



MEMO

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To: Mayor and City Council
From: Joel Hochstein, Chair, Ames Human Relations Commission
Date: November 21, 2019
Subject: Annual Goal Setting Retreat

The Ames Human Relations Commission is aware that in a few months the City Council will embark on a retreat to refine and evaluate the goals established by the Council. The Commission wishes to express the importance of setting concrete goals related to diversity, equity and inclusion in our community and that policies addressing this area are critical to the success of all members of our community.

As such, we hope that the Council will consider the policy-related endeavors as goals below during its upcoming retreat. By no means is this an exhaustive list of policy-related endeavors that could be undertaken.

- 1) Expand funding for and support of diversity, equity, and inclusion work within the organization and outwardly in the community.
 - a. Create the Office of Human Relations and Equity with full-time staff to support inclusion and equity initiatives in the community and to lead the City of Ames organization's initiatives to create and sustain equitable environments and services.
 - b. Re-orient the *volunteer* Ames Human Relations Commission to serve as an advisory board to the Office of Human Relations and Equity. Currently these volunteers are the "doers" of work related to equity and inclusion in the community on behalf of the CoA organization. It is unfair and unrealistic for volunteers to provide the level of service in this area that a city like Ames demands.
- 2) Expand local ordinances to provide additional protections for citizens beyond the floor of Code of Iowa protections.
 - a. Institute Hate Crimes protections similar to Iowa City that go above state protections.
 - b. Institute source of income protections that ban landlords from denying housing to citizens who have income from government funding sources.
 - c. Institute a "ban the box" ordinance that offers additional protections for recently incarcerated people in employment and in housing.
- 3) Focus on racial equity efforts for all offices and departments within the City of Ames organization.
 - a. Join the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and utilize tools and resources from other "best practice" organizations related to government operations and racial equity.
 - b. Create a Racial Equity Action Plan that outlines data points, analysis of programs and services, and provides concrete action steps that will reduce identified inequities.
 - c. Develop a racial equity/equity lens toolkit for city departments to use related to functions and especially funding of projects and community priorities.
- 4) Research, select, and implement diversity, equity, and bias training for all department heads and elected and appointed leaders within the City of Ames organization. This training should be available continuously to allow for the onboarding of new employees, appointed volunteers, and elected officials.