



SEATTLE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Seattle Human Rights Commission presents the 2008 work plan. We have achieved many successes in 2007 and the 2008 work plan reflects the same structure in relation to the Taskforces and the continuation and expansion of work that began in 2007. The recruitment and participation of community residents on the Taskforces will be emphasized in 2008 based on the reality that effectiveness and impact will require larger taskforces. It also serves as a method to expose the residents to the work of the Seattle Human Rights Commission; an important element in the recruitment and selection of commissioners.

The accomplishments of 2007 are reflected in a separate report.

PUBLIC SAFETY TASKFORCE

Members:

Michael Fitch, Chair
Julian Wheeler

- Goal I** **To research and analyze the current condition of community relations with the Police Department, identify areas where human rights concerns exist and make appropriate recommendations and proposals for change.**
- Objective 1* *Continue dialogue with the SPD, the OPA, OPARB staff, and community organizations,*
- Objective 2* *Review public surveys such as those of the SHRC, OPA and others, as identified.*
- Objective 3* *Study the recommendations made by the Mayor's Panel and those expected from the City Council panel and make appropriate recommendations for implementation.*
- Objective 4* *To improve the OPA Process by making it more accessible and responsive to community members. This includes monitoring the plan to move the OPA operations from its current location in the basement of SPD Headquarters.*
- Objective 5* *Conduct at least one Public Hearing in 2008 to gather community input regarding police matters.*

Strategies

- 5.1 Contact the OPA officials, the chairs of the Mayor and City Council Panels, the Mayor and City Council members of the Public Safety Committee, the SPD Chief, a SPOG official, and community leaders to participate in the Public Hearing. (Similar to the fall 2007 Hearing at University Heights Center)
- 5.2 Arrange support for the Public Hearing from SHRC and SOCR.
- 5.3 Arrange facility for the public hearing through SOCR.
- 5.4 Prepare and distribute publicity to promote public participation
- 5.5 Contact community leaders to assure their participation.

Goal II: To examine police operations in terms of training and preparation of police officers to effectively work with the diversity of the communities in Seattle.

Objective 1 *To research current methods of police training in the area of cultural diversity in order to recommend additional training, if needed*

Objective 2 *Examine best practices and available resources to make recommendations to the government officials.*

Objective 3 *Review police reports re incidents of "hate crimes" in Seattle and police response.*

Strategies:

- 3.1 Read the SPD reports on hate crimes and the records of the OPA and other community organizations to identify the areas of public concern.
- 3.2 Review best practices in law enforcement re hate crime prevention and response to hate crimes.
- 3.3 If needed, make appropriate recommendations re hate crime incidents.

HOMELESSNESS TASKFORCE

Members:

Jay Wellington
Lubna Mahadeen
Marissa Chavez
Charles Hodges

Goal I **Increase community knowledge and awareness about the rights afforded to homeless individuals in the City of Seattle.**

Objective 1 *To research current sources of training and information on homelessness to create a curriculum and materials for use in community education about the ordinance change to City of Seattle's Malicious Harassment ordinance.*

Strategies

- 1.1 Identify and evaluate current materials and programs on homelessness.
- 1.2 Finalize curriculum and the preparation of educational material.
- 1.3 Use media to raise awareness about the training and to raise funds for use in education materials.
- 1.4 Explore partnering with SOCR in the production of education materials.
- 1.5 Partner and work with other city agencies, commissions and organizations on their work in similar areas

Objective 2 *To focus on education of youth in schools and community based programs about the homeless and ordinance change.*

Objective 3 *Conduct extensive public outreach to share information on the homeless and on the change to the ordinance.*

Strategies:

- 3.1 Attend public events – festivals, forums etc to be visible and to distribute materials.
- 3.2 Use of media.

Goal II **Investigate the possibility of working with the Washington State Human Rights Commission in changing the ordinance at the state level**

DISABILITY TASKFORCE

Members:

Julian Wheeler, Chair

Goal 1: **To inform and educate the City of Seattle on the state of affairs of disabled people, especially with respect to transportation with the purpose of improving conditions for the disabled.**

Objective 1 *To obtain information on the current status of accommodations for the disabled in the City of Seattle.*

Strategies

- 1.1 Engage in dialogue with SOCR, the City Attorney's office, community organizations, and other pertinent city and county staff, to determine the current status of issues related to public accommodations for the disabled
- 1.2 Conduct research to better understand the local population affected by these issues using surveys, stakeholder interviews and other tools.

Goal 2: **To make meaningful recommendations to the Mayor and City Council about the disabled.**

Objective 1 Research best practices in other cities in order to make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council

EDUCATION TASKFORCE

Members:

Angela Tarah, Chair
Marvin Stern
Merri Ann Osborne
Brahmy Poologasingham
Amanda Licorish

Goal 1 To address the disproportionality in the educational outcomes in the Seattle Public Schools by race and to advocate for equity and fairness.

Objective 1 Research and data collection on the status of the achievement gap and the work on race and equity.

Strategies

- 1.1 Obtain SPS data for the past five years to look at trends – progress or decline in addressing the achievement gap.
- 1.2 Meet with the Superintendent to obtain information on the status of the work on equity and race that began five years ago and on her plans to address this significant issue.
- 1.3 Review the SPS strategic plan, when completed, and address those elements of the plan that impact the achievement gap, positively or negatively.
- 1.4 Establish the SIIRC as a body interested in working with the SPS on the achievement gap.

Goal 2 To partner with other organizations, individuals, parents in working with the Seattle Public Schools to work with communities in improving the educational system.

Objective 1 Assemble community groups and stakeholders, who are working on educational issues to share information, identify common areas of concern and determine opportunities to work together.

APPEALS COMMITTEE

Members:

Jim Yearby, Chair

Lubna Mahadeen

Angela Tarah

Brahmy Poologasingham

Goal 1 To monitor the progress of the MOA and the feasibility of a proposed change to the ordinance on the role of the Appeals Committee.

Goal 2 To continue to work with SOCR staff in providing excellent service to the citizens of Seattle.

Objective 1 *Work collaboratively with SOCR to improve work processes that facilitate better service to customers*

Goal 3 To hear appeals of citizens who believe SOCR has not adequately addressed their complaints of discrimination.

Objective 1 *To conduct thorough investigative review of files and processes of all appeals received by the SIIRC.*

Strategies

3.1 Review discrimination case files for affirmation of findings or remand to SOCR for further investigative work

3.2 Meet with SOCR periodically to share concerns about the appeal process and to reach joint agreement on a resolution.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS TASKFORCE

Members:

Jim Yearby, Chair

Angela Tarah

Goal 1 To ensure that the new mission and vision statements are reflected in all materials related to the SHRC.

Goal 2 To create operational policies and procedures that guide and direct the processes and activities of the SHRC.