

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA BY ADOPTING A NEW CHAPTER 1-29, “**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**” IN TITLE 1 “GENERAL GOVERNMENT” AND FOR OTHER LAWFUL PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County are authorized by the Charter of Athens-Clarke County to provide for the safety, health, peace, security, and general welfare of the community members and visitors of Athens-Clarke County;

WHEREAS, the Unified Government is committed to building an Athens-Clarke County where every community member and/or visitor belongs by prioritizing inclusion, diversity, and equity throughout government policies, processes, and decision-making;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County is committed to building a bridge that strengthens the connection between our community and our local government;

WHEREAS, for the purpose of improving human relations throughout Athens-Clarke County the Mayor and Commission declares this bridge essential;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission acknowledge the need to provide community education, engage in community outreach, and provide community forums to discuss efforts to combat discrimination;

WHEREAS, clear and consistent community education, outreach, and dialogue are necessary to help make the public aware of existing discrimination complaint pathways, combat the effects of discrimination, and increase inclusion, diversity, equity, and belonging throughout Athens-Clarke County;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission recognizes that actively listening to residents is critical to promote human dignity, equal opportunity, mutual respect, and harmony among the many different residents who make up the population of Athens-Clarke County;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission recognizes that fostering dialogue among residents is critical to promote human dignity, equal opportunity, mutual respect, and harmony among the many different residents who make up the population of Athens-Clarke County;

NOW THEREFORE, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia hereby ordains and orders that the Code of Ordinances of Athens-Clarke County shall be amended as follows.

## **CHAPTER 1-29. HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

### **Sec. 1-29-1. Establishment of the Athens-Clarke County Human Relations Commission**

1. The Athens-Clarke County Human Relations Commission is hereby established to provide a communication bridge between the Mayor and Commission and the community and foster dialogue throughout the community that shall:
  - a. Provide community education to residents focused on the existence, availability, and applicability of discrimination complaint pathways, including the Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance, Chapter 6-21 of the Code of Athens-Clarke County.
  - b. Develop and provide policy recommendations to the Mayor and Commission based on active relationship building, community dialogue, listening, data, and research and review of policies elsewhere in Georgia and the United States.
  - c. Serve as an advisory board to the Mayor and Commission.
2. The Human Relations Commission's initial duty upon creation shall be to submit a first-year work plan to the Mayor and Commission for approval that creates by-laws outlining the duties, qualifications, and responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission.

### **Sec. 1-29-2. Definitions**

1. *Human relations*. Human relations shall mean those activities which promote human dignity, equal opportunity, mutual respect, and harmony among the many different residents who make up the population of Athens-Clarke County. This definition shall include those activities and programs classified as promoting the general well-being of residents with regard to race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ethnicity, ability, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, ancestry, veteran/military status, familial status, relationship status, and marital status.
2. *Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance*. The Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance is known as the Non-Discrimination Ordinance or NDO.
3. All definitions found in the Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance, Chapter 6-21, Sec. 6-21-2 shall be incorporated herein.

### **Sec. 1-29-3. Purpose and Scope**

1. The Human Relations Commission shall provide policy recommendations to the Mayor and Commission based on active relationship building, community dialogue, listening, data, and research and review of policies elsewhere in Georgia and the United States with the purpose of improving human relations throughout Athens-Clarke County.
2. The Human Relations Commission shall assess and develop a deep understanding of existing discrimination complaint pathways in order to provide community education.

The Human Relations Commission shall actively listen to the community and provide discrimination complaint referral support.

3. The Human Relations Commission shall educate the community of the existence of the Non-discrimination Ordinance, shall assess the existing relationship between the Human Relations Commission and the Non-discrimination Ordinance, and shall develop a mechanism to assist community members in navigating the process of filing a complaint with the Athens-Clarke County Attorney's Office ("Attorney's Office").
4. The Human Relations Commission shall assess and make policy recommendations to Mayor and Commission and consider recommendations from Mayor and Commission with respect to the scope of the Human Relations Commission.
5. The Human Relations Commission shall receive and discuss regular updates from the Attorney's Office regarding Non-Discrimination Ordinance complaints and their status.
6. The Human Relations Commission shall engage in extensive community education, outreach, dialogue, and recruitment that prioritizes diversity, inclusion, representation, belonging, and equity.

#### **Sec. 1-29-4 Function and Duties**

1. The Human Relations Commission shall deliver an annual work plan addressing and outlining an action plan with goals and present it to the Mayor and Commission via a work session.
2. The Human Relations Commission shall provide quarterly reports to the Mayor and Commission.
3. The Human Relations Commission shall respond to topics assigned by Mayor and Commission and make policy recommendations related to the purpose and scope of the Human Relations Commission.
4. The Human Relations Commission shall develop and implement ongoing community marketing and education strategies.
5. Human Relations Commission members shall participate in mandatory onboarding and annual training.
6. The Human Relations Commission shall engage in active and consistent community outreach and education.
7. The Human Relations Commission shall work in collaboration with the Mayor and Commission and the Inclusion Office.

#### **Sec. 1-29-5. Membership**

1. The Human Relations Commission shall consist of fifteen (15) voting members. Members shall include diverse representation by race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ethnicity, ability, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, ancestry, veteran/military status, familial status, marital status, expertise, lived experiences, and their intersections. All members shall be appointed by

majority vote of the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County. Such members shall be residents of Athens-Clarke County.

2. In appointing members to the Human Relations Commission, the Mayor and Commission shall apply evaluation criteria that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in alignment with the scope, expertise, and life experiences necessary to achieve desired scope and function. Applications shall be open to all residents throughout Athens-Clarke County, with an effort made to collaborate with community organizations to ensure that applications are made accessible to residents from underrepresented communities. Every effort should be made to, whenever possible, ensure membership includes multiple people of a given identity or lived experience.
3. The Mayor and Commission recognizes the importance of including youth membership and as such shall seek to include youth members aged fifteen to twenty-five where possible.
4. For the initial term of service, the Mayor and Commission shall designate eight members to serve initial four-year terms and seven members to serve initial two-year terms. After the initial appointment of members, all members shall be appointed to serve four-year terms. There shall be no limit of the number of terms a member can serve.

#### **Sec. 1-29-6. Organization**

1. The Human Relations Commission shall hold an organizational meeting in January of each year to elect officers and transact any other authorized business. At such meetings and thereafter from time to time on the call of the Chair of the Board, the Board shall adopt and promulgate or amend such bylaws, rules, and regulations as are deemed necessary or convenient to conduct the affairs of the Human Relations Commission.
2. The membership of the Human Relations Commission shall elect the following officers:
  - a. The chair; and
  - b. The vice-chair.
3. Elected officers shall serve one-year terms from the time of their election at the organizational meeting.

#### **Sec. 1-29-7. Compensation; removal**

1. Members of the Human Relations Commission shall be compensated via a stipend of \$25.00 for each regular meeting that they attend.
2. Members of the Human Relations Commission shall be eligible for reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, not including travel to and from meetings.
3. A member of the Human Relations Commission may be recommended for removal for good cause. Good cause may be found for the following:
  - a. Neglect of duty,
  - b. Incompetence,

- c. Misconduct,
- d. Malfeasance, or
- e. Failure to complete training requirements

**Sec. 1-29-8. Meetings; absence of member**

1. The human relations commission shall meet monthly for at least ten meetings per year on call of the chair or any four members.
2. Any member who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings may be replaced.

**Sec. 1-29-9. Vacancies**

Any membership vacancies created on the Human Relations Commission for any reason whatsoever shall be filled by the Mayor and Commission within sixty (60) days to fulfill the remainder of the term.