

**Unified Government of Athens – Clarke County**  
**Human Relations Commission**  
**By-laws**

**Article I. Establishment of the Athens-Clarke County Human Relations Commission**

1. The Athens-Clarke County Human Relations Commission (HRC) is hereby established to provide a communication bridge between the Mayor and Commission and the community to 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, research and review of policies elsewhere in Georgia and the United States.
  - c. Serve as an advisory board to the Mayor and Commission on matters related to human rights and discrimination within Athens-Clarke County.
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.

**Article II. Definitions**

1. *Human relations*. Human relations shall mean those activities which promote human dignity, equal opportunity, mutual respect, and harmony among the 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.

- a. All definitions found in the Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance, Chapter 6-21, Sec. 6-21-2 shall be incorporated herein.

### **Article III. 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 and assistance.
3. The Human Relations Commission shall educate the community about 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 the 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.

### **Article IV. 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.

#### **Article V. 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 a 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 purview, 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 recognize 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 to the number of terms a member can serve.

## **Article VI. Organization**

### **Section I. Officers**

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 Chairperson of the Commission, the Commission shall adopt and promulgate or amend such by-laws, 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 Chairperson; and
  - b. The Vice-Chairperson.
3. During their first regularly-scheduled meeting of each calendar year, the HRC shall select a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from among their membership. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson shall each serve in their positions during the calendar year, and their terms shall expire at the adjournment of the first regularly-scheduled HRC meeting at the beginning of the next calendar year after their appointment. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson may be reelected for multiple terms.
4. The duties of the Chairperson shall be to:
  - a. Preside at all meetings of the Human Relations Commission.
  - b. Set the agenda for Human Relations Commission meetings.
  - c. Maintain order and decorum during the meeting.

- d. Represent the Human Relations Commission in all private or public matters unless another member is appointed to do by the body.
  - e. Serve as liaison with the ACCGov Manager for the purpose of assisting in the coordination of activities between the Human Relations Commission and the Mayor & Commission.
5. The duties of the Vice-Chairperson shall be to assume the duties of the Chair in their absence.

## **Section 2. Subcommittees**

1. The Human Relations Commission may seek to establish one or more subcommittees to assist in the effective conduct of its business. These subcommittees may be formed at the discretion of the Chairperson.
2. Members of the subcommittee shall be appointed by the Human Relations Commission based on the purpose and function of the Subcommittee, as well as the expertise of the members of the HRC.
3. Unless otherwise specified, a subcommittee may consist of no fewer than three members.

## **Section 3. Vacancies**

1. In the event that the Chairperson is absent or unavailable, then the Vice-Chairperson shall serve as the acting Chairperson and shall have all the powers and duties provided to the Chairperson under any applicable laws of the State of Georgia, the Enabling Legislation, these by-laws, and any policies or procedures of the Human Relations Commission.
2. If the Chairperson is unable to complete the remainder of their term due to death, disability, resignation, removal, or other like causes, then the Vice-Chairperson shall become the permanent Chairperson and serve the remainder of the former Chairperson's term. The Human Relations Commission shall select from among its membership a new Vice-Chairperson as soon as practicable through a majority vote, but no later than sixty (60) days after the former Vice-Chairperson becomes the permanent Chairperson. The newly-selected Vice-Chairperson shall then serve the remainder of the former Vice-Chairperson's term.

3. If the Vice-Chairperson is unable to complete the remainder of their term due to death, disability, resignation, removal, or other like causes, then the Human Relations Commission members shall select from among their membership a new Vice-Chairperson as soon as practicable, but no later than sixty (60) days after the former Vice-Chairperson becomes unable to complete the remainder of their term. The newly-selected Vice-Chairperson shall then serve the remainder of the former Vice-Chairperson's term.

4. If both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are absent from a particular meeting, then as the first order of business, the Human Relations Commission members in attendance shall select an acting Chairperson from among their membership. During the meeting, the acting Chairperson shall have all the powers and duties provided to the Chairperson under any applicable laws of the State of Georgia, the Enabling Legislation, these by-laws, and any policies or procedures of the Commission. Upon the arrival or appearance of the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson at the meeting, the acting Chairperson shall cede their role to the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, as the case may be.

5. 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.

## **Article VII. Compensation and 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

## **Article VIII. Meetings of the Human Relations Commission**

### **Section 1. Meetings**

1. The Human Relations Commission shall meet monthly for at least ten meetings per year. The Chairperson shall ensure that all members of the Commission receive notice of the date, time, and place of any Human Relations Commission meetings.
2. Special meetings of the commission may be called by the Chairperson or by any four (4) members upon no less than twenty-four (24) hours' written notice to each member subject to the requirements of O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 – 50-14-6. The Office of Inclusion shall be responsible for communicating the information about these special meetings to the members of the Commission.
3. Meetings of the Human Relations Commission shall be deemed cancelled whenever the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government has closed its offices due to inclement weather, emergency situations, or other similar conditions. However, the Chairperson of the Commission may determine that such meeting should go forward, in which case the meeting shall be held as scheduled.
4. A meeting of the Human Relations Commission may be cancelled or postponed as follows:
  - a. The Chairperson may cancel a meeting or postpone a meeting to a later date if there is an agreeable consensus of the Human Relations Commission.
5. The Chairperson may delegate the responsibility of providing notice to HRC members of Commission meetings, or the cancellation or postponement thereof, to the staff of the Office of Inclusion.
6. There must be at least eight (8) of the fifteen (15) members present at a meeting to constitute a quorum for conducting business, including voting on any matters.
7. Decisions of the Commission shall be by a majority vote of the members present for the meeting. The Chairperson shall serve as a voting member of the Commission.
8. Meetings of the Commission shall generally be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.<sup>1</sup> The Chairperson shall decide points of order

and procedure, and upon request of the Chairperson or any member of the Commission, the Athens-Clarke County Attorney (or the Attorney's designee), if in attendance, shall act as the Parliamentarian and render an opinion as to any point of order or procedure.

9. Members of the Commission shall seek recognition from the Chairperson prior to speaking. The Chairperson shall recognize members in the order in which recognition is sought. If two (2) or more members of the Commission seek recognition at the same time, the Chairperson shall designate the order of members entitled to speak.

10. No member of the Commission shall address the Commission or question another member who is speaking, except through the Chairperson.

11. Questions from members of the Commission to staff members or other persons present at the meeting shall be directed through the Chairperson.

12. During discussions of the Commission, members should confine their discourse to the matter at hand.

13. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson to maintain order and decorum during the meeting. As part of this responsibility, and in the exercise of sound discretion, the Chairperson may pose the question of whether the discourse of the Commission is relevant to the matter at hand. Furthermore, any member of the Commission in attendance may pose such a question in the same manner as raising a point of order. Upon the Chairperson or any member posing such a question, the members of the Commission shall take a vote to determine whether the discourse is relevant. If a majority of the members present determine the discourse to be irrelevant, then all members shall suspend such discourse.

14. Upon a motion, second, and majority vote of the members present, HRC members may take a recess. The Chairperson may also, upon their own volition, grant a recess of up to twenty (20) minutes once during a meeting. If a meeting lasts in excess of three (3) hours, the Chairperson may, upon their own volition, grant a second recess of up to twenty (20) minutes during the meeting.

15. Unless otherwise provided under the Georgia Open Meetings Act, O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1, et seq., or other laws of the State of Georgia, all meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public.



16. During the first regularly-scheduled meeting of the calendar year, the Commission shall approve the upcoming calendar year's schedule for its regular meetings. Public notice for regularly-scheduled meetings shall be posted in the manner provided under the laws of the State of Georgia.

17. A designated person from the ACCGov Unified Government Office of Inclusion shall ensure that an audio-visual recording of each meeting is made, and such audio-visual recording shall be kept in accordance with any applicable laws of the State of Georgia.

18. The Vice-Chairperson or a designated member of the ACC Unified Government Office of Inclusion shall take minutes of each meeting of the Human Relations Commission. The Vice-Chairperson and the Office of Inclusion shall be responsible for maintaining records of the minutes of each meeting. The minutes must be distributed to the members of the Commission at least five (5) days before the next meeting.

19. All members of the Human Relations Commission will make a diligent effort to attend all meetings of the HRC. If a member of the Commission anticipates missing a meeting, they will provide advance notice to the Chairperson whenever possible.

20. Any member who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings may be replaced.

## **Section 2. Public Comment**

1. Public comment shall be allowed at the regularly-scheduled monthly meetings of the Commission and any specially-called or emergency meetings where the Commission will vote on a substantive issue within its authority of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. There will be two opportunities for Public Comment on the agenda before Old Business and before New Business.

2. Before public comment, a copy of the public comment list will be provided to the Chairperson. The Chairperson will call each person or organization in the order shown on the list.

3. The following shall apply to public comment at Human Relations Commission meetings:

- a. A public comment list shall be provided prior to meetings where public comment is permitted.
  - b. Those wishing to address the HRC will be asked to provide their first and last name. They may also choose to provide more information if they would like to be contacted at a later time.
  - c. If an organization wishes to address the Commission, then the organization will be asked to provide the organization's legal name. The organization shall designate at least one (1) person to speak on the organization's behalf.
4. Each person wishing to provide public comment shall have three (3) minutes to address the Commission. The Vice-Chairperson or other designated person shall keep time, providing notice to the speaker when they have thirty (30) seconds left. A person shall have one opportunity each meeting to provide comment and may not reserve the remainder of their time or yield the remainder of their time to another person.
5. HRC members, staff members, and members of the public should not interrupt, question, or debate a person while they are providing public comment.
6. Public comment shall proceed in an orderly fashion, with the Chairperson calling each person on the public comment list after the prior person wishing to comment has completed their statements. HRC members shall refrain from questions, discussion, or deliberation until after all persons on the public comment list have provided their respective statements.
7. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson to maintain order and decorum during the meeting. As part of this responsibility, and in the exercise of sound discretion, the Chairperson may call for a speaker to end their remarks if they refuse to cease speaking after their three minutes has passed or if their comments are inappropriate or offensive.
8. Members of the public may be added to the Public Comment list after the meeting has begun through the Chairperson.
9. After the HRC has heard from all persons on the public comment list, the HRC members may discuss the comments or otherwise deliberate as necessary. The Commission may request that staff of the Manager's Office and the Office of Inclusion address comments as appropriate.

### **Section 3. Agendas**

1. The Chair and a designated member of the Office of Inclusion shall be responsible for drafting an agenda prior to each meeting of the Human Relations Commission. This agenda shall be distributed to the members of the Commission at least five (5) days prior to the next meeting. Each agenda must be approved, with or without amendments, by a majority of the members present.
2. For regularly scheduled monthly meetings, the Agenda shall be structured as follows:
  - a. Call to Order by the Chairperson
  - b. Acceptance of the Agenda
  - c. Approval of the Minutes from the previous meeting
  - d. Chairperson's Update and Report
  - e. Public Comment for Old Business
  - f. Old Business
  - g. Public Comment for New Business
  - h. New Business
  - i. Announcements
  - j. Adjournment
3. The agenda may be amended by a majority vote of the members present.

### **Article IX. Other**

#### **Section 1. Adoption of Policies and Procedures**

- a. Within its authority, the Human Relations Commission may adopt such written policies, procedures, and protocols as the Commission deems appropriate. Generally, the staff of the ACC Manager's Office and the Office of Inclusion will assist the HRC with the development and drafting of policies, procedures, and protocols, and the Commission may adopt them by majority vote. Any such policies, procedures, and protocols shall be kept in an organized fashion in the records of the HRC.
- b. No policy, procedure, or protocol permitted under this Article, or any portion thereof, shall conflict with the laws of the State of Georgia or any applicable laws of the United States.

**SECTION 2. Amendments**

a. The HRC may periodically amend these by-laws. Any amendments shall be approved by a majority vote of the Human Relations Commission members. Any proposed amendments must be provided to HRC members at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting in which HRC members are to vote on such proposed amendments. However, if all HRC members agree, this seven (7) day requirement may be waived.

**SECTION 3. Parliamentary Procedure**

a. The Robert’s Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by the authority’s by-laws.

SO ADOPTED by the Athens-Clarke County Human Relations Commission on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice-Chairperson

SO ADOPTED by the Athens-Clarke County Human Relations Commission on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

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Chairperson, Julita Sanders

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Ke-Marcis Howard

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Vice - Chairperson, Tameka Curry

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Sharon McDaniel-Miller

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Brandon Baker

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Callie Moore

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Jayivey Brown

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Ed Moore

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Myung Cogan

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Kathleen Westbrook

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Danielle Gillmer

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Alejandra Villegas Lopez