

# 2020 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 ISU, ACSD, and any others well-positioned to give input on diversity, inclusion and equity in the community in order to recommend action items and changes to the ordinance.

## **2020 AHRC COMMISSIONERS:**

In addition to new members of AHRC in 2020, a new strategic plan was adopted and approved. Throughout the Coronavirus Pandemic, the AHRC found new ways to do the meaningful work set forth by the City Council.

- Jill Crosser, Chair
- Wayne Clinton, Vice Chair
- Leslie Ginder (appointed October 2020)
- Jahmai Fisher
- Madesh Samanu
- Liming Pals (through August 2020)
- Deb Schildroth, City of Ames Staff Liaison

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## ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS:

### JANUARY 2020:

- Chair Joel Hochstein and Jill Crosser presented the Humanitarian award to Janet Hopper at the Dr. Martin Luther King Day Celebration at Ames Middle School.

### FEBRUARY 2020:

- Update on planning for **2020 Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations**. Jill Crosser attended as the representative for the Commission.
- Commission members discussed the frequency of pushing out information on the Humanitarian and A Home for Everyone awards electronically and via events such as National Night Out, Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations, etc.
- Focus group responses reviewed : twenty-two (22) individuals responded to the survey. A collective scan of the responses was done amongst the Commission.

### MARCH 2020:

- Approved "**A Home for Everyone**" Award Recipients as ACCESS Housing Team and Cassandra Kramer.
- Themes from Focus Group responses were created. It was decided to put this on hold because of in person meetings being cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### APRIL 2020:

- Discussed data from the 2019 Focus Group Survey and next steps with COVID-19 restrictions.
- Selected Jill Crosser as Chair of AHRC.
- Selected Wayne Clinton as Vice Chair of AHRC.
- Discussed how AHRC members can be more present and available in the Ames Community
- Discussed ways to incorporate public awareness and visibility into the Strategic Plan and via social media outlets.
- Announcement of AHRC partnership with planning the **2020 Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations**. Chair Jill Crosser served as the lead and met biweekly with the team.

### MAY 2020:

- Discussed and updated Strategic Plan and changed format.
- Discussed ICRC partnership and complaint process.
- Discussed treatment of Asian community in Ames since COVID-19. Liming Pals shared her survey with AHRC.
- Discussed a thank you to Chief Cychosz for his public statement about policing and the death of George Floyd. Chair Jill Crosser sent message via email.

### JUNE 2020:

- Developed a Social Media Messaging Plan addressing the Asian Community and worked with City staff for video creation.
- Approval of FY2020/21 Annual Budget.
- AHRC brochure updates suggested and made.
- Social Media posts of all Commissioners photo and bios started.
- Updated Strategic Plan (2020-2022) approved by AHRC.
- NAACP Town Hall Meeting involvement.
- Reviewed yearly calendar for AHRC presence opportunities (most events cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic).

### JULY 2020:

- Met with ICRC Executive Director, Elizabeth Johnson on role and responsibility of ICRC and the process used to receive and investigate complaints.

- AHRC approved and signed Cooperative Agreement for ICRC FY2020/21.
- Preparation for presentation of 2019 Annual Report to City Council on August 11, 2020.

#### **AUGUST 2020:**

- Chair Jill Crosser updated the Commission about on-going planning for the **2020 Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations**.
- 2019 Annual Report presented to Ames City Council at City Council meeting.
- Connected with Ames Pride for virtual event information.
- AHRC worked with Elizabeth Johnson at ICRC to update forms on the webpage to include more than the English language (Chinese, Spanish).
- Communication/suggestions made with transgender, gender-conforming, gender questioning individuals, updates/revisions made to AHRC literature and City website/brochures.
- Photos/Bios of AHRC members posted via social media.

#### **SEPTEMBER 2020:**

- AHRC members reviewed City of Ames and ICRC websites for gender neutral and inclusion language.
- AHRC Commission members took part in NAACP Town Hall meeting.

#### **OCTOBER 2020:**

- Approved Vice Chair Wayne Clinton to serve on behalf of the AHRC on the **Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Planning Committee**.
- Appointment of new AHRC Member, Leslie Ginder to fill the unexpired term of Liming Pals.

#### **NOVEMBER 2020:**

- Approved **Humanitarian Award** application materials and referred City staff to post on AHRC webpage.
- Updates and revision suggestions made to Good Neighbor Brochure and the Diversity and Inclusion webpage (larger font, add language about medical care, Ames on the go app, hyperlink videos)
- Chair Jill Crosser proposed a social media guideline for the City.
- Chair Jill Crosser nominated and awarded 4 under 40 Ames Chamber of Commerce award.
- Vice Chair Wayne Clinton and his wife, Edna, nominated and awarded Diversity and Inclusion award with Ames Chamber of Commerce.
- Chair Jill Crosser and Vice Chair Wayne Clinton met with ISU Margo Foreman Assistant Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion and Equal Opportunity to discuss a partnership.
- **2020 Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations** had a great turnout despite a virtual platform.
- Commission provided a memo to City Council including recommendations on “Policing in Ames” conversations and Diversity and Inclusion work with the City of Ames Police Department.

#### **DECEMBER 2020:**

- Joint meeting with AHRC and Public Relations Officer, Susan Gwiasda, to look at stats from social media posts. Commission member introductions on Facebook had over 4000 hits.
- Discussed January social media posts, annual calendar of events and Vice Chair Wayne Clinton’s Chamber award photo and message.
- AHRC selected Charles Grimm as the Humanitarian Award recipient and the four ( ) nominees received paper certificates in the mail as recognition signed by Chair Jill Crosser.
- AHRC approved up to \$300 in gift cards for essay contest for Dr. Martin Luther King Day Celebration.

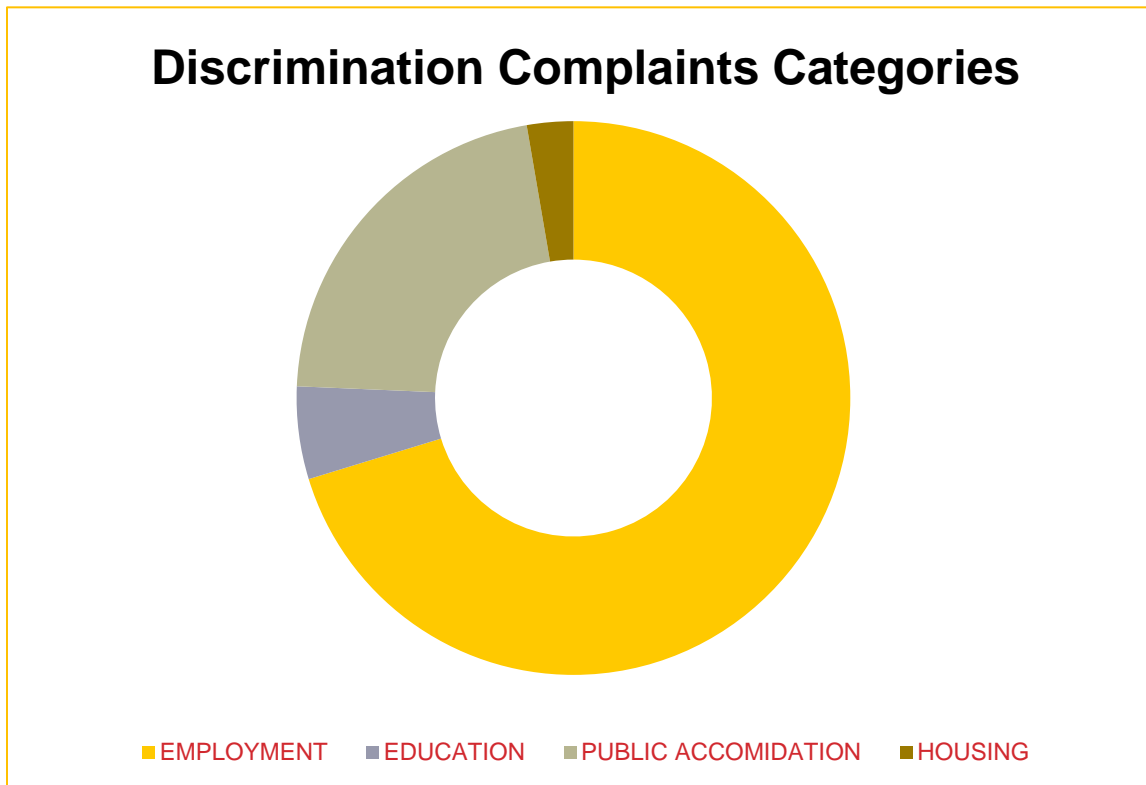
## AMES CIVIL RIGHT COMPLAINTS TO THE IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION 2020:

Citizens are able to 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 for the purpose of understanding the areas of complaints and concerns identified. Results of this request are provided below.

### Figure 1. Discrimination Complaint Categories

There was a total of thirty-six (36) complaints in 2020 to the ICRC which are grouped in the following four (4) categories: **Employment, Education, Public Accommodation, Housing.**

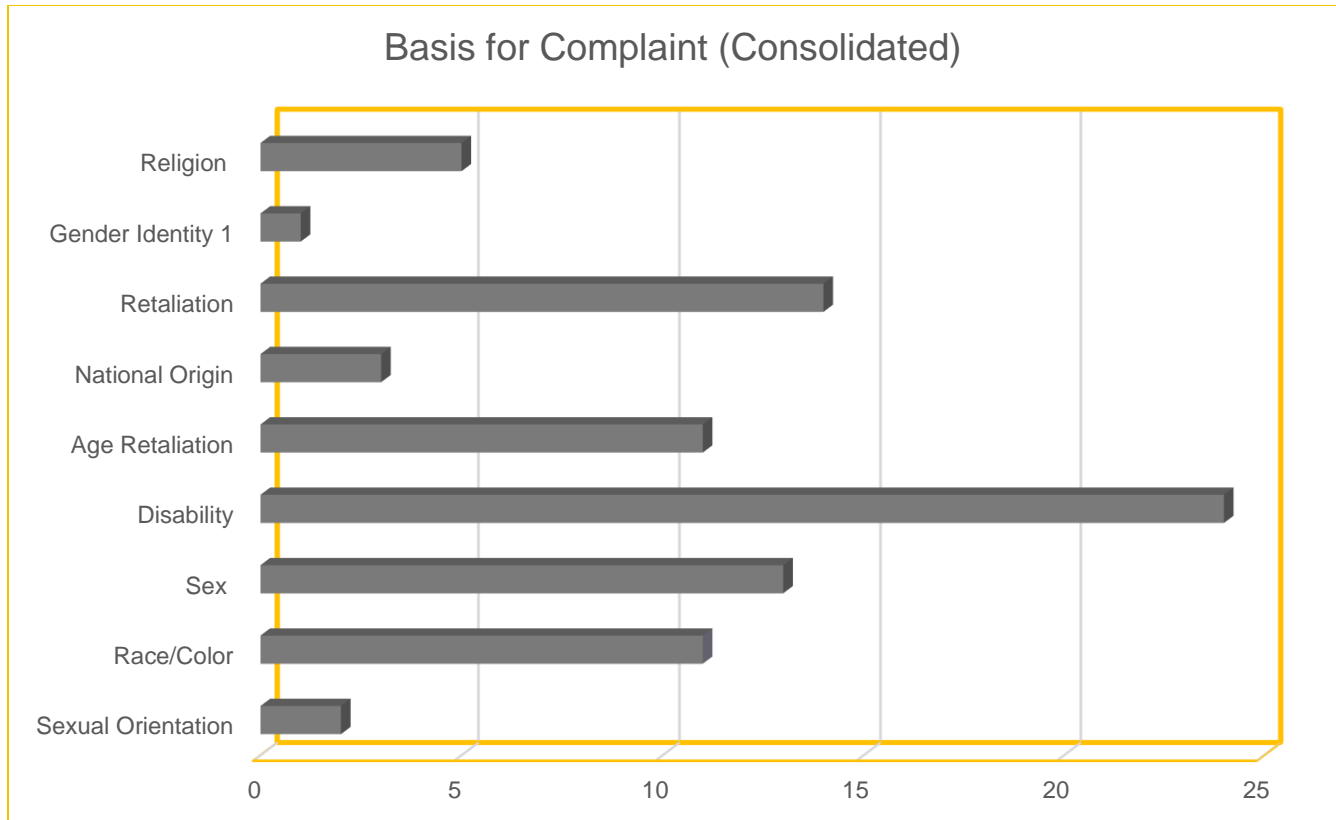
As indicated on the chart below, the main areas of complaint included Employment (26 complaints), Public Accommodation (7 complaints), Education (2 complaints), and Housing (1 complaint).



## **Figure 2. Basis for Complaint (Consolidated)**

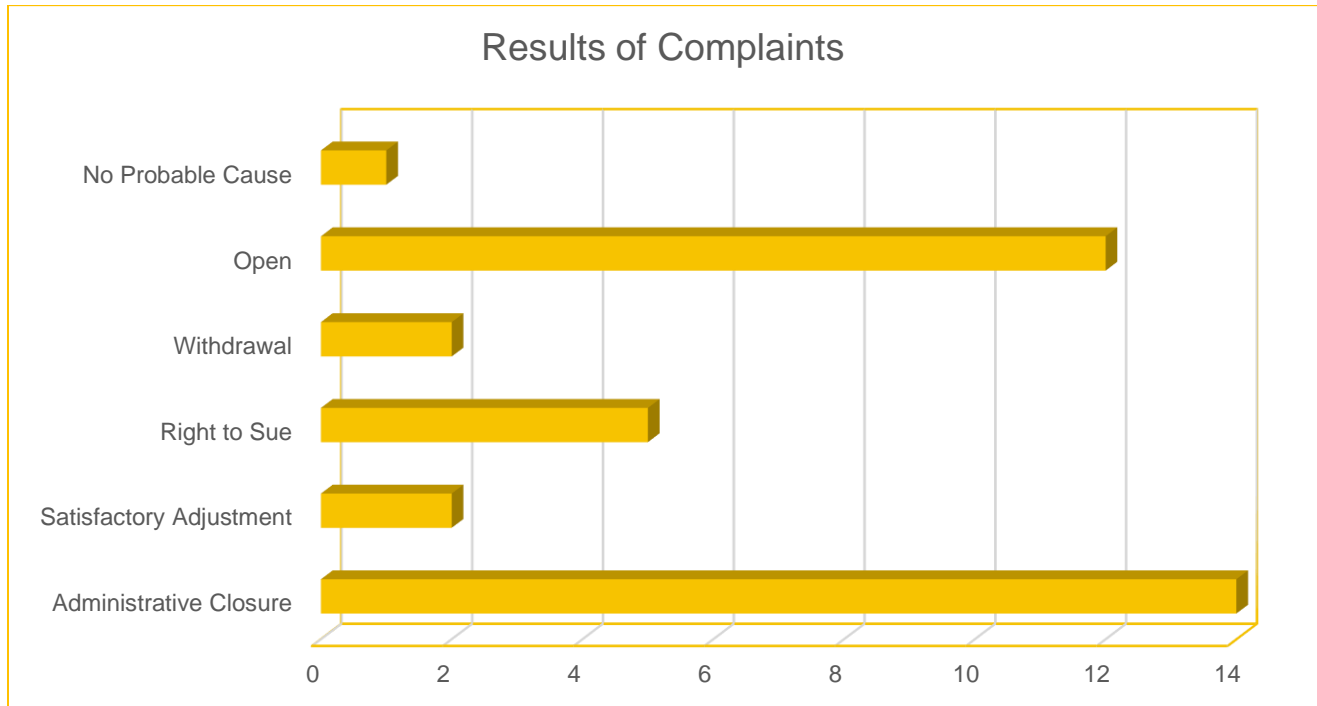
This graph illustrates the basis for the complaint areas on Figure 1. **The categories are: Religion, Gender Identity, Retaliation, National Origin, Age, Disability, Sex, Race/Color, Sexual Orientation.**

Please note that individuals may file complaints in more than one area simultaneously. There was an increase in following categories from 2019's data: **Disability, Age, Retaliation.** As indicated on the chart below, twenty-four (24) or 67% of the complaints were based on disability factors and fourteen (14) or 39% retaliation.



### **Figure 3. Results of Complaints**

The following chart reviews the results of the complaints in 2020 given by the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. Fourteen (14) of these complaints received administrative closure, one (1) was deemed “No Probable Cause”, twelve (12) are Under Open Investigation, five (5) issued a Right-to-Sue letter, two (2) Satisfactory Adjustment and two (2) were Withdrawn.



### **Summary:**

As the data shows, the City of Ames had thirty-six (36) complaints to ICRC . For comparison, in calendar year 2019 there were thirteen (13) complaints filed from Ames, which is an increase of over 177%. Of these complaints in 2019, ten (10) were related to employment, while the remaining three (3) were related to housing. . In 2020, of the thirty-six (36) complaints, the majority were in employment and education areas. The bases or basis for the complaints were: retaliation (8), disability (5), sex (4), race (4), sexual orientation (2) national origin (1).

With the 2020 data presented, it's evident that disability and employment have increased in complaints. There was also an overall increase in complaints in which could be represented to the pandemic or simply better visibility on how to file a complaint.

## AMES COMPLAINTS – (JANUARY 2020 – DECEMBER 2020)

**(Full 2020 Information shared by Iowa Civil Rights Commission)**

Area	Basis	Cause of Action	Result
Employment	Race, Disability, Retaliation	Harassment, Discharge	Administrative Closure (AC)
Employment	Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Disability	Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Constructive Discharge	Satisfactory Adjustment
Employment	Disability, Retaliation	Accommodation, Discharge	Right-to-Sue
Employment	Age, Disability	Discharge	AC
Employment	Disability	Harassment, Accommodation, Reduced Pay, Discharge	Withdrawal
Employment	Sex, Sexual Orientation, Retaliation	Opposition, Sexual Harassment, Constructive Discharge	Right-to-Sue
Education	National Origin, Religion, Disability, Retaliation	Service, Benefits, Harassment, Discipline	AC
Employment	Sex, Age	Demotion, Training, Harassment, Reduced Pay, Assignment	AC
Employment	Race, Color, National Origin	Promotion, Training, Harassment, Reduced Hours, Reduced Pay, Discharge	AC
Employment	Disability, Religion, Age, Retaliation	Discipline, Discharge	Open
Employment	Disability, Retaliation	Accommodation, Hiring, Harassment, Discharge	Right-to-Sue
Employment	Race, Color, Age	Benefits, Promotion, Pay, Discharge	Right-to-Sue
Employment	Race, Color, Disability, Retaliation	Harassment, Suspension, Discipline, Discharge	Open
Employment	Disability, Retaliation	Accommodation, Discipline	AC
Public Accommodation	Race, Color, Sex	Service	AC
Employment	Age, Disability	Accommodation, Assignment, Discharge	Withdrawal w/Satisfactory Adjustment



Employment	Sex, Retaliation	Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discipline, Opposition, Discharge	AC
Employment	Age	Layoff, Discharge	AC
Employment	Race, Disability, Retaliation	Accommodation, Harassment, Discharge	Right-to-Sue
Employment	Race, Color	Discharge	AC
Employment	Sex, Age, Retaliation	Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Pay, Assignment, Demotion, Training, Constructive Discharge	AC
Employment	Race, Age, Disability	Accommodation, Harassment, Promotion, Suspension, Discharge	AC
Public Accommodation	Race, Sex, National Origin, Religion, Disability	Service, Accommodation	AC
Housing	Race, Disability	Terms & Conditions, Eviction	No Probable Cause
Public Accommodation	Disability	Service	AC
Employment	Sex, Disability	Accommodation, Discipline, Discharge	AC
Employment	Sex, Age	Hiring	Open
Public Accommodation	Race, Sex, Color	Service, Harassment	Open
Employment	Sex, Age, Disability, Retaliation	Accommodation, Reduced Hours, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discharge	Open
Employment	Sex, Age, Disability	Accommodation, Demotion, Pay, Assignment	Open
Employment	Disability, Retaliation	Discharge	Open
Public Accommodation	Disability, Religion	Accommodation, Service	Open
Public Accommodation	Disability, Religion	Accommodation, Service	Open
Employment	Sex, Retaliation	Sexual Harassment, Constructive Discharge	Open
Education	Religion, Disability	Accommodation, Service	Open
Public Accommodation	Disability	Accommodation, Service	Open

# AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION 2020-22 STRATEGIC PLAN

## **Strategic Goal A – Advocacy**

The Ames Human Relations Commission (AHRC) 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 warned and assisted in preventing it. Commission members will be active participants in the City, will develop and follow a protocol to handle discriminatory incidents in the community, and will report and make recommendations directly to the City Council to ensure all voices are heard.

## **Strategic Goal B – Information & Analysis**

The Ames Human Relations Commission (AHRC) 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: AHRC will maintain objective knowledge related to claims of discrimination.**

- AHRC will work directly with the Iowa Civil Right Commission and will collaborate annually with a representative to better understand the complaint process.
- AHRC will obtain and review reports from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission on claims of discrimination in relation to types and probable cause.
- AHRC will obtain and review reports from the ICRC on types of claims made locally in writing, or on the website and report of Discriminatory Claims to the City, and any concerns expressed to [HumanRelations@cityofames.org](mailto:HumanRelations@cityofames.org).
- AHRC 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 leaders as needed.

**OBJECTIVE 2: AHRC will partner with City and Community members to learn about discrimination and how to decrease the risk.**

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

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

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

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

- AHRC will increase engagement and community interactions.
- AHRC will monitor and report contacts or participation in relation to social media and public engagement activities.

**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 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-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 link 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; (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.
- AHRC Commission Members will work with community partners who specialize in areas of expertise
- AHRC Commission members will represent the AHRC 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: AHRC will manage the annual budget in a fiscally responsible manner**

- AHRC 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 what advance these strategic goals.
- AHRC 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.