2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Department of County Administration, Lonnie R. Robbins,
Chief Administrative Officer

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

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# OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUITY ANNUAL REPORT

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In Howard County we strive to be a welcoming community for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, country of origin, sexual orientation, or income level. As your Howard County Executive, I remain steadfast in our commitment to eradicate hatred and discrimination in all its forms in our community. In reaffirming that commitment, there are two items that merit special acknowledgement since the 2019 report.

First, we have transformed the Office of Human Rights into the Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE) to align its mission and purpose more clearly with our core pillars. Secondly, in January 2021, I appointed Dr. Denise Boston as the County’s first Equity and Restorative Practices Manager. The position is a permanent role within the Office of Human Rights and Equity and will be responsible for identifying any practices or policies needed to ensure equity; recommend and implement training and competency-building; and develop strategic community partnerships. Through restorative practices, Dr. Boston will help our community by strengthening relationships and building social connections.

In a year that saw us all facing a new normal because of the COVID-19 pandemic, OHRE continued its robust community outreach and engagement through a series of virtual celebrations, seminars, workgroups, and community meetings.

We also made progress in our efforts to be more inclusive and recognize our history. In September 2020, we created the La Alianza Latina Workgroup (Latin Alliance). This Workgroup will not only provide Latino residents a seat at the table, but access to government to implement long-lasting change. In October 2020, we celebrated Howard County’s first Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Moving forward, we will recognize this holiday in place of Columbus Day.

Sadly, there are those who continue to focus on our differences rather than our similarities. This report documents 47 hate-bias incidents in 2020, defined as acts of prejudice, hate or violence directed because of race, religion, ethnic background or sexual orientation. The report also highlights incidences of employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and public accommodation discrimination last year. Moving forward, OHRE will continue to be a leader in our community, a symbol of our values, and a force for positive change.

Once again, I thank everyone at OHRE who is making Howard County safer and more just, so that all our residents can thrive.

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
Dear Howard County Residents,

This 2020 Annual Report for the Office of Human Rights & Equity (OHRE) and the Human Rights Commission (HRC) is an important overview of the status of civil rights in Howard County. This report details OHRE’s education, outreach and enforcement actions and initiatives to safeguard the public from discrimination. The County reaffirms its commitment to being a place where each resident is able to grow and prosper in an environment free of discrimination, bigotry and other unlawful practices.

This past year tested us in many ways and highlighted the intersectionality of the systemic challenges that confront us as a community. Years in the future, Howard County residents will look back upon this time as a turning point in our history – when we committed ourselves to forge a stronger, more diverse, more equitable, and more inclusive Howard County for all.

This includes Howard County government’s pledge to create an equity plan that reflects the collective strength of our diversity to better serve our residents. Dr. Denise Boston was hired as our new Equity and Restorative Practices Manager and will lead us in that effort.

The Commissioners of the HRC serve on a truly volunteer basis and I am thankful to each of them for their service. In a year in which we navigated the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, I would also like to thank Yolanda Sonnier for her leadership in focusing the Office on its mission of providing trademark efficient case resolution while continuing to expand public engagement efforts that were educational, responsive, and relevant.

In closing, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the OHRE staff. Thank you for your professionalism, dedication, and service to our community by ensuring that all individuals have an equal opportunity to pursue their lives free of discrimination.

Sincerely,

Lonnie R. Robbins
Chief Administrative Officer
Dear Howard County Residents,

I am pleased to present the 2020 Office of Human Rights and Equity Annual Report. The Office of Human Rights and Equity’s (OHRE) mission is to eradicate discrimination, protect and promote Human Rights and increase equity in Howard County. The office serves as a catalyst in fostering attitudes and beliefs that everyone has the right to enjoy a wholesome and productive quality of life free of discrimination.

2020 was pinned as the Year of Vision. Then we experienced the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the targeting and violence against Asian Americans, the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, which led to the social protest and the sudden “wakeup call” on racial discrimination and social inequities in our world. At that point, people thought 2020 wasn’t after all the year of vision. I assert 2020 was most definitely the year of vision! What America clearly saw was that racism, discrimination, targeting and inequities do exist despite statements of a post-racial society even from national leaders. 2020 reflected a shift in priorities for people personally and professionally.

Howard County is an ever-increasing conglomerate of diverse cultures and OHRE continues evolving to address the needs of the county. Undaunted, yet emboldened by the challenges of a global pandemic:

- the Outreach Team restructured their presentations, utilizing applications such as WebEx, to connect with the county virtually through trainings, workshops and events including Bystander Intervention and Cultural Awareness, Leaning into Humanity, Humanity Matters, Native American Heritage Month, Kwanzaa, and OHRE Overviews in English, Spanish and Chinese;
- the Investigative Team continued to tackle incidences of discrimination throughout Howard County through impartial investigation, conciliation, mediation and education and likewise utilized WebEx to conduct investigative interviews, meetings, mediations and conciliations.

Additionally, in 2020, the Office of Human Rights’ name was changed to the Office of Human Rights & Equity. This name change and the newly formed Equity & Restorative Practices Manager position is a reflection of the County’s continued commitment to addressing the obstacles and inequities that exist in our county.

As I near the completion of my second year serving Howard County as OHRE’S Administrator, I would like to extend my continued appreciation to the OHRE staff for tirelessly using their talents to create a county free from discrimination and inequities. 2020 was a very trying year fraught with great adjustment, loss and learning new ways to live. The dawning of 2021 finds us in a new world of possibilities. OHRE continues to persistently support, engage with and protect Howard County residents despite the challenges because We Are Here For You!

In Gratitude and Service,

Yolanda F. Sonnier
Yolanda F. Sonnier, Administrator
The pictures above and throughout this report were taken in 2020 prior to COVID-19 or in previous years.

Office of Human Rights & Equity Staff

Administrator:
Yolanda F. Sonnier, Administrator

Investigative Staff:
Mary M. Campbell, Senior Investigator and Compliance Officer (Retired 2020)
Chey Martineau, Investigator/Mediator/ Compliance Officer- December 2020
Todd Givens, Investigator/Mediator
David Ruiz, Intake Investigator

Community Outreach Staff:
Trent Day Hall, Supervisor
Marla Moore, Outreach Coordinator
Chaunta Taylor, Outreach Coordinator

Administrative Staff
Evelyn Boulware, Administrative Aide/Mediator
Heidi Tilkens, Administrative Technician
History and Purpose

The Howard County Office of Human Rights (OHR) was established in 1975 and functions pursuant to the Howard County Code, Section 12.200-12.218. The responsibilities are to investigate complaints of discrimination; resolve complaints by conference, mediation, conciliation or litigation; and enforce Howard County Human Rights Law. In addition, the office serves as a catalyst in fostering attitudes and beliefs among Howard County residents that ensure that all people have an equal opportunity to pursue lives free of discrimination.

On August 24, 2020, County Executive Calvin Ball announced a new position within Howard County government, the Equity and Restorative Practices Manager. The position will identify any practices or policies needed to ensure equity; recommend and implement training and competency-building; and develop strategic community partnerships. Through restorative practices, the leader in this position will help our community in strengthening relationships and building social connections. County Executive Ball also announced the renaming of the Office of Human Rights to the Office of Human Rights and Equity.

The administration determined the name, Office of Human Rights and Equity, reflects the importance of inclusivity and focuses on promoting human rights and ending discrimination for every resident of Howard County. The County Council passed a bill changing the name in October 2020 and the name change became official in December 2020.

Complaint Process

Individuals who believe they have experienced discrimination in Howard County may file a complaint with OHR by telephone, walk-in or via the OHRE website. Complaints for discrimination can be filed regarding employment, housing, public accommodations, financing, law enforcement and any other facets of the lives of Howard County residents where discrimination may be found to exist.

To begin the process, the complainant must complete a pre-complaint questionnaire that asks for information about the alleged discriminatory incident(s). The intake investigator, along with the complainant, will draft a charge of discrimination. Once the charge is signed, the case is then assigned to an investigator.

The protected classes in Howard County are Race, Age, Marital Status, Occupation, Creed, Sex, Political Opinion, Source of Income (Housing Only), Color, National Origin, Familial Status, Personal Appearance, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Disability and/or Gender Identity.

For housing cases, complaints must be filed within one year of the alleged discrimination. For all other cases, complaints must be filed within six months of the alleged discrimination.

2020 Complaint Summary

For the calendar year 2020, OHRE issued 41 findings, closed 58 cases and opened 54 new cases. Investigators responded to an additional 139 inquiries which did not become cases. OHRE participated in community programs, as well as cooperated with public agencies and private groups on educational programs, outreach activities and training.
Office of Human Rights and Equity - A Fair Employment Practice Agency

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is authorized by statute to use the services of state and local Fair Employment Practice Agencies (FEPA), like the Howard County Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE), to assist in meeting its mandate to enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA).

OHRE has been a FEPA designee since 1984. This is quite an honor for OHRE and a confirmation of the quality of its investigative abilities. Additionally, EEOC has named OHRE as a “certified acceptance” agency. This indicates that OHRE has consistently met the contractual requirements to EEOC's satisfaction, and that EEOC accepts OHRE's case decisions.

You can reach out to us at (410) 313-6430 or OHRE@howardcountymd.gov
2020 Total Caseload Analysis

The following tables provide a statistical report of the complaints and monetary settlements for the year 2020:

Table 1 - Total Cases Filed with OHRE 2018-2020
Table 2 - 2020 Caseload Analysis by Basis
Table 3 - Monetary Awards Gained through OHRE Intervention
Table 4 - Monetary Settlements 2018-2020
Table 5 - Cases Closed 2018-2020

Table 1 - Total Cases Filed with OHRE 2018-2020
Table 2 - 2020 Caseload Analysis by Basis

Note: *Source of Income is for Housing cases only
In addition to monetary awards, OHRE settled cases that included non-monetary settlement terms. Some of those non-monetary settlement terms, also known as Targeted Equitable Relief (TER): included internal policy changes, training and professional development, reasonable accommodations including change in work schedule, apartment renovations, and neutral references.
Table 4 - Monetary Settlements 2018-2020

Table 5 – Cases Closed 2018 to 2020
Hate-Bias Incidents 2020

A hate-bias incident (HBI) is an act of prejudice, hate or violence directed against individuals, groups or institutions because of race, religion, ethnic background or sexual orientation. HBIs are intended to cause harm and may result in physical or emotional injury and/or property damage.

A HBI poses a unique danger to society. Such acts affect the fundamental rights of the entire community. These incidents cause tension and may erupt into violence among or between different groups. Victims of an HBI should immediately report the incident to the Howard County Police Department (HCPD). Victims may also contact the Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE).

In 2020, forty-seven (47) incidents were reported to OHRE from the HCPD. Once an HBI is reported to the HCPD, the HCPD submits monthly reports to OHRE. The number of HBIs reported in OHRE’s annual report is gathered from initial reports received from the HCPD. During the HCPD’s investigation, a case may be reclassified, thus there may be a difference between the HBI reporting in the OHRE Annual Report and the HCPD’s Annual Report.

OHRE works closely with the HCPD to review reports of hate-bias incidents and provide accurate reporting.
2020 Bias Motivations
Training & Professional Development

OHRE staff participates in various trainings either by leading the training or as a participant for professional development. Below are a few highlighted trainings.

Lateral Class: Hate Bias Training
Howard County Police Academy
February 21, 2020

The purpose of this training was to educate a new lateral class about OHRE’s mission investigating HBIs and thus providing officers with information to disseminate to citizens about our services.

Bystander Intervention and Cultural Awareness Training
May - December 2020

This training was held 1-2 times a month with a cap of 30-50 participants. This 3-hour training was open to the public and focused on providing tools of effective communication, human dignity and cultural data analysis. Bystander Intervention teaches participants to recognize a potentially harmful situation and respond in a way that might positively influence the outcome. Bystander Intervention training may be tailored for the specific needs, demographics and outcomes of a requesting group. In May 2020, this training was presented twice for the Howard County Chinese School administrators, teachers, parents and students as well as Human Rights Commissioners and leaders in other Chinese organizations in Howard County.

International Association of Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) Town Hall Meeting
“Human Rights in an Era of Uprisings and the Pandemic”
June 26, 2020

National experts highlighted pertinent and timely human and civil rights issues. Discussions included Fair Housing; Discrimination; Hate Violence and Trends; Health and Economic Disparities; Excessive Use of Police Force; Violence and Reform; the “I Can’t Breathe” Movement; Protests and What They Mean.

OHRE staff participated to find out best practices for Human and Civil Rights Workers.
Community Outreach Activities

Community Outreach experienced a paradigm shift in connection to the way they work and service Howard County. The mission of supporting and providing resources and tools needed to honor the collective humanity of our diverse population remained unchanged; the method of delivery and focus had to shift due to quarantine guidelines caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

To this end, 2020 saw Community Outreach restructuring programs, events, trainings, presentations and facilitated dialogues to make them as effective, engaging and fruitful in a virtual medium as they are in person. Due to this foresight, community-based activities were facilitated seamlessly despite social distancing requirements.

Armed with information and awareness, Community Outreach partnered with various stakeholders including Howard County Government Organizations, nonprofits and businesses to ensure the needs of the community were heard, understood, and met from multi-dimensional standpoints. They did not have to reinvent the proverbial wheel; choosing instead, to consolidate resources and serve more Howard County residents.

Upon reformatting presentations and acquiring skills required to facilitate in virtual spaces; Community Outreach created and implemented virtual versions of live activities. This effectively doubled their program offerings and exponentially increased community engagement requests.

Highlighted 2020 activities included:

- **Lunar New Year**
  **Jan 25, 2020** - A New Year’s celebration that celebrated Howard County’s diverse Asian population. OHRE provided a table with information about our mission, vision, outreach and services. As this event was held before the COVID-19 epidemic, it was in-person. OHRE provided informational brochures in Chinese and Korean to attendees of the Lunar New Year festivities.

- **Childhood Memories of the Holocaust: A Cantata**
  **We Will Never Be Bullied Again**
  International Holocaust Remembrance Day
  75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau
  January 27, 2020 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
  Oakland Mills Meeting House

  This gripping theatrical work explored the consequences of unchecked bigotry and the resilience of the Jewish community in the face of the unspeakable tragedy of the Holocaust through song and spoken word.

  OHRE co-hosted this event and HRC Commissioners were also in attendance. Both organizations managed an information table and shared their organizations mission, services and outreach.
• Black History Month
  Lunch and Learn: February 13, 2020
  The event, produced in partnership with the Elkridge 50+ center; focused on exploring Black history and experiences within the context of American history and culture. Facilitators presented information about Black history with the intention of creating authentic connection and understanding. All perspectives, truths, and experiences are invited to respectfully engage in this experience.

• Black History Expo: February 15, 2020
  Long Reach High School
  The National Pan-Hellenic Council of Howard County and the Howard County Public School System-Office of Community Outreach and Engagement sponsored the 2020 Black History Expo. This event increased awareness and expanded knowledge and appreciation of African Americans’ significant global contributions. The theme was “African Americans and the Vote.” OHRE presented a screening of the film “Meet Me at Equality,” and a group discussion about the Civil Rights Movement.

• Humanity Matters
  August – September: This five part dialogue series provided over 100 community members the opportunity to explore the complexity of cultural identity and its impact on our lived experiences and community. The series was developed in response to requests from numerous community organizations and members in response to social and civil unrest and political, and racial tension in both the United States and Howard County. The series followed the “Awareness. Alignment. Action.” paradigm and yielded tangible changes and creations to honor the humanity of all residents from individual, cultural, and institutional stand points. This series was offered virtually and in person (following social distancing protocols).
• Hispanic Heritage Month: September 15 – October 15

Zumba
September 26, 2020
OHRE hosted a one-hour virtual Zumba session with Alexandria Fraijo of La Bodi Massage, Inc. This event brought an authentic piece of Hispanic cultural to the forefront for the larger community to enjoy and honor. This event gave residents an engaging and active virtual experience.

Celebremos! Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with Bingo Live on Zoom
October 7, 2020
In partnership with the Howard County Office of Human Rights. Participants celebrated Latinx/Hispanic culture by participating in a virtual Bingo game.

OHRE Overview (in Spanish)
October 13, 2020
This event aims to give an overview of OHRE and the ways in which we serve the community. This Spanish language presentation ensures that Spanish speaking residents have access to much needed information and resources.

Latinx/Hispanic Heritage Month Kahoot! Trivia on Zoom
October 15, 2020
In partnership with the Howard County Library System, participants learned more about Latinx/Hispanic Heritage. This Trivia contest was presented live via Zoom and Kahoot!

• Native American Heritage Month
November 2020:
National American Indian Heritage Month recognizes the culture, traditions and history of American Indians and Alaska Natives. OHRE in partnership with Nava Be Diné, a Howard County-based business that showcases Native American culture, hosted “We Are Still Here,” a virtual celebration that featured activities for people of all ages throughout the month. Seven events included cooking lessons; a Hoop Dance demonstration; storytelling; singing and drumming. It culminated in a lively panel discussion featuring Native American equity workers, artists, and community stakeholders in conversation about cultural resilience, human rights and the survival of Indigenous People.
Due to COVID-19 restrictions the Kwanzaa celebration was held virtually. The Office of the County Executive, OHRE, the Kwanzaa Committee and various community partners, including the Howard County Center of African American Culture, NAACP, the Howard County Council of Elders, and the Howard County Office of the Sheriff, produced seven videos (one for each of the seven Kwanzaa principles).

**The following Kwanzaa videos were produced:**

- **December 26, 2020 - Welcome to Kwanzaa and Unity (Umoja) with County Executive Calvin Ball and OHRE Administrator, Yolanda F. Sonnier, Rev. Eric King, K. Earl Owens of the Council of Elders, Paul Thompson and Zhion Perkins.**
- **December 27, 2020 - Self Determination (Kujichagulia) with Riley Macon**
- **December 28, 2020 - Collective Work and Responsibility (Ujima) with Vanessa Webb**
- **December 29, 2020 - Cooperative Economics (Ujamaa) with Lee & Elizabeth Vanterpool of Anegada Delights Caribbean Cuisine**
- **December 30, 2020 - Finding Your Purpose (Nia) with Dr. Amber Hodges**
- **December 31, 2020 - Unlock Creativity (Kuumba) with the Howard County Center of African American Culture member Angela Brade.**
- **January 1, 2021 - Finding Faith (Imani) with Kurt Wall of the Tau Pi Chapter, Omega Psi Phi, Inc. and the Howard County Office of the Sheriff.**
Mary M. Campbell, Compliance Officer, Retires

OHRE said farewell to Mary M. Campbell when she retired from the position of Compliance Officer in April 2020. Mary was employed with Howard County Government for 35+ years and was a pillar in Howard County’s Civil Rights Community. Her extensive expertise in anti-discrimination law will be missed.

OHRE will not be the same without Mary, an experienced and trusted advisor, mentor, and friend.

OHRE benefitted greatly from Mary’s years of service. Some of her awards and accomplishments include:

- From 1984-2019, there were numerous temporary appointments as Acting Administrator of the Office of Human Rights.
- In April of 1993, she received a letter from the County Executive and the Human Rights Commission Chair, commending her on a job well done for her sexual harassment workshop and training.
- In March of 2008, Mary received a letter from the Fire Chief, commending and thanking her for her Diversity Training given to the Fire Officers.
- Mary was nominated in 2016 for County Administration’s Customer Service External Award; in 2017, she was nominated for the Mentor Award.
- Throughout her career, Mary received multiple outstanding performance evaluations, all noting extraordinary work ethic and expertise in her field.
- Mary planned and implemented the Network of Neighbors Training for Howard County Government.
- Mary conducted Fair Housing Trainings for Community Homes, Howard County Association of Realtors and the Howard County Housing Commission.
- Mary contributed to national and local EEOC initiatives and conferences.
- As Co-chair of Coalition Opposed to Violence & Extremism (COVE), Mary sponsored anti-hate crimes training and events.
- Mary also served as a member of the Training Committee and Secretary of National Association of Human Rights Workers, which provides training and certification of Human Rights Investigators.
• Mary also worked closely with Regional Fair Housing group, which is responsible for implementing the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing law in the region.

• Finally, Mary worked with a transition committee which included the Howard County Public School System and local advocates, to help transition adults with intellectual disabilities from the school system into meaningful jobs.

Prior and current Administrators had this to say about Mary:

Yolanda F. Sonnier, Administrator (2019 - Present)

“It is with a heavy heart that I bid farewell to Compliance Officer, Mary M. Campbell, as she embarks upon retirement. Mary’s work ethic, integrity, passion, and enormous contributions to Human Rights serve as a beacon of light to all who’ve had the good fortune to work with Mary or benefit from her efforts.

Throughout our brief time together, my respect and affection for Mary grew exponentially. I will treasure Mary for welcoming me with open arms and providing me all the assistance I needed to ensure a smooth transition. While I am saddened that I will no longer have a front-row seat to Mary’s exemplary journey; I know that she will continue to make the world a better place, through her position as Co-Chair of Coalition Opposed to Violence and Extremism (COVE) and her other volunteer efforts.

On behalf of the Office of Human Rights and Equity, I wish Mary a wonderful retirement full of love, friendship, and blessings.”

Dr. Barbara J. Sands, Administrator, (2015 - 2019)

“Mary Campbell is a strong, knowledgeable and fearless advocate for people who had their Human Rights violated. She is recognized and respected at the Federal, State and local level for her courageous efforts to fight for equal rights for everyone, regardless of Race, Creed, Color, Religious Beliefs, or gender.

It was a joy to have Mary Campbell serve when I was Administrator for The Howard County Office of Human Rights. There are your Constitutional Rights and there are your God-given Rights; they may not be the same. Howard County is better because of what we did here.”

Dr. C. Vernon Gray, Administrator (2007 - 2015)

“I first met Mary in 1985 or 1986 in my maiden term on the Howard County Council and soon after she had joined the Office of Human Rights. Subsequently, in 2009, I had the opportunity to work with her when I was appointed Administrator of the Office of Human Rights. Mary’s dedication and commitment to justice, equality and human rights were superb. She was very generous with her time and super patient in sharing her knowledge with colleagues and others about discrimination behavior and anti-discrimination laws. She was excellent in panel discussions and training sessions. I saw her patience and expertise on display when the Howard County Police Department requested that their 300 plus officers be trained on Howard County human rights laws, to particularly include gender identity, which had recently been signed into law. Issues arose when officers would make a traffic stop and discover that the driver may be expressing a gender other than birth gender as shown on the driver’s license. This created contentious situations. Mary conducted more than a dozen sessions of approximately 30 officers each. She encountered several disinterested officers as manifested through body language and grunts. Mary would not be deterred. She patiently utilized her interpersonal skills to embrace all the officers, even those uninterested initially. After a couple days of training, many inquiries and questions arose, showing a passionate interest in the topic. Mary was shrewdly able to expertly train the officers and embrace them, while not offending anyone. The training was a smashing success, as indicated by follow-up reviews.”
Dear Partners in Community Service,

In 2020 as the Howard County Human Rights Commission (HRC) embarked on its next 50 years of service to the community, we experienced unprecedented challenges during the course of the year. The COVID-19 pandemic radically altered the way we did business in that we were compelled to shift from in-person meetings to virtual online meetings throughout most of the year.

I am proud to say that with the support from Office of Human Rights and Equity staff as well as the dedication and hard work from my fellow commissioners, we were successful in completing the business at hand virtually that included hearing several cases of alleged discrimination in a neutral forum. Early in the year, the Commission held a retreat whereby the HRC committee structure was reorganized and a mission statement was developed.

Because of the pandemic, HRC was forced to host its Annual Human Rights Commission Awards in a virtual ceremony. As has been the case in the past, the ceremony honored Howard County individuals and organizations that perform outstanding achievements in human rights. This ceremony recognized for the first time a student recipient.

The most significant project of 2020 was a review of immigration policies and practices in the county that stemmed from concerns from immigration rights advocacy groups raised during a public forum in October 2019. Several commissioners formed a committee to look into immigrant justice and safety. The work of reviewing documents and conducting onsite reviews and interviews was initiated before the pandemic became evident, and the committee steadfastly pursued this effort with great skill under difficult circumstances that culminated with a report to the County Executive and County Council.

Despite these unprecedented challenges, I am proud to say that the Commission’s work has not missed a beat. By adapting to our new business format, it has seamlessly carried out its mission of advocacy, education and representation. Moving forward into 2021, the Human Rights Commission will continue its excellent track record to ensure that Howard County remains a place for equity, inclusion and justice for all residents.

Sincerely

Bob Ford
Chair, Human Rights Commission

Howard County Government, Calvin Ball County Executive

www.howardcountymd.gov
Human Rights Commission (HRC)

The Human Rights Commission was established in 1969. It is comprised of 11 members and a non-voting student member, 18 years old or under. Commissioners must live in Howard County and represent the diversity of county residents. The duties and responsibilities of the Commission are prescribed by law.

Members of the Human Rights Commission

Robert Ford, Chair - Term expires 3/1/23
Lynda Earle, Vice-chair - Term expires 3/1/24
Scott Markow, Vice-chair - Term expires 3/1/23

Commissioners

Bianca Chang, Vice-chair - Term expires: 3/1/25
Mabrooka Chaudhry - Term expires: 3/1/22
Joan Hash - Term expires: 6/1/21
Joshua Kaufman, Term expires: 3/1/25
Peter Hwang - Term expires: 6/1/21
Leslie Salgado-Tamyo - Term expires: 4/1/24
Gabriel Terrasa - Term expires: 5/1/22J
Kui Zhao - Term expires: 3/1/25

Student Commissioner

Musa Abdul-Aziz Jafri - Term 7/1/19 - 6/30/20
Jonathon Di Pietro - Term 7/1/20 - 6/30/21

Human Rights Commission Staff

Melissa Goldmeier, HRC Legal Counsel, Howard County Office of Law
Yolanda F. Sonnier, Executive Secretary & OHRE Administrator
Chaunta Taylor, Recording Secretary

Elections for 2021 Officers

Every December, the Commission accepts nominations from appointed Commissioners to serve in the roles of Chair and Vice-chair for the upcoming year.

In 2020, the Commission created a new position, Corresponding Secretary, in light of the various correspondence sent by HRC in 2020.

The following individuals will serve in the roles indicated for 2021:

Scott Markow, Chair
Bianca Chang, Vice-chair
Joshua Kaufman, Corresponding Secretary
2020 Human Rights Commission Award Recipients

The Howard County Human Rights Commission hosts an annual awards ceremony that celebrates individuals and community organizations for their contributions to human and civil rights in Howard County. These awards recognize exemplary citizenship, dedicated leadership and outstanding achievement in eliminating or eradicating discrimination. Award recipients are selected by the Commission from nominations submitted by the community.

The Commission presented Jumel Howard, Erika Strauss Chavarria and The Horizon Foundation with the 2020 Human Rights Award during a virtual awards ceremony on October 22, 2020. In addition, Charmaine Y. Yuan was the recipient of the Human Rights Commission’s newly formed Human Rights Commission Student Award.

Individual Award Recipients

**Jumel Howard**, a pillar of the LGBTQ+ community, is determined to break down barriers to ensure that everyone is accepted and included, no matter their sexuality or race. Founder of the first Howard County Pride Festival, Jumel is well-known and respected for his promotion of community dialogue and reinforcement of the county’s goals of diversity and inclusiveness.

**Erika Strauss Chavarria** started the Facebook group “Columbia Community Care” (CCC) in March 2020 in response to the dire needs of community members struggling in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, Erika has volunteered at schools throughout the county, providing food to more than 100 families a day. On weekends, when Howard County Public School System Grab-and-Go meals are not available, she distributes food. In addition to her role with CCC, Erika is an advocate for marginalized communities. She testified on behalf of Howard County’s immigrant community, served on the Education Equity Police committee for school equity and accountability, and helped organize the Black Lives Matter March and Vigil in Columbia in June.

Organizational Award Recipients

The **Horizon Foundation** is committed to improving the health of Howard County’s residents through innovative initiatives, collaborative partnerships, strategic grant making and thoughtful advocacy. Through its programs, the Horizon Foundation strives to promote social justice, equity and dignity for all, and consistently aims to help everyone in its community, especially those facing the greatest challenges.

Student Award Recipient

This year, the Commission launched its inaugural Human Rights Student Award contest to recognize individuals 26 and under for human and civil rights contributions to Howard County. **Charmaine Y. Yuan** was the 2020 recipient. A senior at the University of Maryland at College Park, Charmaine spent her school breaks volunteering at the Howard County Food Bank. While there, she organized shelves, stocked refrigerators and washed bins. Charmaine was committed to ensuring that the Food Bank’s clients had a decent environment to shop in and healthy food options to choose from. Charmaine believes that every person deserves to be treated with respect, humanity and dignity. Charmaine also devotes her time to several other community organizations.
Human Rights Commission (HRC) Community Outreach Activities

The Human Rights Commissioners attended trainings and conferences to remain current on best practices, human rights and civil rights law. Additionally, HRC leaders conducted community outreach events to share the mission, duties and responsibilities of HRC. The Commissioners also attended and participated in the following events:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Holiday Celebration
January 19, 2020
2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Howard Community College
Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center
Smith Theatre
10901 Little Patuxent Parkway
Columbia, MD 21044

This community event included a multi-cultural reception followed by a youth-centered program that included the presentation of student essay contest and poster contest awards. The contest theme was “Racial injustice around the world. Poverty. War. When man solves these three great problems he will have squared his moral progress with his scientific progress. And more importantly, he will have learned the practical art of living in harmony.”

Lunar New Year
The Year of the Rat
January 25, 2020
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
The Mall in Columbia Lower Level

The Lunar New Year is one of the most important traditional holidays in East Asian culture. The celebration featured more than a dozen music and dance performances along with cultural demonstrations, artwork and food.

Childhood Memories of the Holocaust A Cantata: We Will Never Be Bullied Again
International Holocaust Remembrance Day
75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau
January 27, 2020 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Oakland Mills Meeting House

This gripping theatrical work explored the consequences of unchecked bigotry and the resilience of the Jewish community in the face of the unspeakable tragedy of the Holocaust through song and spoken word. The HRC Commissioners attended in support of OHRE’s event.
Human Rights Commission 1st Annual Retreat
February 1, 2020

The Human Rights’ Commissioners participated in their first annual retreat. This collaborative session included defining the vision and mission statements and renewing their commitment to human rights. With the support of the OHRE staff; the commissioners formulated annual goals and created committees to facilitate the achievement of these milestones.

Census 2020
Complete Count Committee (CCC)
February to August 2020

The HRC supported the Complete Count Committee and their community partners in discussing and implementing outreach strategies around reaching targeted populations. They assisted OHRE and Howard County Government in efforts to educate Difficult to Count populations. Commissioner Kui Zhao assisted County Government in communicating with members of the Asian community to further the distribution of promotional materials.

2020 Human Rights Day in Annapolis
February 21, 2020
Miller Senate Office Building- West I
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

This event included presentations on addressing Hate Bias in Maryland. A report was provided that focused on the 2020 Census and the civil rights implications of counting all residents. The League of Women Voters of Maryland educated attendees about the significance of the 100th Anniversary of Women’s Suffrage, a Civil Rights milestone. The program ended with a legislative update.

Jewish Community Relations Council Presentation
April 28, 2020

The Human Rights Commission and Office of Human Rights & Equity met with the Jewish Community Relations Council to present the functions and activities of OHRE and the HRC. Scott Markow, Vice Chair of the HRC, and OHRE Administrator, Yolanda F. Sonnier, led the presentation.

Webinar – “Well-Being in the Asian Community”
May 13, 2020

HRC, Asian American Educators of Howard County (AAEHC), and Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) co-hosted this event. The keynote address was provided by Dr. Kevin Nadal, Professor of Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Graduate Center at the City University of New York. Dr. Nadal is one of the leading researchers in understanding the impacts of micro aggressions on the mental and physical health of marginalized groups of people. Dr. Michael Martirano, Superintendent of the Howard County Public School System, presented opening remarks.

Asian Representatives Meeting with Howard County Executive Calvin Ball
May 19, 2020

Yolanda F. Sonnier, OHRE Administrator, and HRC Commissioner Bianca Chang and Commission Member Kui Zhao attended a meeting with County Executive Ball, his senior staff, and Asian representatives of Howard County. Various county stakeholders made presentations in support of the Asian community. The County Executive issued an annual proclamation that officially recognized Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Howard County.
Virtual Board of Education Candidate Forum  
May 20, 2020

The Howard County NAACP, the Council of Elders, the African American Community Roundtable (AACR), and the Wilde Lake High School PTSA hosted a virtual Board of Education Candidate Forum. The Human Rights Commissioners participated in the forum.

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration  
June 2, 2020

The Chinese American Parent Association of Howard County (CAPA-HC), Human Rights Commissioner Kui Zhao, and OHRE Community Outreach Supervisor, Trent Day Hall, organized a seminar as part of the AAPI Heritage Month celebration. CAPA-HC invited all community members to attend a celebration that honored Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Mr. Hall provided culturally relevant data, tangible ways to humanize and combat ‘bystander effect’, and information about the OHRE’s mission and work.

Korean OHRE Overview Presentation  
October 8, 2020

HRC Commissioner, Peter Hwang, and OHRE Community Outreach Coordinator, Chaunta Taylor, gave a presentation about protections afforded under the Howard County Human Rights Code, the services that OHRE provides to Howard County residents and information about the HRC.

Indigenous Peoples’ Day  
October 12, 2020

Howard County celebrated its first Indigenous Peoples’ Day on October 12th. County Executive Calvin Ball announced in September that Howard County would recognize the holiday in lieu of Columbus Day and encouraged residents to honor Indigenous People, thus opening discussions about the importance of acknowledging our collective history.

“Indigenous Peoples’ Day brings awareness to the First People of this nation that often are invisible to many,” said Kevin Allis, CEO for the National Congress of the American Indian. “It’s a day that celebrates the beauty of the American Indian, and is a reminder to all that tribal nations, and their traditions and customs, still exist.”

(Howard County news release 10/11/20)

“Indigenous Peoples’ Day is about acknowledging the First People, the Treaty People, of the land we now call home,” said Ani Begay Auld, Navajo Nation representative. “It is a first step in honestly addressing the legacies and costs of our prosperity, both imparted unevenly to this day. We do not get to choose our past, but we get to choose our values: How we live up to and celebrate them. This moment in history is our opportunity to choose, with the clarity of historical perspective as to the true measure of those long celebrated as heroes, to celebrate legacies that represent our values. Today, Howard County’s choice is local. Today we choose Civility and Indigeneity.”

(Howard County news release 10/11/20)
2020 Report of the Howard County Human Rights Commission (HRC) on Immigration Issues in Howard County
November 2020

In October of 2019, during a public forum before the HRC, representatives from The Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice presented concerns regarding immigrant justice and safety. Because of the Coalition’s presentation, the HRC formed a Committee on Immigration (COI) to study two of the issues raised: (1) termination of the Intergovernmental Service Agreement between the Howard County Department of Corrections and the United States Department of Justice; and (2) addition of immigration status as a protected class to Subtitle 2 of the Howard County Code. After a thorough study of these two issues, COI prepared a draft report to the entire HRC, that further addressed these issues. The HRC presented a report detailing factual findings from the study and recommendations based upon said findings. The report is hosted on OHRE’s website.

Chinese Community Outreach
November 15, 2020

OHRE Community Outreach Coordinator, Chaunta Taylor and HRC Commissioner, Kui Zhao, co-hosted an outreach webinar for the Chinese community. Commissioner Bianca Chang also presented and encouraged audience members to apply for future commissioner positions.

On the Table
November 2020

Per the County Charter, the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) is updating the comprehensive plan, HoCo by Design. HRC Commissioner Kui Zhao and Jeff DelMonico of DPZ, moderated a webinar with 36 participants from the Chinese community. HRC Commissioner Joan Hash hosted an On the Table webinar and provided notes and screenshots of her sessions for the Department.
Greetings,

It is my pleasure to bring you greetings on behalf of the members of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission. The commissioners are proud to coordinate the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Celebration and Day of Service.

Each year, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration takes place the third Sunday of January, the day before the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The Day of Service takes place the next day on the third Monday of January. The Day of Service provides a variety of service opportunities throughout the community that are representative of Dr. King’s dedication to servant leadership.

On behalf of the members of the commission I extend our heartfelt appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the commission and the honor of sharing Dr. King’s legacy of justice for all.

Sincerely,

Tracey L. Williams

Tracey L. Williams, LCSW-C, PPW
Chairperson
The Howard County Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission was established by order of the Howard County Executive to encourage and coordinate appropriate ceremonies and activities honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. Commissioners are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The seventeen-member commission meets once a month at 9820 Patuxent Woods Drive in Columbia, MD to formulate strategies for the annual commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr. in January. In March 2020, the Commission began meeting virtually. County residents are invited to fill commission vacancies and positions on various subcommittees. Persons interested in serving on the Commission and/or serve on subcommittees, should contact OHRE at (410) 313-6430.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY COMMISSION MEMBERS

Tracey L. Williams, Chair  
Appointment date: 5/7/2018  
Term expires: 3/1/2023

Bert Hash, Jr., Vice Chair  
Reappointment date: 02/2021  
Term expires: 3/1/2024

Tina Horn, Secretary  
Appointment date: 06/03/2019  
Term expires: 5/1/2024

Hunter Craig  
Appointment date: 10/05/2020  
Term expires: 3/11/2023

Dr. Clarita Dawson  
Appointment date: 12/07/2020  
Term expires: 2/01/2025

Teresa Garcia  
Appointment date: 10/05/2020  
Term expires: 3/1/2024

Caroline Harper, Ph.D.  
Appointment date: 11/05/2016  
Term expires: 3/1/2022

Abbie Diane Martin, Ph.D.  
Appointment date: 7/1/2018  
Term expires: 3/1/2024

Kimberly McCauley  
Appointment date: 10/05/2020  
Term expires: 3/1/2024

Daniel Nairn  
Appointment date: 10/05/2020  
Term expires: 3/1/2022

(continued on next page)
MLK Commission Members (continued)

Yetta Roggerson
Reappointment date: 02/2021
Term expires: 3/1/2024

Bonnie Sorak
Appointment date: 10/05/2020
Term expires: 3/1/2023

Brett Vess
Appointment date: 12/07/2020
Term expires: 3/1/2025

Kurt W. Wall
Reappointment date: 02/2021
Term expires: 3/1/2024

Student Commissioners

Hunter Craig
Appointment date: 10/2019
Term expired: 10/2020

Lawrence Lewis, III
Appointment date: 11/02/2020
Term expires: 6/30/2021

Howard County Government Staff:

Yolanda F. Sonnier - OHRE Administrator
Heidi Tilkens - Recording Secretary
Marla Moore - Outreach Coordinator

New Commissioners in 2020

The Commission was excited to welcome:

- Hunter Craig (Transitioned from a Student Commissioner to a Regular Commissioner)
- Dr. Clarita Dawson
- Teresa Garcia
- Kimberly McCauley
- Daniel Nairn
- Bonnie Sorak
- Brett Vess
- Lawrence Lewis, III (Student)
The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Celebration:

OHRE and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission presented our annual celebration of the life and legacy of civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Sunday, Jan. 19, 2020.

The event was held at Howard Community College, Horowitz Visual & Performing Arts Center, Smith Theatre, in Columbia, Maryland. The reception commenced at 2:00 p.m. followed by the 3:00 p.m. program. Both activities were free to the public.

The family-friendly, multi-cultural celebration included performances by diverse community groups and recognition of the 2019-20 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Living the Dream Award recipients and the Student Poster and Essay Contest winners. Mount Hebron High School senior, Allen J. Dixon served as the Master of Ceremonies. Pastor Larry Walker of Celebration Church delivered the Invocation.

The Living the Dream Award recognizes individuals and organizations that promote the teachings and legacy of Dr. King through community involvement. The Student Essay Contest challenged high school and middle school students to write essays in response to Dr. King’s words “Racial injustice around the world. Poverty. War. When man solves these three great problems, he will have squared his moral progress with his scientific progress. And, more importantly, he will have learned the practicality of living in harmony.” Posters inspired by the theme were designed by elementary school students.
Award and Contest Winners

Living the Dream Award
Organizational Award
Glen Mar United Methodist Church

Individual Award
Charles Fuller, Esq.

Elementary School Poster Contest
First Place
Olivia Muzzatti - Cradlerock Elementary School

Second Place
Daisjah Boykin - Cradlerock Elementary School

Third Place
Madelyn Schuster - Cradlerock Elementary School

Middle School Essay Contest
First Place
Jordan Neperud - Lake Elkhorn Middle School

Second Place
Reginald de los Reyes - Lake Elkhorn Middle School

Third Place
Jasmin Land - Lake Elkhorn Middle School

High School Essay Contest
First Place
Isiason Brown - Long Reach High School

Second Place
Amen Owusu - Wilde Lake High School

Third Place
Nica Vasquez - Wilde Lake High School
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service: “A Day On, Not a Day Off” - January 20, 2020:

County residents were encouraged to participate in the “Day of Service Across Howard County.” People registered through the Volunteer Center Serving Howard’s website to register for service opportunities. The opening ceremony began at 9:00 a.m. at the Ascend One building in Columbia, Maryland. Several organizations sponsored numerous volunteer activities for individuals and teams, including Hands Only CPR, First Aid Techniques, Coupon Clipping for Military Families and Small Crafts for Seniors.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission Community Outreach

MLK Commissioners, Tracey Williams and Bert Hash, Jr., distributed food products for ten families in Columbia twice a month from October through December of 2020. Commissioner Hunter Craig led a High School Food Drive in January 2020. Commissioners Kurt Wall and Bert Hash, Jr. volunteered at four food distribution events with the Indian Cultural Association during 2020.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission and the Harriet Tubman Foundation of Howard County co-hosted a Pop-up Pantry at Ridgely Run Community Center in December. This outreach activity blossomed into a recurring event that continues to provides much needed food to Howard County families.
Workgroups

La Alianza Latina Workgroup

County Executive Calvin Ball established La Alianza Latina as a workgroup during Hispanic Heritage Month in September 2020 through an Executive Order. The goals of the workgroup are to promote diversity and civility and to work with County agencies, nonprofit organizations and other community groups to facilitate inclusion, communication, understanding and respect. La Alianza Latina Workgroup meets quarterly that are open to the public. The workgroup terminates on March 15, 2022.

Message from La Alianza Latina Workgroup Co-chairs:

We are greatly honored to serve as the Co-chairs and look forward to the opportunity of partnering with the County Government and the larger community to advocate for and enhance the quality of life for Latinos in Howard County.

Since September 2020, the members of La Alianza Latina have diligently worked to identify key areas where to focus our efforts. After thoughtful discussions, our group homed in on three pillars: Education, Healthcare and Economic Equity and Empowerment. These serious issues have affected the LatinX population in our county and have only been exacerbated during the pandemic. It is our intention to work with the County Government and other key stakeholders to address them in the short and long term.

We would like to thank our subcommittee chairs, Sandy Cos (Education), Maria Angelica Vargas (Economic Equity and Empowerment) and Dr Yvette Oquendo Berruz (Healthcare) for taking on leadership roles and steering the work that is ahead of us. We are also extremely grateful to all the workgroup members for contributing their time and expertise to ensure the success of our endeavors. In addition, we extend our appreciation to David Ruiz, Megan Williams, Yolanda Sonnier and Janssen Evelyn for their support and guidance as our efforts get underway.

We look forward to working with the County government and community partners to solidify the role of La Alianza Latina in making Howard County a more inclusive, welcoming and equitable community for all.

Sincerely,

Cris Oviedo & Danielle Duran Baron

Cris Oviedo & Danielle Duran Baron
Co-chairs, La Alianza Latina Workgroup
Appointed Workgroup Members:

Co-chairs: Danielle Duran Baron and Cris Oviedo

Alicia Altamirano  Alicia Ardila  Andrea Nunez
David Rodriguez    Elisa Montalvo  Felicita Sola Carter
Gabriel Terrasa    Gabriel Moreno  Katie DiSalvo-Thronson
Luzmila Robinson   Maria Angelica Vargas  Maryann Maher
Patricia Lins Silva Sandy Cos          Yvette Oquendo-Berruz

Howard County Government staff:

Yolanda F. Sonnier, OHRE Administrator
David Ruiz, OHRE Investigator
Megan Williams, Constituent Services Liaison
Janssen Evelyn, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer

The workgroup is charged with:

- Organizing events and facilitated discussions, in partnership with community and non-profit organizations;
- Providing opportunities to share concerns, promote understanding and foster stronger relationships including focus groups, facilitated dialogues, summits and additional outreach efforts;
- Advising the County Executive on best practices and strategies to protect and promote the Latino community in the areas of health and wellness;
- Offering services to non-English speakers, action steps for closing gaps in healthcare regardless of immigration status, and access to quality of life resources;
- Working with Howard County Government employees to identify best practices to service the Latino community;
- Ensuring that all meeting minutes are made available to the public on the Office of Human Rights and Equity website;
- Submitting biannual reports to the County Executive on the work of the Workgroup and current and emerging issues affecting the Latino community; and
- Making a recommendation of whether the Workgroup shall become permanent in Howard County government.
LGBTQ+ Workgroup

The Howard County LGBTQ+ Workgroup was established on November 1, 2019. County Executive Calvin Ball signed an Executive Order to create a LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+) Workgroup to promote the shared community values of diversity and civility.

The Workgroup partnered with county agencies, non-profit organizations, and other community groups to facilitate an environment of inclusion, communication, understanding, and respect throughout Howard County.

LGBTQ+ Workgroup held quarterly meetings that were open to the public and provided a yearly report to the County Executive that addressed and identified current and emerging issues that affect the LGBTQ+ community.

The Workgroup was also charged with the following:

- Organizing a series of events and facilitated discussions, in partnership with community and non-profit organizations, providing opportunities to share concerns, promoting mutual understanding and fostering stronger relationships to encourage a more inclusive community. This may include focus groups, facilitated dialogues, summits and additional outreach efforts.

- Advising the County Executive on best practices and strategies to further protect and promote the LGBTQ+ community.

- Working with Howard County Government employees to identify best practices to affirm members of the LGBTQ+ community.

- Ensuring that all meeting minutes are made available to the public on the OHRE website.

Vision
To create an open and transparent forum/space for community to inform/affect the direction and focus of the LGBTQ+ work group. To serve as a conduit for resources and a support system on behalf of the LGBTQ+ communities’ interests.

Mission
To educate and inform all Howard County residents about authentic ways to honor the dignity of citizens of LGBTQ+ community members. To identify and inform tangible policy changes that will make Howard County a more inclusive, safe, and welcoming space for our LGBTQ+ residents.

Purpose
To correct cultural hiccups that undermine the dignity of the LGBTQ+ community by increasing visibility, resources, and supports. The intention is to affirm and validate the realities and needs of individuals that reside in the LGBTQ+ community.
LGBTQ+ Workgroup Panel Presentation
October 20, 2020
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

The LGBTQ+ Workgroup hosted five content experts who presented as follows:

**Hate Bias Incidents:**
Officer Chris Cromwell, Howard County Police Department

**Human Trafficking:**
Andrea Nunez, Manager - Office of Human Trafficking Prevention
Department of Community Resources and Services

**Intersectionality of Black/Trans Experiences:**
Maya Carey, HopeWorks of Howard County

**Medical Supports & Resources:**
Debb Dunn, Chase Brexton Health Care

**Name Change Information:**
Lee Blinder, Trans Maryland

“Getting to Know your Neighbor”
Virtual Zoom Event
November 12, 2020

This event spotlighted four powerful panelists from the LGBTQ Community: Justin Hanna, Suzi Gerb, Daijah Sims and Pablo Moulden. The event was moderated and organized by LGBTQ+ Workgroup member, Dr. Juls Gilliam. The event gave participants the opportunity to learn about diverse members of the LGBTQQA+ community.
OHRE Frequently Asked Questions

Who Can File a Complaint?

Anyone who believes that they have experienced discrimination in Howard County in the areas of Employment, Housing, Public Accommodation, Law Enforcement or Finance and you are covered by one or more of the following 16 protected basis:

- Race
- Familial Status
- Personal Appearance
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Religion
- Sex
- Color
- Gender Identity
- Creed
- Age
- National Origin
- Political Opinion
- Marital Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Occupation
- Source of Income (Housing)

A complaint must be filed within 6 months of the alleged discrimination, except housing complaints must be filed within 1 year of the alleged discriminatory behavior.

How Do I File A Complaint?

You must file your complaint with the OHRE. Please call OHRE at 410-313-6430 for specific information. Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

If I File with OHRE, Should I also File with EEOC?

No, if the complaint is cross-jurisdictional with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), OHRE will cross-file the complaint with EEOC. You should not file separately with both. Call OHRE with any questions.

I live in Howard County, but work in another county. Can I still file my complaint in Howard County?

OHRE can only take complaints which occur in Howard County regardless of where the complainant resides.

Can OHRE Provide Interpreters?

OHRE will provide interpreters for any language required. When you contact the office, inform us that you need an interpreter. OHRE will contact an interpreter to assist you with filing a complaint.

What Happens After a Complaint is Filed?

All complaints are investigated unless the Administrator finds lack of jurisdiction or no reasonable cause to exists to believe that an unlawful practice has occurred.

The Respondent is notified of the investigation and the investigation is initiated. Once your case is filed, you will be assigned to an investigator. You can contact your investigator at any time during the investigation in order to check on the status of your case.
Discrimination is illegal in Howard County, Maryland.

Howard County law prohibits discrimination in the following areas:

- Employment
- Housing
- Public accommodation
- Financing
- Law enforcement

Based on the following protected categories:

- Race
- Age
- Marital status
- Occupation
- Creed
- Sex
- Political opinion
- Source of income
- Color
- National origin
- Familial status
- Personal appearance
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Physical or mental disability
- Gender identity

Office of Human Rights & Equity

9820 Patuxent Woods Drive
Suite 237, Columbia, MD 21046

Email: OHRE@HowardCountyMd.gov

Phone: 410-313-6430

Fax: (410) 313-6468