

AGENCY SUMMARY

OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (OHR)

Office of Human Rights [agency website](#)

Office of Human Rights [FY 2024 approved budget](#)

Office of Human Rights [FY 2024 budget review report](#)

Office of Human Rights [FY 2025 budget review report](#)

Budget & Policy Analyst: Roger G. Benegas

Leadership

VACANT, Executive Director / Custodian of Records

Jose Villegas, Deputy Director & Investigations Division Manager

Henry Jimenez, Language Access Compliance Manager

Felipe Urquilla, Human Trafficking Division Manager

Kyla Hanington, Public Outreach and Engagement Division Manager

Core Services

- Investigate claims of discrimination in the areas of employment, housing and residential real estate, public accommodation, law enforcement and commercial real estate.
- Identify and recover survivors of sex and labor trafficking, increase prosecution of traffickers, and educate the public about human trafficking.
- Build community and reduce incidents of hate, bias and violence by organizing community dialogue through outreach and public engagement.
- Ensure that all limited English proficient and non-English proficient County residents receive equal access to County services under the Language Access for Public Services Act (2017 and 2020).
- Manage the immigrants defense program with the Capital Area Immigrant's Rights Coalition (CAIR) to provide legal representation to all County residents under threat of deportation

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the [Subtitle 2, Division 12 of the County Code](#), the Office of Human Rights was established. There are thirteen (13) Commissioners to the Office of Human Rights. They are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the Council pursuant to the provisions of [Section 322 of the Charter](#).

The County Executive shall appoint an Executive Director. S/he shall supervise the operations of the Agency and shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by the Commission.

The Human Relations Commission was established by (CB-1-1972), with the goal of eliminating discrimination and civil infringements for all persons in the County. Between 1972 and 2011, the Human Relations Commission functioned as an independent agency under the Executive Branch. In 2011, the former County Executive issued an Executive Order (42-2011) reorganizing the agency, placing the Human Relations Commission as a division under the Office of Community Relations based upon a need to economize the cost of the administration with consideration to related duties and functions. In 2021, the County Executive issued [Executive Order #4](#), and [CB-11-2021](#) was proposed which served to reorganize the duties of the Commission from under the Office of Community Relations, thereby establishing it as its own separate agency again to better serve these functions. [CB-12-2021](#) was enacted, which changed the name of the Human Relations Commission to the Office of Human Rights.

The functions of the Agency shall be to eliminate discrimination as defined in [Section 2-186 and wrongful practices as defined in Section 2-186 of the County Code](#). Additionally, they should work to eliminate infringements of the civil and human rights, civil liberties, and/or investigate allegations in which a person(s) has been adversely affected in the areas of housing and residential real estate, employment, law enforcement, education, public accommodations, or commercial real estate.

Organizational Structure

- The agency is lead by an Executive Director/Custodian of Records who oversees four (4) main divisions: Investigation; Human Trafficking; Language Access; and Public Outreach and Engagement.

FY 2024 Top Priorities

- Provide civil and human rights protection to aid in positive economic development and public safety.
- Reduce acts of discrimination within the County to positively impact economic development.
- Increase the number of coordinated anti-trafficking efforts to positively impact public safety and economic development.
- Increase education and outreach engagement opportunities to positively impact safe neighborhoods, and to reduce violent crimes.
- Increase the percentage of County agencies in compliance with the Language Access for Public Services Act of 2017 and 2022.

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Budgetary Resources – Below is the 5-year overview of resources allocated to OHR from FY 2020-24.

