



## **The District of Columbia Commission on Human Rights**

### **Request for Nominations for 2023 Human Rights Awards**

#### ***“DC Human Rights Act: Protecting and Celebrating Bodies and Minds of All Abilities”***

The District of Columbia Commission on Human Rights requests nominees for several categories of human rights awards described here to be awarded at its 2023 Human Rights Gala. This Gala will take place on Thursday, December 7, 2023. December 7<sup>th</sup> was chosen to celebrate both International Human Rights Day on December 10<sup>th</sup> and the International Day of Persons with Disability on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

This year’s Gala theme celebrates all levels of physical and mental abilities, and the event will honor the individuals and communities who dedicate themselves to improving the lives of people with physical and mental disabilities. The nominees should exhibit exceptional dedication to protection against discrimination and/or to help enhance the diverse abilities of people who live or work in the District of Columbia. We are pleased to co-host this event with the Office of Human Rights and work in collaboration with the Office of Disability Rights, Office of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing, and the Department of Behavioral Health.

For the first two Awards, the Commission welcomes nominations of DC residents. The Commission may consider non-DC residents if the nominated individual’s exceptional contributions in the District of Columbia can be demonstrated. For the Community Award, the Commission encourages nominations of organizations active in the District.

#### **1. Cornelius R. “Neil” Alexander Humanitarian Award**

For almost twenty years, until his untimely death in 2007, Neil Alexander served as the Chief Hearing Examiner for the D.C. Commission on Human Rights. With extensive knowledge of discrimination law and a dedication to civil rights and social justice, Neil wrote numerous legal decisions that not only received regional and national attention but set precedents that would forever shape our enjoyment of rights in the District.

The Cornelius R. “Neil” Alexander Humanitarian Award recognizes the efforts and accomplishments of individuals who embody the legacy of Neil Alexander in their life-time contributions to the protection of many of the 23 traits protected under the DC Human Rights Act, including protection for people with disabilities, resulting in a lasting impact on the quality of life of the residents, workers and visitors in the District.

**2. Emerging Human Rights Leader Award**

The Commission is pleased to present this award to emerging leaders aged 30 years or younger, who exhibit extraordinary leadership in human rights awareness raising through advocacy, the arts, education, networking, outreach, or other similar activities. The leadership preferably would center around the protection of people with disabilities and related protections under the DC Human Rights Act (or related human rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), or an emerging human rights issue that is yet to receive sufficient attention and protection. Up to three awards in this category will be presented. **This year, we are pleased to reserve one of the three awards for a student who attends DC Public Schools or a DC Public Charter School.**

**3. Community Award**

Community organizations active in the District of Columbia and providing outstanding services to protect and support DC residents, workers, or visitors - especially those with disabilities - are eligible to receive this Award. Established in 2022, this Award celebrates the significant contributions of an organization, rather than an individual, toward the protection and promotion of one or more of the 23 protected traits or the human rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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Nominations must be received no later than August 21, 2023, using the nomination form available here, via email with all information fields contained in the nomination form filled, and addressed to [Commission.COHR@dc.gov](mailto:Commission.COHR@dc.gov)

For details on the 2023 Human Rights Gala, information will be available shortly at: <https://ohr.dc.gov/>

Thank you for your interest and participation!

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***The District of Columbia Commission on Human Rights***

*The Commission on Human Rights adjudicates private sector complaints that have been found to have probable cause and have been certified by the Office on Human Rights, issues regulations to implement the Human Rights Act, and conducts public outreach. Up to 15 volunteers from the District and nominated by the Mayor serve the Commission.*