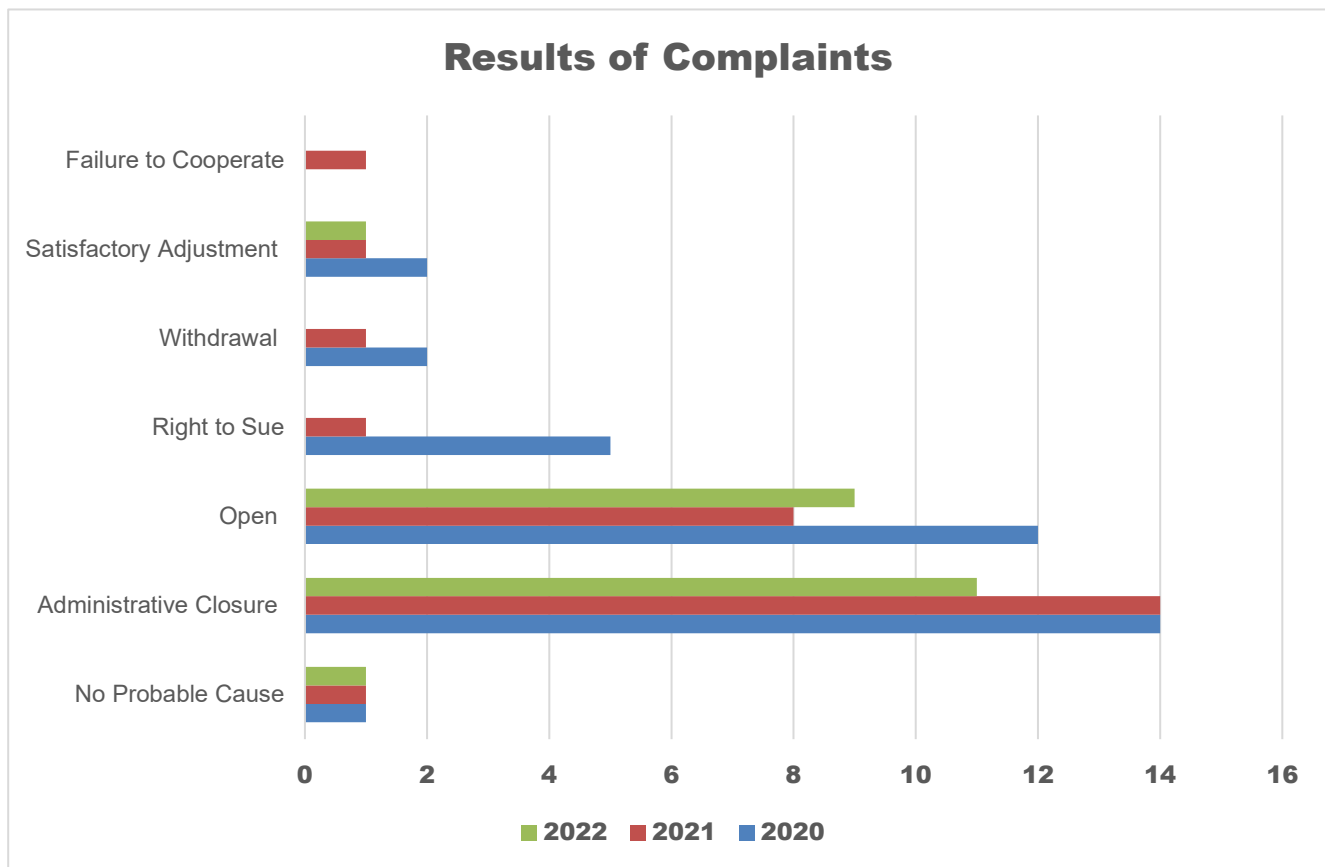


Figure 4

Summary

- There was an overall decrease in complaints between 2021 and 2022.
- In 2022, of twenty-two (22) complaints, the majority were in Employment. Of all the complaints filed, the most common basis for complaints included Retaliation with a total of eleven (11).
- The most frequent outcome was Administrative Closures, with eleven (11).
 - For the ICRC, the Administrative Closure category encompasses three different things:
 1. Further investigation is not warranted.
 2. When the Commission issues a “right-to-sue” letter, the Commission administratively closes the complaint and will take no further action on the complaint.
 3. If conciliation fails, the complaint will be reviewed to determine whether it should proceed to public hearing. If the complaint is not selected for public hearing, the complaint will be administratively closed.

AMES COMPLAINTS – (JANUARY 2022 – DECEMBER 2022)

(Full 2022 Information shared by Iowa Civil Rights Commission)

Area	Basis	Cause of Action	Result
Housing	Disability	Reasonable Accommodation, Terms and Conditions	AC (Administrative Closure)
Housing	Disability	Terms and Conditions	No Probable Cause
Housing	Disability	Terms and Conditions, Harassment	Satisfactory Adjustment
Employment	Disability, Retaliation	Denied Accommodation, Discipline, Suspension, Discharge	AC (Administrative Closure)
Employment	Race (Other), National Origin (Middle Eastern), Color, Age, Retaliation	Harassment, Discharge	Open
Employment	Sex (Female), Age (Younger)	Training, Discharge	AC (Administrative Closure)
Employment	Religion (Other), Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Retaliation	Harassment	Open
Employment, Public Accommodation	Sex (Female), Gender Identity	Service, Denied Accommodation, Discipline, Hiring, Training, Discharge	AC (Administrative Closure)
Employment	Age (Older)	Suspension, Discharge	AC (Administrative Closure)
Employment	Race (Black), National Origin (Other), Color, Retaliation	Hiring, Discharge	AC (Administrative Closure)
Employment	Race (Black), National Origin (Other), Color, Retaliation	Hiring, Service	Open
Employment	Sex (Female), Retaliation	Assignment, Demotion, Discipline, Harassment, Discharge	Open
Employment	Sex (Male), Retaliation, Disability	Discipline, Harassment, Suspension	AC (Administrative Closure)
Employment	Race (Black), Sex (Female), National Origin (Other), Age (Older), Disability, Gender Identity, Retaliation	Harassment, Pay Comparability, Constructive Discharge	AC (Administrative Closure)
Employment	Race (Other), National Origin (Other), Color, Disability, Retaliation	Assignment, Discipline, Harassment, Discharge	Open
Employment	Race (Other), National Origin (Other), Color, Retaliation	Discharge	AC (Administrative Closure)
Employment	Race (Black), Sex (Female),	Harassment, Constructive Discharge	Open
Employment	Disability	Denied Accommodation, Discharge	Open
Employment	Race (Black)	Discipline	Open

Area	Basis	Cause of Action	Result
Employment	Disability, Retaliation	Denied Accommodation, Discipline, Harassment, Reduced Pay, Assignment, Promotion	Open
Public Accommodations	Gender Identity	Denied Accommodation, Harassment	AC (Administrative Closure)
Public Accommodation	Race (Black), Sex (Female), Color, Familial Status, Marital Status	Benefits	AC (Administrative Closure)

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION 2020-22 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Goal A – Advocacy

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Strategic Goal C – Public Awareness & Effective Communication

The Ames Human Relations Commission strives to be a central location for the citizens of the City of Ames to advocate for, build awareness of, and communicate with. Commission members will connect with their community through public awareness and effective communication with members.

Objective 1: AHRC will work to improve effectiveness in communicating with the general public through media outlets.

- AHRC will increase engagement, community interactions and raise public awareness of the Commission’s work by expanding media outreach.
- AHRC will provide educational press releases on topics related to housing, employment, education/training, public accommodations or services, credit, and other topics to the City of Ames Facebook page, and other media outlets regularly.
- AHRC will administer communication with the press following discriminatory incidents in the Ames community as determined by the commission.
- AHRC will monitor and report contacts or participation in relation to social media and public engagement activities.

Objective 2: AHRC will maintain an active presence in the Ames community.

- AHRC will be active in the community and have commissioners attend events listed in the Commission’s annual calendar with visible identification (t-shirt, name tag).
- AHRC will co-sponsor community events with aligned organizations and individuals throughout the city.
- AHRC will provide and update the annual calendar of events online.
- AHRC will raise public awareness of community organizations, activities, and individuals that exemplify inclusivity and a nondiscriminatory approach. Members will be present at annual awarding the Humanitarian award (January at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday) and Fair Housing Award (April at City Council).

Objective 3: AHRC will keep all documentation related to its mission current, easy to navigate, assessable, and with person first language.

- AHRC will create links to educational pieces and resolutions, Iowa Civil Rights Commission documents, etc. from the website to improve access to publications and dissemination of information for all persons.
- AHRC will provide translated bolded/large print directions (in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean) on A) how to translate the web contents on the City site; B) how to file a complaint;

and C) how to access interpretation for other City services.

- AHRC will provide translated bolded/large print directions (in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean) on how to obtain interpretive services for assistance in understanding discrimination laws and filing complaints on all AHRC Documents.
- AHRC will provide a link to Iowa Civil Rights Commission Complaint Form directions in Spanish and Chinese. AHRC will also provide information on how to obtain it in other languages and formats.
- AHRC will improve communication with transgender, gender-nonconforming, and gender questioning persons within the Ames community and will assist in the revision of all City website and brochures to include gender neutral language by removing his/her language from AHRC-specific literature.

Strategic Goal D – Management Excellence

The Ames Human Relations Commission will ethically work towards this strategic plan for the betterment of our community in an ethical and fiscally responsible way.

Objective 1: AHRC will strive to keep this strategic plan at the forefront of all its decisions and activities and within our areas of focus and expertise.

- AHRC's monthly meeting agenda will reflect the strategic plan by indicating a section for each strategic goal and all the council's priorities will feed each section.
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