

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS**



Open Government Report 2014

To institutionalize a culture of transparent and open government, accountability, and to expand opportunities for resident participation and collaboration, this Report describes how the DC Office of Human Rights (OHR) has and will continue to develop and enhance transparency, public participation, and collaboration. In accordance with Mayor's Order 2014-170, this report addresses the following topics:

1) Transparency

OHR has taken significant steps over the last few years to become more transparent, and will continue to do so in fiscal year 2015. Existing transparency-related projects and efforts include:

- Providing case data via our annual report, which is also available on our website at ohr.dc.gov/page/annualreports. Annual publicly reported data includes: number of discrimination cases docketed by area and by protected trait, average mediation settlement rate and monetary totals, number of language access investigations and results, Commission on Human Rights caseload and other important information.
- Publishing our first report on progress of the Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Program, including detailed data and information about the number of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with bullying prevention policies, the number that are compliant with requirements in the Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012, and which requirements are not met by each LEA. Additionally, OHR launched an online Know Your Policy web portal allowing parents and guardians easy access to the bullying prevention policy and primary bullying prevention contact at their child's LEA.
- Publishing agency information on our website, including all media releases, all external reports (including our annual report, Language Access reports and research reports), laws we enforce, internal personnel processes and procedures, and complaint processes and procedures. We also provide numerous facts sheets and documents to help residents better understand office functions and work.
- Responding to and providing contact information for Freedom of Information Act requests, and making information available on our website at ohr.dc.gov/page/opengovernment.
- Posting all Commission on Human Rights and Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force meetings on the website as required under the Open Meetings Act. Additional OHR events not covered under the Open Meetings Act are also posted on our website.

- Posting meeting minutes from the Commission on Human Rights open meetings.
- Working closely with the Office of the City Administrator (OCA) and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to identify a significant number of datasets that OCA and OCTO expect to publish online later this year. If no dataset from our agency is selected to be included in this 2014 release, we will continue to work with OCA and OCTO to identify datasets appropriate to publish in 2015. In the future, requirements for open data reporting will be provided by the Chief Data Officer.

In addition to continuing the above transparency-related projects, OHR plans to implement the following efforts:

- Providing the number of inquiries made to the office regarding discrimination, to provide a fuller picture of the number of complaints the agency receives in a fiscal year.
- Releasing more detailed geographic data about the cases docketed with our office, including the number of cases filed by residents in each ward, and the wards in which respondents are located.
- Publishing our first Citywide Bullying Prevention Program annual report, which goes beyond the aforementioned school-specific data to include policy-related information on youth-serving government agencies and their grantees.
- Increasing available information about cases before the Commission on Human Rights, including criminal background cases, number of cases certified for the Commission and number of decisions rendered.
- Providing live webcasts of open meetings of the Commission on Human Rights and Mayor's Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force, including archive webcasts of the meetings online.
- Posting meeting minutes from open meetings of the Mayor's Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force.

2) **Public Engagement and Participation**

OHR has dramatically increased its public engagement and participation efforts over the past year, and continued existing efforts, which includes:

- Hiring a Community Outreach Coordinator focused on engaging the public to educate them about civil rights in the District and to receive feedback on OHR's work and opportunities to improve. The Coordinator also attends the meetings of non-profit organizations, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, tenant groups and other community organizations to explain the agency, answer questions and receive feedback.
- Increasing our housing discrimination outreach efforts significantly, with a 400 percent increase in the number of housing-related events, trainings and meetings we have attended.

- Posting agency information, events and other engagement opportunities on our website, our social media platforms and through our email listserv.
- Providing information online and through social media about how to submit information during open comment periods for revising regulations related to the Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012 and the Language Access Act of 2004.
- Developing new, innovative and efficient methods for reporting discrimination by taxicabs, and single-stall public bathrooms that are not-compliant with a requirement they be gender-neutral. OHR partnered with the DC Taxicab Commission (DCTC) to create a joint, simplified form for reporting taxicab discrimination, and allowed people to file complaints about bathrooms via our Twitter handle or by using the hashtag #SafeBathroomsDC. More about the taxicab discrimination form is available at ohr.dc.gov/taxis. More about the SafeBathroomsDC campaign is available at ohr.dc.gov/bathrooms.
- Creating a new general brochure that more clearly describes the agency for the general public, and developing numerous fact sheets in multiple languages to help describe the OHR complaints process, the Language Access Program and the Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Program.
- Launching language support pages in Amharic, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese, which provide basic OHR information and vital documents in those languages.
- Responding to all requests made via the “Ask the Director” email address within two business days.

In addition to continuing the above efforts, in fiscal year 2015 OHR is considering:

- Creating new, more efficient methods for reporting certain categories of discrimination complaints.
- Developing additional FAQ sheets for our programs and for new laws we enforce.

3) **Collaboration**

OHR has increased its collaboration with other government agencies and community organizations in the last year, including:

- Launching the Human Rights Liaison training initiative, bringing key staff from community organizations into a full-day training to learn about District civil rights laws, tips for identifying discrimination, and the OHR complaint process. The training programs – which have trained almost 30 individuals from almost as many organizations – aims to engage community organizations in our work and provide them with the information necessary to assist their clients when discrimination may have occurred.

- Developing the joint taxicab discrimination form with the DC Taxicab Commission and maintaining dialogue on how to reduce discrimination by taxi drivers.
- Conducting a survey to determine how government agencies and partner organizations view collaborations with OHR.
- Participating in the DC Taxicab Commission Disability Advisory Committee, which brings together disability advocates, government agencies and the taxicab industry to research ways to provide more accessible taxis.
- Building partnerships with immigrant advocacy groups and direct service providers. This included holding two events aimed at learning the needs of those who speak limited or no English when engaging with government agencies, and to determine additional services government could provide.
- Engaging over 20 organizations and agencies from the Mayor’s Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force to hold an event for parents and guardians looking for tools and tips to prevent bullying among youth.
- Conducting dozens of presentations and trainings for community organizations and government agencies (such as the Office of Police Complaints) to better educate the public about civil rights laws and OHR functions.

In fiscal year 2015, OHR plans to:

- Expand its Human Rights Liaison training program to incorporate more community organizations and direct service providers from a greater variety of communities.
- Continue collaborating with the DC Taxicab Commission to determine new proactive initiatives aimed at reducing taxicab discrimination.
- Conduct a survey of partner agencies and organizations to further determine the experience of such entities in working with OHR.
- Create an “Ask OHR” social media campaign that prompts followers to ask questions and provide feedback to the agency.