

City of Charlottesville

Human Rights Commission & Office of Human Rights

Calendar Year 2024 Annual Report Summary

Presented by

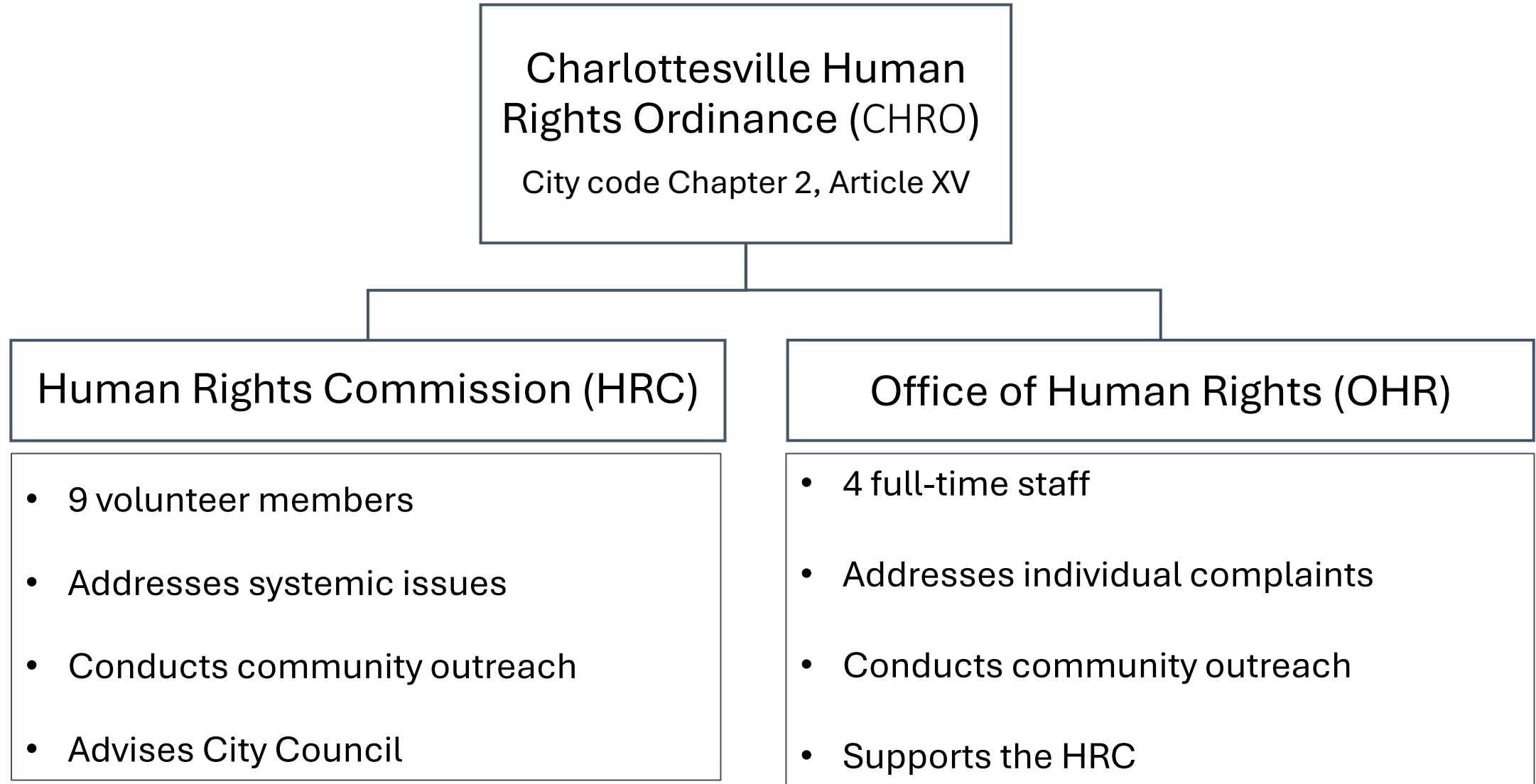
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Heather Roberson-Gaston, Chair, Human Rights Commission

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Human Rights Division of the City Manager's Office



Office of Human Rights Organizational Structure



The Human Rights Ordinance

Under Section 2-433 of the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance, it is the role of the Human Rights Commission and Office of Human Rights to:

- 2-433.(a): Assist individuals with complaints of discrimination.
- 2-433.(b): Provide awareness, education, and guidance.
- 2-433.(c): Review City policies.
- 2-433.(d): Seek federal workshare agreements with the EEOC and HUD.
- 2-433.(e): Make legislative recommendations to City Council.
- 2-433.(f): Prepare recommendations for City Council related to the function of the Commission.

2-433.(a): Individual Assistance

Highlights

- 288 unique individuals served
- 13 complaints opened
- 1,841 incoming contacts

Observations

- Complaints nearly doubled
- Simultaneous investigations increased
- Multiple cases in alternative dispute resolution

Opportunities

- Consider anticipated workloads and personnel requirements
 - Intake and alternative dispute resolution
 - Investigation
 - Outreach to populations not being reached

2-433.(b): Awareness and Guidance

Highlights

- 833 people contacted through service provision outreach
- 246 total community outreach activities
- 276 attendees attended 8 education and awareness events

Observations

- HRC engaged in but did not plan for outreach
- Community engagement leads to systemic impact
- Significant inquiries originated in Albemarle County

Opportunities

- Refine HRC annual planning to include outreach
- Restructure OHR staffing to expand engagement and impact work
- Consider dialogue with County regarding human rights services

2-433.(c): City Policy Review

Highlights

- Submitted recommendations to Council for:
 - Equitable shelter and supports for the homeless
 - Effective right to counsel for tenants facing eviction

Observations

- Research and community partnerships improve the HRC's work
- Research and community partnerships rely on OHR staff
- OHR staff capacity is stretched

Opportunities

- Restructure OHR staffing to adequately support this work
- Seek partnerships for research

2-433.(d): Federal workshares

Highlights

- Human Rights Ordinance amended on 08/05/24 and 01/21/25
- Amended Ordinance submitted for federal fair housing workshare

Observations

- Human Rights Ordinance stronger and more comprehensive
- Qualification for federal fair housing workshare likely

Opportunities

- Consider the best interests of the City and community

2-433.(e): Legislative Program

Highlights

- Hosted 2 public panels with state legislators
- Released a poll to gather public feedback
- Submitted recommendations to Council on 09/06/24

Observations

- Legislative process continues to improve
- Supporting this process requires significant staff time

Opportunities

- Restructure OHR staffing to adequately support this work

2-433.(f): Commission Policies

Highlights

- Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance amendments regarding public hearings
- Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance amendments regarding subpoena power
- Rules & Procedures change for annual meetings

Observations

- Regular review of the Ordinance and Rules & Procedures is valuable
- Supporting this process requires significant staff time

Opportunities

- Plan for annual review
- Restructure OHR staffing to adequately support this work

Human Rights Commission Work Plan: March 2026- February 2027

Focus Areas (as of April 15, 2025)

- Housing access and stability across protected classes and economic status
- Support for vulnerable and marginalized communities during federal uncertainty

Goals (as of April 15, 2025)

- Hold a landlord training on the enforcement authority under the Human Rights Ordinance
- Hold a roundtable with immigration community stakeholders to ensure fair access to services
- Hold a joint summit with UVA and Albemarle County regarding the focus areas
- Explore feasibility of a joint City/County Human Rights Commission
- Host a public expert panel on the focus areas to inform policy and legislative recommendations
- Submit legislative recommendations to City Council related to the focus areas by September 2025
- Submit policy recommendations to City Council related to the focus areas by October 2025

Questions?

Staff Contact

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