



Report on Human Relations Commission

Today's agenda

- Summary of background information presented to commissioners in individual sessions
- Summary of feedback from the commissioners
- Staff recommendations on composition and role of Human Relations Commission
- Recommendations & feedback
- Agreement on next steps

Historical Summary

- The county's first Human Relations Commission was formed in 2000 and met for several years with very limited staff support
- Full-time director position added in late fall of 2007
- Bylaws were last revised on August 24, 2010 (attached to agenda).
- The commission had 12 members appointed to 3-year terms, limited to 2 consecutive terms
- The director position was eliminated early in 2011
- The Human Relations Commission stopped meeting at that time.

Major activities 2008-2010

- Proposed resolutions to BOC
- Sponsored school essay contests
- Sponsored reading club
- Sponsored and coordinated Awards Program
- Began work on Civil Rights Ordinance, first step in qualifying for HUD funding. This also would require General Assembly authorization of the Civil Rights ordinance
- Offered training on diversity in the workplace
- Director met with a few people who had discrimination concerns

Statewide Trends

- The number of Human Relations Commissions within the state has **declined 44%** since 2006.
- Fewer remaining ones are connected to county governments: **down from 71% to 40%**

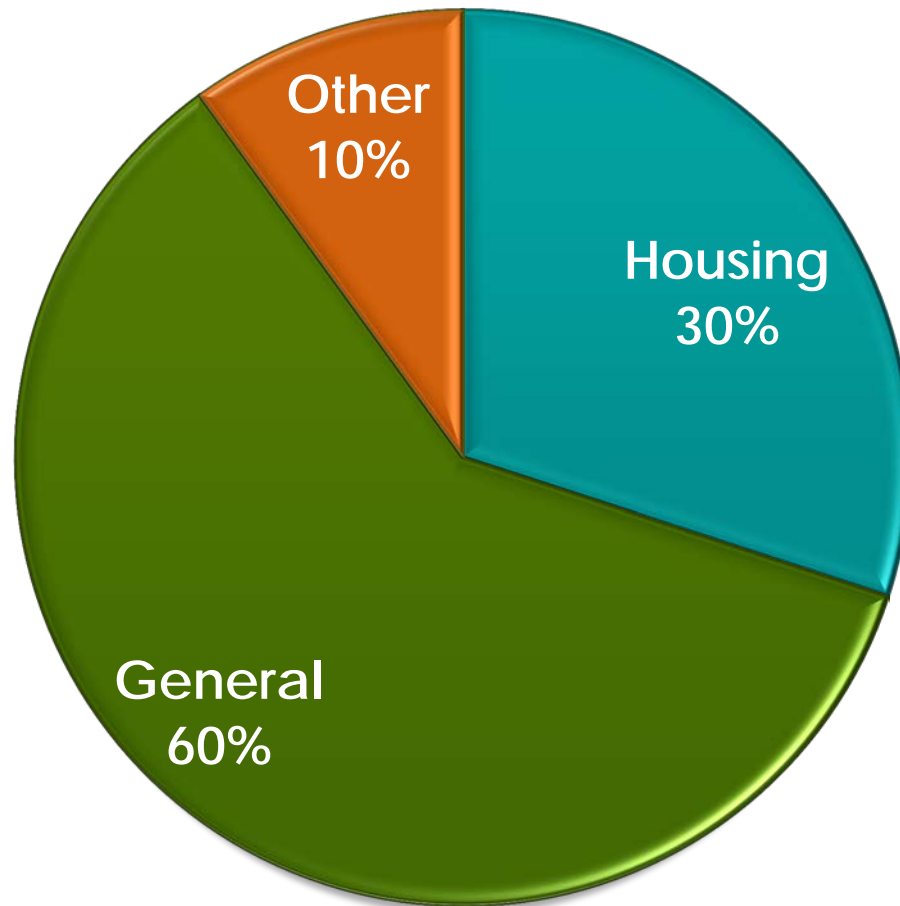
	2006	2016
Total # of Local Human Relations Commissions	36	20
# County or Joint-County Commissions	25	8*
# with Paid Staff	16	9

*Alamance County's commission is separate nonprofit that serves entire county and towns

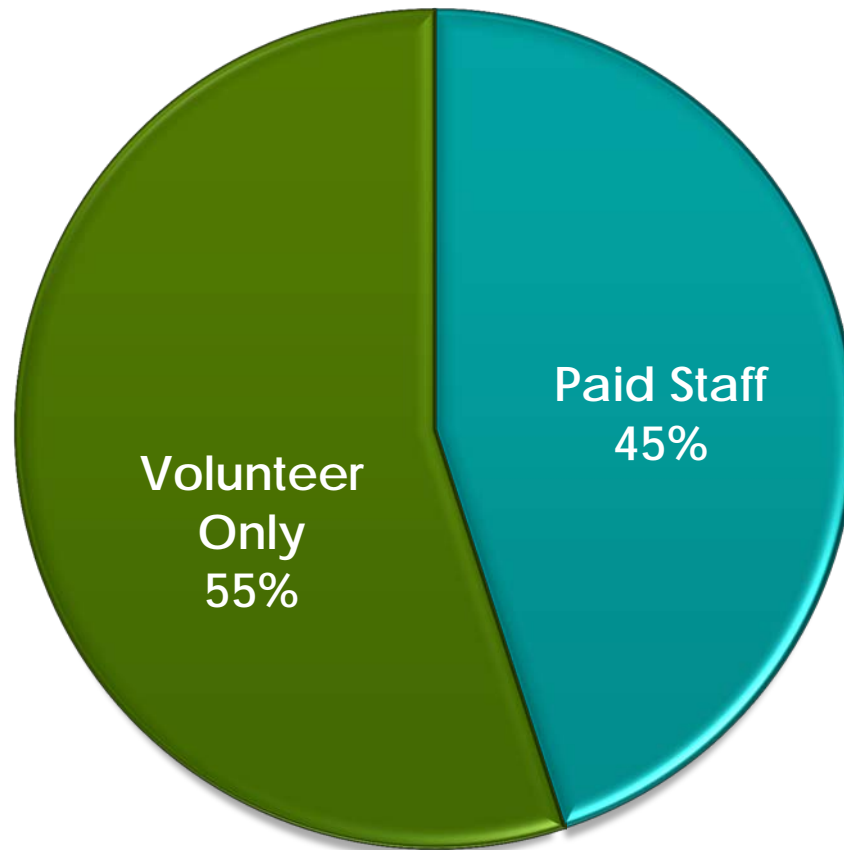
Why the drop in commissions?

- A combination of factors:
drastic budget cuts during the recession,
changes and cuts in HUD funding for Fair
Housing enforcement, and local conflicts
over the role and mission of human
relations commissions.

Focus Areas of Other Human Relations Commissions



Paid Staff Compared to Volunteer Human Relations Commissions



Lessons learned

- Include key county departments and towns as non-voting members if the focus is on departmental issues (hiring, training, community outreach, etc).
- Start with efforts that build trust internally and across the community.
- Inventory and promote existing resources, such as EEOC, Legal Aid, Housing Authority, grievance procedures to avoid duplicating efforts and minimize liability issues.
- Ask partners such as departments, churches, nonprofits and businesses what role would be most helpful and how to keep them in the loop.

Existing departmental efforts

- Several departments reported existing and planned efforts related to human relations
- Much more underway than six years ago.
- There are many good things here to build on and possibly replicate in other departments and/or the towns.
- Department heads generally expressed support for efforts that address root causes. They also are open to information on best practices and ways to strengthen current efforts.
- But an investigative focus of the commission could be source of a conflict if not handled very carefully

Key Challenges

- A huge drop in people completing law enforcement classes in NC, but is nationwide problem. Pool of new officers is shrinking.
- Similarly, Hispanic & Latino populations often lack information on the benefits of public service careers.
- Language and cultural barriers.
- Fair Housing administration to secure funding from HUD is even harder to secure now.
- Young people do not have enough programs outside of schools to develop their potential and keep them out of trouble
- Systemic change will take many years and it will take time to build trust with key stakeholders

Key Opportunities

- Help departments evaluate policies and training programs, with the goals of better understanding of workforce diversity and cultural competence
- Compile existing resources and make them widely available online, in news media and publications to help people with possible discrimination issues
- Pursue options to increase local interest in law enforcement and public service in minority populations and increase minority job applicants
- Develop partnerships with various community groups to increase activity and education options for young people
- Assemble local data about what the real issues are

Feedback from Commissioners

- Strong support for addressing systemic issues, such as:
 - developing strategies to increase minority job applicants and promotions, including scholarships and job fairs
 - offering community education on human relations issues
 - supporting community-based youth development programs.
- Provide ways for employers to know what tools and resources are available to help them

Feedback from Commissioners

- Collect local data to know what the real issues are, rather than assumptions based on other places
- Develop an accessible resource guide for residents to know where to go for help
- Leverage activities already underway by local governments and nonprofits
- A new Human Relations Commission should include community members, but also representatives of key county departments, towns, and school system.
- A staff director position is premature until we know the mission and goals

Need Your Feedback

- The next slides will provide some recommendations based on your feedback and our research

Proposed Mission of HRC

- In its early years, a strong focus on developing relationships and trust will lay a vital foundation that was lacking before. Therefore, we are recommending a different mission statement for the initial work of the commission.
- **PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT:** The Chatham County Human Relations Commission will serve as a valuable resource to residents, community organizations and employers to promote better understanding and mutual respect among residents of all racial-ethnic and income backgrounds.

Proposed Initial HRC Roles

These are focused on building a foundation of trust:

- Identifying and securing partnerships with key county departments, nonprofits, schools, towns, etc. around human relations issues
- Developing a community survey or study to gather information on specific areas of need
- Developing resource guide for people with discrimination concerns and developing a dissemination plan
- Identifying effective tools and resources related to diversity in the workplace, developed in partnership with key employers

Proposed Initial HRC Roles

- Developing local strategy or effective programs to attract more minorities to law enforcement and public service careers
- Recognizing organizations or individuals making a positive difference
- Advising the Board of Commissioners on related issues
- Reporting back to the Board of Commissioners every 6-12 months on key findings and status

Proposed HRC Composition

We recommend 15 to 16 voting members to include:

- 7 to 8 diverse voting members representing the general public, nonprofits, churches and businesses (1 member per BOC district and 2 to 3 members at large)
- One voting representative each for Chatham County Human Resources, Public Health, Social Services and Sheriff (up to 4 people)
- One voting representative of the school system
- One voting representative of the towns (up to 3 people)

Other HRC Recommendations

- Terms of Office: Three-year staggered terms
- Follow the other operational guidelines in the Advisory Committee Policy related to quorum, meetings, minutes, officers, etc.

Likely Next Steps

- Begin contacting the county departments, school system and towns about their interest in participation
- Identify resources needed at the staff level to support the commission and impact on budget
- Based on feedback today, work with the county attorney to draft new bylaws. Likely would be February 2017 meeting before this can be prepared.

Other Feedback?

- What else does staff need to know before we move ahead with next steps?