

RULES OF PROCEDURES
of the
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

The mission of the Human Rights Commission of Palm Springs is to promote improved relations, civic peace, intergroup understanding, and the full acceptance, respect, and participation of all persons in all aspects of community life so that we will be equal in the eyes of each other.

GOALS

1. To develop community education programs;
2. To investigate and mediate instances of discrimination of groups or individuals;
3. To bring persons and groups together in common support of human rights issues;
4. To acquire the fiscal and human resources necessary to support and accomplish the work of the Commission;
5. To provide management and coordination for the Commission;
6. To promote diversity through the appointment of candidates to all city boards and commissions to proportionately reflect the diversity of the population of the City of Palm Springs;
7. The Commission and each Committee shall develop goals and objectives annually, for adoption by the commission.
8. The Commission shall work closely with the Mayor, City Council, City Cabinet and with all other City Commissions and Boards in joint endeavors which support the Commission's mission statement and City's goals and objectives.

ROLE OF THE COMMISSION

The commission will act as an advisory body to the Mayor and City Council with regard to human rights issues (first amendment), to establish policy for the operation of the commission, and to establish a budget and funding sources for the commission.

COMMISSIONERS

Each member of the commission is an officially appointed representative of the City and thereby is expected to behave in a professional manner that is representative of a City official.

SUBPOENA POWER

The Mayor and the City Council have expressed a willingness to provide such authority on a case-by-case basis.

ROLE OF STAFF

Staff will provide coordination and clerical support, will act as a liaison to other city departments, and will serve as a resource to the Commission.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTIURE

A. Commission members are appointed by the City Council for three (3) year terms. The terms are staggered with three (3) members appointed annually. If a vacancy on the Commission occurs the new commissioner appointed to that vacancy shall serve out the remainder of the term of the past commissioner, they are replacing.

B. Regular commission meetings and study sessions are to be held on a regular basis as determined by the Commission. All meetings are to be open to the public per the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act and Government Code Section 54940. Special meetings may be called by the chair, by three (3) members of the Commission, or by the Executive Committee. The agenda shall be made available to the general public in one (1) location, posted a minimum of 72 hours prior to a regular meeting. Items for the agenda must be given to the Chair by the Executive Committee meeting prior to the regular commission meeting. Items may be added to the agenda where a need to act arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda, and 2/3 vote of the membership or unanimous if less than 2/3 of the members are present. A regular meeting may be adjourned for lack of a quorum to a new time. If within five (5) days from the original meeting date, no new agenda posting is required.

C. Agenda Format

- 1) Reading of the Mission Statement
- 2) Roll Call
- 3) Posting of the Agenda
- 4) Approval of the Minutes
- 5) Public Comments
- 6) Community Speaker Presentation (When scheduled)
- 7) Community Recognition
- 8) Reports- Chair; Committees; Commissioner Comments; Staff
- 9) Items for Discussion/Vote

D. All meetings must be held in a facility that is accessible to all members of the community.

E. All designated committee reports requiring Commission action shall be acted upon by the Commission in a timely fashion or returned to the Committee for revision.

F. Minutes of the commission and its committees will be submitted to the membership prior to the next regular Commission meeting. All recorded copies of Commission activities shall be retained and kept on file in the Commission designated office. The minutes shall contain all actions taken (who, what, when, why and how), motions made and seconded, the nature of the vote, committee reports, topics discussed, decisions and how reached (vote or by consensus), and action items, identified.

G. Time shall be set aside in each agenda for public comments.

H. The Commission will schedule a planning retreat annually and submit a follow-up report.

I. A semi-annual report regarding the meeting of the Commission's annual goals and objectives shall be prepared and reported to the City Council and City Cabinet.

J. Study sessions will be held periodically as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee or majority of the Commission.

K. All Commission members will be given sufficient opportunity to comment on all issues, after which staff may be allowed to speak on the same issues, as appropriate.

OFFICERS

Officers of the Commission will consist of the Chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a member of the Commission At Large, serving as a rotating member of the Executive Committee. The offices of chairperson and vice-chairperson are for a term of 12 months and said officers are elected by the Commission at large. The rotating member of the Executive Committee is elected by the Commission membership at large and services for a period of three (3) months.

Nomination and election of officers shall take place the second meeting in July annually. Election of the rotating member of the Executive Committee shall then take place at the second meeting of the month, quarterly (July, October, January & April).

The role of the Chairperson shall be to lead meetings of the Commission, call special meetings as necessary, represents Commission on City Cabinet, serves as Chairperson for all Executive Committee meetings, function as liaison with Commission staff, other city boards and/or commissions, members of City government and perform other duties as required.

The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson in all stated duties of the Chair, and will serve as Chairperson in the absence of that individual.

The Rotating Member of the Executive Committee serves as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson; this individual represents the Commission at large on the Executive Committee and maintains a full third vote on the Executive Committee in all matters.

Committee Chairs are appointed for a term of one (1) year or at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Please note membership on all committees and chair positions, other than the Executive Committee, are open to full participation by any present or past member of the Commission or member of the community.

1. Executive Committee

Membership: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson & Rotating Member of the Commission-at-Large

Responsibility: Set agenda for regular and special commission meetings, coordinate commission activities, provide direction and facilitate communication with Commission members, provide orientation to the new members, implement policy, problem solve appoint committee chairpersons, to promote the goals, objectives and activities of the Commission by working closely with local media representatives, produce quarterly Human Rights Commission Newsletter, periodically update HRC brochure, develop public service announcements(PSAs), help to prepare and review all commission news releases, coordinate requests for interviews of commission members, promote policy that all news and press releases be reviewed by the Executive Committee, develop, train and maintain group of identified commissioners who are willing to serve on Speakers Bureau, then confirm and coordinate their appearance at civic meetings and functions.

2. Commission Development/Mediation Committee

Responsibility: Periodically review Commission policy / procedures/by-laws and other pertinent governing regulations, institute commissioner training/certification (i.e. mediation, cultural diversity, citizens police academy, etc.) monitor commissioner attendance at meetings and maintain statistical information for Human Rights commission Action Plan Task Force evaluation; develop commissioner / mentor program, develop and maintain new commissioner orientation program, promote diversity on all city commissions/boards and in filling city staff vacancies, help develop and institute memorandum-of-understanding (MOU) with various civic groups, agencies and organizations, plan and produce annual retreat and subsequent report, provide information and consultation regarding alternative dispute resolution, to hear and investigate complaints, to maintain documentation of mediations performed, to maintain statistics on hate crimes, acts of discrimination, status of diversity within city boards/commissions, maintain referral information to various other community or governmental agencies as part of mediation service and prepare semi-annual report to the City Council on Commission goals and objectives.

3. Community Relations Committee/Budget/Personnel Committee

Responsibility: To promote on-going communication and cooperation between the Commission, community and city departments, especially police and fire, promote diversity through the hiring practices of all city departments in insuring the city staff reflects the diversity proportionately of the inhabitants of the city, develop law enforcement police advisory sub-committee to advise the police chief and his administrators regarding the practices of police personnel in support of "community policing strategy", actively recruit candidates for the "citizens on patrol" and police academy programs, establish an annual budget for the

Commission, secure support staff, develop and periodically review staff job/duties description and workplace requirements, work to secure funding, both public and private, to promote the work of the Commission, develop cost estimates for commissioner training and educational forums,

Note: All committees numbered below 4-9 shall be responsible for producing an annual educational forum. These educational forums can be conducted in conjunction with community groups, other Commission Committees/Focus Groups or other City Commissions/Boards.

4. Youth/Education Affairs Committee

Responsibilities: Recruit youth representative from Palm Springs High School to serve as liaison to the commission (non-voting member), develop educational programs and forums concerning affected focus group, work closely with school district staff regarding civil/human rights issues on school campus, develop strong communications and liaison with Palm Springs High School staff and administrators,

5. Gay & Lesbian/ Women Affairs Committee

Responsibilities: Liaison with the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgender and women's community of Palm Springs, collect data regarding focus groups and services available to their community interests,

6. African American/Asian Pacific Affairs Committee

Responsibilities: Develop liaison and collect data regarding focus groups, maintain list of services available to community members, produce educational forums on topics of interest,

7. Latino/Native American Affairs Committee

Responsibilities: Develop liaison and collect data regarding focus groups, produce educational forums on topics of interest, maintain data concerning veterans related issues

8. Seniors/People with Disabilities Veterans Affairs Committee

Responsibilities: Develop liaison and collect data regarding focus groups, maintain list of services available to community, search issues and services available for seniors and disabled (i.e. health concerns, housing, retirement, transportation, legal services, etc.),

9. Religious/Business/Homeless/Health/Housing/Employment Affairs Committee

Responsibilities: Develop liaison with religious community affiliated organizations and maintain list of services offered community, maintain statistics regarding status of homeless individuals in our city, maintain communication and representation with local food kitchen, collection of information and data regarding focus areas, list of resources available to community members, participate in civic groups focusing on health/housing/employment issues as Commission representative, work closely with representatives of the business community around specific issues which pertain to their groups and issues.

VOTING

A quorum of the Commission is 50% of the membership plus one. Once a quorum is established, a simple majority of the members of the Commission present at the time of voting is required for a formal action; voting will be by a voice vote. Consensus as an agreement without formal action can be reached if all are in favor and none are in dissension.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Meetings of the Human Rights Commission are guided by Robert's Rules of Order.

1. Courtesy and justice to all.
2. Consider one thing at a time.
3. The minority must be heard.
4. The majority shall prevail.

MEDIA POLICY

All news and press releases generated by the Commission must be reviewed by the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee are the primary spokespersons of the Commission. Staff is responsible for the coordination of communications together with representatives of the Media Committee. Any member of the Commission may elect to respond to the media as an individual,

however, any issue involving business of the Commission requires communication with an Executive Committee member prior.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All commissioners are required to complete a conflict of interest statement and file it with the City Clerk. Conflicts of interest are covered in Government Code Section 81000. Statements of economic interest (Form 730) must be filed pursuant to the Code (when entering office, annually and upon leaving Commission).

ATTENDANCE

A quorum is essential for the conduct of commission business. Commissioners shall contact the Commission staff member 48 hours prior to the next scheduled regular meeting of their intent. If a quorum is not present, the meeting may be adjourned by the members who are there. If no members are present, the meeting may be adjourned by the staff member.

Unexcused Absences

If a Commission member misses three (3) consecutive or 25% of the regular meetings in a fiscal year (6 meetings), his/her membership is automatically terminated. If the absence at the regular meeting is due to the fact that the regular meeting was changed from the normal second and fourth Thursdays of each month, then the absence shall be considered excused for purposes of this attendance policy.

The same policy shall apply to membership on the Executive Committee, three (3) consecutive or 25% of the meetings in a fiscal year. The member shall be allowed to continue on the Commission if they were not absent from the regular meetings.

Excused Absences

- a) Advance Notice:
The period of time for advance notice to be given is a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the next scheduled regular meeting;
- b) Sudden Illness:
No advance notice is required;
- c) Unexpected Business/Personal Matters:
A minimum of 48 hours prior notice required

All notices regarding absences shall be reported to the Commission staff member and approved by the Executive Committee.

Any tardiness or leaving early from a Commission regular/executive meeting of 15 minutes or greater which causes a lack of a quorum shall be judged as an absence, and shall be handled under the absence policy.

Note: Each Commissioner shall be responsible for maintaining a diary of their time spent performing the business of the Commission which shall be reviewed and recorded prior to each regular meeting by the Commission Development Committee.

REMOVAL OR RESIGNATION OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

A commissioner wishing to resign from the Commission should submit a letter of resignation to the Mayor, Chairperson of the Commission, and City Clerk.

Regarding the issue of absenteeism, the Chairperson shall file a certification with the City Clerk that such absences have occurred in violation of Commission Policy, and his/her office shall thereupon automatically become vacant, the affected member shall be notified in writing, and the vacancy shall be filled as any other vacancy.

Removal from the Commission may be recommended by the Chairperson on behalf of the Commission for any / or all the violations listed:

- 1) Failure to meet monthly with assigned committee duties;
- 2) Failure to give a written report monthly of one's committee assignment to the Commission;
- 3) Failure to follow-through with committee responsibilities in a reasonable and timely fashion as required for the meeting of the goals and objectives of the Commission;
- 4) Failure to adhere to the media policy;
- 5) Failure to be an active participant in community functions, especially those assigned by the Chairperson or Executive Committee as the formal representative of the Commission;
- 6) Failure to maintain an Individual commissioner's diary and/or to submit the completed diary to the Chairperson of the Commissioner Development Committee prior to each regular meeting.

Any of the above violations shall cause the Chairperson of the Commission to certify in written form to the member such violation has occurred. After five (5) violations in one fiscal year the Chairperson of the Commission shall certify with the City Clerk that such violations of Commission policy has occurred, and the members office shall automatically become vacant. The affected member shall be notified in writing, and the vacancy shall be filled as any other vacancy.

The Mayor has the ability to remove a commissioner from office, should he/she deem such action appropriate.

VACANCY

Vacancies on the commission shall be filled through current City policy.

FISCAL YEAR

July 1 through June 30.

BUDGET PROCESS

The Commission shall establish an annual budget, developed by the Budget Committee, and approved by the Commission at Large.

INDEMNIFICATION

Commissioners are indemnified in accordance with City policy.

Revised & Adopted 9/12/96

ATTACHMENTS

List of Community Liaison Groups
Bill of Rights
Universal Declaration of Human Rights
City Ordinance No 1426
Conflict of Interest Code
Task Force Report
Civil Rights Acts
American with Disabilities Act
Fair Employment and Housing Act
Hate Crime Definition
Relevant legislation/ court decisions

LIST OF COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUPS

1) Executive Committee

Liaison: Other City commissions/boards, Mayor and City Council, other human rights civic or governmental organizations and/or agencies, including but not limited to San Diego Human Rights Commission, Coalition for Human Rights, California Association of Human Rights Organizations (CAHRO), All community media organizations, including but not limited to The Desert Sun, Bottomline, Mizell Senior Center Newsletter, Megascene, Palm Springs TV, KESQ-TV, KNWZ radio, KWCY radio, KEZN-FM radio, KCMJ radio, KMIRTV, KPSI radio, Press Enterprise, Desert Woman Newspaper, Desert View, Palm Canyon Times Newspaper, The Business Journal Newspaper, KDES radio, Desert Daily Guide, LifeStyle Magazine, Coachella Valley Family News, Power Radio 100.6FM, Palm Springs Life Magazine, African American Chamber of Commerce, Desert Business Association, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Palm Springs Jaycees, etc.

2) Commission Development/Mediation Committee

Liaison: Other governmental and civic agencies responsible for overseeing human/civil rights issues/complaints/statistics, all other City Commissions/Boards to promulgate increased communication and joint commission projects; all civic groups which has MOU with Commission

3) Community Relations/Budget/Personnel Committee

Liaison: All city departments, especially police and fire, including but not limited to Palm Springs Police Officers Association, Mounted Police of Palm Springs, affected community focus groups and existing community organizations impacted by city services, City Personnel Office.

4) Youth/Education Affairs Committee

Liaison: All civic groups working with youths, including but not limited to Palm Springs High School staff/administrators/PTA, Palm Springs Boys & Girls Club, Camp Fire Desert District group, Coachella Valley Gang Task Force, Childhelp USA, Family Service of Coachella Valley, Palm Springs High School District Board of Education and Superintendent, Junior AID of the Desert, Palm Springs Police Athletic League, Palm Springs Library, Palm Springs Teachers Association, Palm Springs Youth Center, Desert Highland Gateway Community Center, Gay Associated Youth, Girl Scouts & Boys Scouts of America, etc.

5) Gay & Lesbian/Women Affairs Committee

Liaison: All civic groups working with focus groups, including but not limited to Desert Business Association, Desert AIDS Project, Gay & Lesbian Alliance of the Desert, AIDS Assistance Program, Desert Rodeo Association, National Organization of Women(NOW), Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays(P-FLAG), Palm Springs Lesbian & Gay Pride, Gay Associated Youth, Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Veterans, Desert Women's Network, Log Cabin Republicans, Democratic Club of the Coachella Valley, American Association of University Women, League of Women Voters,

6) African-American/Asian-Pacific Affairs Committee

Liaison: All civic groups working on focus group issues, including but not limited to Desert Highland Gateway Estates Association, African American Advisory Committee of Palm Springs High School, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Coachella Valley District, Negro Academic Scholarship Fund, African American Chamber of Commerce,

7) Latino/Native-American Affairs Committee

Liaison: All civic groups working on focus group issues, including but not limited to Coachella Valley Mexican-American Chamber of Commerce, United Farm Workers of America, MAYA Club, California Rural Legal Assistance, Coachella Valley Immigration Services & Associates, Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, Agua Caliente Tribal Council, Friends of the Indian Canyons, Riverside/San Bernardino Counties Indian Health Service, Torres Martinez Tribal Office, Cabazon Band of Mission Indians,

8) Seniors/People with Disabilities/Veterans Affairs Committee

Liaison: All civic groups addressing focus group issues, including but not limited to Sun Line Transit, Mizell Senior Citizens Center, Desert Council on Aging, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Stroke Activity Center, American Association of Retired Persons(AARP), United Way of the Desert, American Lung Association, American Heart Association, Arthritis Foundation, Braille Institute of the Desert Center, Desert Blind & Handicapped Association, Disabled American Veterans, Guide Dogs of the Desert,

9) Religious / Business / Health / Homeless / Housing / Employment Affairs Committee

Liaison: All civic groups addressing focus group issues, including but not limited to Well of the Desert, Bahai World Faith, Unity of Palm Springs, St. Teresa's Catholic Church, Catholic Charities, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans Services, Desert area Meals on Wheels, Desert Community Outreach Food Pantry, Food in Need of Distribution(FIND), HADASSAH, Palm Springs Chapter, Jewish Federation of Palm Springs, Jewish Community Center /Temple Isaiah, Our Lady of Soledad Catholic Church, Palms Springs Clergy Association, all civic and government groups addressing focus group concerns, including but not limited to California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission(EEOC), Riverside County Housing Authority, Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development(HUD), Workers' Compensation Board, U.S. Department of Labor, Cal/OSHA, California Department of Insurance, Health Care Service Plan Regulation, California State Department of Social Services, Labor Market Information Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights.