



## Staff Report

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Steve Powers, City Manager

**FROM:** Kacey Duncan, Deputy City Manager

**SUBJECT:**

Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission Annual Report

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

**ISSUE:**

Acceptance of the Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission Annual Report

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Information Only

**SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:**

Founded in 1964 by the Salem City Council, the Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission assists residents and advises City Council regarding human rights.

The Commission's role is defined in Salem Revised Code Chapters 8 and 97.

**FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

In 2017, the Commission helped with 33 reports of discrimination, an increase from 16 received in 2016 and 12 in 2015. Commissioners note an overall issue with underreporting by the community and that reports received are not necessarily sustained. Residents were assisted through conciliatory services, information and referral by Commissioners and City staff.

HRRAC's Core Response Team provides support, information and referral to hate crime victims. Salem Police Department received 13 reported bias crimes in 2017, up from twelve in 2016. In 2017 and 2016 race was the predominant category with eight each year.

Through its LGBTQ Rights Task Force, Commissioners and community volunteers held a first annual Transgender Day of Remembrance event to recognize persons killed worldwide due to hate crime

related to gender identity.

In preparations for Salem Police Department's planned in-service training related to gender identity, the Commission's LGTBQ Task Force developed a video about interactions between police and persons who are transgender and non-binary. The team also assisted with the curriculum for the training.

The Commission's Community Awareness Task Force collaborated with students from Willamette University on research objectives to explore Salem's perception of the diversity and inclusiveness of our community, to establish a baseline awareness measure prior to launching a contemplated awareness campaign and to identify which aspects of HRRAC's message should be highlighted in the awareness campaign.

A (non-probability convenience sample) survey revealed a variety of findings. Students offered conclusions to the Commission, including that Salem needs improvements in terms of increasing diversity and inclusiveness and that the majority of Salem residents are not aware of the HRRAC and its services.

The Commission convened a Trauma Informed Care Task Force which studied local resources and developed a training to ensure Commissioners are trauma informed when supporting victims of discrimination.

The Commission convened a Child Friendly Cities Task Force which studied local city approaches to welcoming and including children and youth in all aspects of planning and decision-making and supported work for Salem to be a Child Friendly City.

Commissioners attended community events and connected with local organizations to increase dialogue and provide support. Examples of events attended include Capital Pride, Bridge to Recovery, Micronesian Islander Day and Salem Speaks Up!.

Gretchen Bennett  
Human Rights and Relations/Federal Compliance  
Manager

**Attachments:**

1. Discrimination Reports Summary
2. Core Response Team Brochure
3. LGBTQ Rights Task Force Brochure
4. Willamette University student Awareness Research Report