¿Discriminación contra los latinos?
¡No en Nuestra Ciudad!

Si usted siente que ha sido tratado injustamente, comuníquese con nuestra oficina para recibir asistencia gratis y confidencial.

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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Des Moines,

Chairing the Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Commission for the past two and a half years has been amazing. The staff, fellow commissioners, and the community have been amazing. Their willingness to move on solution-based initiatives is second to none.

We have witnessed multiple items come to fruition over the years. It has been rewarding to see record numbers of attendees at the symposium and the entire community come together for the Bridging the Gap initiative. I feel that we are in the midst of accomplishing goals that will be an integral component of making this a world-class city for everyone.

The commission will continue to work diligently towards human and civil rights for all. It has been my honor to lead this commission and I am elated to continue working on the commission with the new chair, Kameron Middlebrooks.

All the best,

IZAAH JB KNOX
CHAIR,
DES MOINES CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CIVIL & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

VISION STATEMENT
The Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Commission will be recognized for its excellence in education, advocacy, community engagement and investigations of civil rights violations creating a city that is a beacon of human rights and equality for all, with a culture of inclusiveness, respect, and peace.

IZAAH KNOX CHAIR
KAMERON MIDDLEBROOKS VICE CHAIR
EMILY SHIELDS SECRETARY

DANIEL GARZA
CLAUDIA SCHABEL
VERONICA OUYA
RACHELLE HUNT-RUSSIAN
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

MISSION STATEMENT

To advance justice, promote equality and ensure the protection of human rights for all people in Des Moines through investigation, education, advocacy, and community engagement.

The Des Moines Civil & Human Rights Commission continued to fulfill its mission in 2018 with historic gains for the department. We increased our number of probable cause discrimination cases by 400% and secured over $60,000 in damages for complainants in civil rights cases; hosted our most successful Civil & Human Rights Symposium in its 32-year history with over 700 people attending and learning about the Blueprint to Building Community; championed the legacy of civil rights trailblazer Edna Griffin with an awards dinner that included over 300 community members; and achieved our 2017 goal of hiring a City Equity Coordinator which has been an asset in helping make Des Moines a more equitable city.

We also launched Bridging the Gap, our community dialogue series to engage members from across the community on ways to strengthen community-government relations, improve public safety, and increase opportunity. These community dialogues were an innovative approach in the collaboration and engagement of residents to understand and meet the needs of the communities we serve.

As we move forward into 2019, our goal is to remain responsive to the needs of the Des Moines community regarding equity, opportunity, and socio-economic justice. We will continue our community dialogues, deepen our relationships with community partners, and provide informational materials in multiple languages. As we work to “bridge the gap” and improve access to opportunities for all, it will take all of us (including you dear reader) to make Des Moines a community where everyone has the ability to move up the socio-economic ladder.

I’d like to thank our Commissioners, staff, volunteers, and community members for their commitment and investment in the Des Moines Civil & Human Rights Commission. I look forward to another year characterized by progress for all residents, citizens, and visitors in the Des Moines area.

In the spirit of advancing opportunity and justice for all,

JOSHUA V. BARR
Director
Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Department
In last year’s report I expressed excitement in having the office’s first “Cause” case with the new staff. It is with greater excitement that I share that this year, following the public hearing, the judge made a finding in our favor.

As the Cornerstone Events Coordinator, organizing and carrying out our highest attended Symposium as well as the 70th Anniversary Edna Griffin Celebration dinner, were two standout events with great success and engagement. I also spent an awesome year as staff liaison for LGBTAC. Working with LGBTAC to connect the City and community has been exciting, inspiring, and eye-opening. I look forward to another year of continued growth and experiences serving the Des Moines community.

The Department’s focus on community engagement has really come to fruition this year. I enjoyed collaborating with Des Moines Public Schools to provide a back-to-school workshop for the city’s immigrant and refugee population. Our outreach efforts and partnerships resulted in the most successful Symposium to date, and it was great to see our hard work result in the vision we hoped to achieve.

An investigative highlight would have to be the conciliation of two cases that resulted in over $45,000 in monetary awards to Complainants.

I look forward to seeing the impact Bridging the Gap will have in the community in 2019.
The highlight of the past year has been the deep dive into building community relationships and partnerships throughout the Greater Des Moines Area. Between the launch of Bridging the Gap, the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Subcommittee and the Edna Griffin Legacy Awards, our work has really embodied the theme of our Symposium, "Blueprint to Building Community." Our outreach work has centered on systems-thinking in order to spearhead community-driven and culturally-responsive initiatives. I foresee the work that the Commission has launched this year continuing to build equitable, long-term sustainable solutions, which is the work that brought me to the department in the first place.

Serving as the Legal Intern for the Civil and Human Rights Department has increased my passion for helping systematically oppressed groups. As intern, I researched local ordinances and wrote determinations for employment discrimination cases.

As I complete my last year of Law School at Drake, I am finishing up research on youth and immigration in the criminal justice system. The staff of the Civil and Human Rights Department aided me in fostering my passion for justice to help those who do not know the system. I am thankful for my experience at this office and know that the Civil and Human Rights of the City of Des Moines will continue to move forward.
In 2017, a new position was formed and introduced to the Department: Equity Coordinator. A first for the city, this position was a huge step forward in the direction of the Department's 2018 vision.

As Equity Coordinator, my mission is to remove barriers to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all Des Moines residents. I aim to serve as the liaison between underrepresented groups in the community, city departments and community partners who are working towards the equitable delivery of City services and critical community services. I want to collaborate across multiple sectors to collectively envision and work towards systemic changes to promote and advance equity in Des Moines.

Throughout the first few months in my role, I was able to connect with community leaders, service providers, and organizational partners to begin and strengthen the conversation on reducing disparities in outcomes – especially in historically marginalized communities. A step forward for the City in this time was gaining membership with Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE).

I look forward to continuing to work to eliminate social inequities in the community,
INVESTIGATIONS

VICTORIES

$64,216.08
monetary awards in
discrimination complaints

400%
increase in probable cause cases
Complaints filed in our office from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018:

**74**

**Complainants by Ward**

Complaints filed came from residents living in the following wards:

- Ward 4: 24%
- Ward 3: 26%
- Ward 1: 14%
- Ward 2: 18%
- Unknown*: 19%

**Respondents by Ward**

The Respondents in the complaints filed were located in the following wards:

- Ward 3: 34%
- Ward 4: 20%
- Ward 2: 9%
- Ward 1: 15%
- Unknown*: 22%

*Unknown refers to unincorporated areas of the city.
Complaints filed include multiple bases.
The 32nd Annual Civil and Human Rights Symposium took place on March 19, 2018. With over 700 attendees, "Blueprint to Building Community" looked at the ways that the infrastructure of a community might be the source of inequity and presented ways to remove those barriers from the ground up. The keynote presentation by Madison Deshay Duncan focused on the history of Center Street and the unforeseen impact economic and community development can have on cultural communities.

The 2018 Human Rights Awards were presented to Robert Nishimwe, for the Porter S. Dimery, Sr., Youth Human Rights Award; Erica Johnson for the Mary Louise Smith Human Rights Award; and the Central Iowa Center for Independent Living (CICIL) for the Fort Des Moines Human Rights Award.

The inaugural Civil and Human Rights Lifetime Achievement award was presented to Donna Russell Red Wing for her lifelong commitment to LGBT rights.
After being turned away from the lunch counter at Katz Drug Store in 1948, Edna Griffin launched a protest that culminated in the passage of civil rights laws that prohibited racial discrimination in public accommodations.

2018 marked the 70th anniversary of this landmark Iowa civil rights battle. The Edna Griffin Legacy Awards Dinner was held in her honor, and included a proclamation signing by Governor Kim Reynolds marking July 3 as Edna Mae Griffin Day. The Edna Griffin Award of Courage was presented to Rebecca Grant for her work fighting discrimination in the Cedar Rapids School District. The Stanley Griffin Trailblazer Award was presented to Emily Lang and Kristopher Rollins for their work with RunDSM.
In May of 2018, we launched a project 2 years in the making: Bridging the Gap. Bridging the Gap (BTG) is a multi-sector approach to creating collaborative solutions for a thriving city.

This project is rooted in the belief that long-term systemic change must be sustainable and inclusive. For this reason, we began by developing an ongoing dialogue and strategy series to connect local city, county, and state government representatives, business leaders, service providers, and community members.

"As one of the fastest growing regions in the nation, we are in the perfect position to become the model of equitable crime prevention and economic growth."

T.M. Franklin Cownie, Mayor

We identified four areas of opportunity to make Des Moines an equitable and sustainable city:

- Safety and Justice
- Refugee & Immigrant Affairs
- LGBTQ+
- Breaking Bread Building Bridges

As we delve deeper into the issues that concern our communities, we hope that "bridging the gap" in these areas will help all residents of Des Moines thrive.
The conversations focused on creating pathways to better relationships that included all sectors of a community: education, employment, housing, and government, while also calling for policy review and greater community engagement.

In Part II of Bridging the Gap, these ideas were developed into strategies that were then brought back to the community for a vote on which course of action the community felt should be prioritized to have the greatest positive impact and change in the community.

Known as "The Reveal", this art-gallery style event was held in multiple locations across Des Moines to showcase the 9 thematic options that were distilled from the over 200 ideas generated in the deliberative dialogues. Artist Nathan Wright illustrated original work that represented these ideas, which were displayed alongside similar programs, policies, or practices instituted in other cities across the Midwest.

In Part III of Bridging the Gap, the votes will be tallied and the Commissioners will work with City Council and City Staff to determine how we formulate community-initiated priorities into tangible programs. Final recommendations will be made to City Council in the joint-meeting with City Council, the Commission, and community.

This process aims to establish a practice and a culture of government working with community to develop programs that move the community forward and strengthen relationships between community and government.
Refugee & Immigrant Advisory Subcommittee

Formed in December 2017, the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Subcommittee provides assistance and advice to the Commission regarding issues affecting refugee and immigrant communities.

Members of the subcommittee initiated efforts to engage in ongoing relationship building and culture-specific dialogues with the goal to present culturally responsive recommendations to City Council.

These dialogues, part of the Department’s Bridging the Gap series, explored the present and prevalent concerns and experiences of refugee and immigrant communities, their vision for the future of Des Moines as residents, and potential strategies that can be employed by local government to support the growing immigrant and refugee populations.

"I have learned a lot working as a member of RIAS. I believe we have the right formulas in place to make Des Moines the number one city in the USA when it comes to human rights, fairness, justice, and equity... I am glad that RIAS, in working with the Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Commission, has done a great job in assessing refugees and immigrants’ plights, hearing for themselves through community dialogues. City Council members, Commissioners, and legislators should have all the information they need to make informed policy decisions that make Des Moines more equitable." - Samuel BKVD Wilson, RIAS Member

"There is nothing more powerful than hearing from those who have firsthand experiences with challenges and hardships in our own City. There is also a great sense of hope when you hear from these same individuals that they are not giving up on the City, and instead they are willing to work together to make it a better place for all. Humanizing the experiences of immigrants and refugees in our City has improved my own appreciation for the work that the Commission does and will continue to do." - Claudia Schabel, Commissioner

"The dialogues with members of refugee and immigrant communities have provided important insight into the challenges and opportunities our community faces if we are to achieve success in a way that benefits everyone. There are so many opportunities to empower more people to be involved in making Des Moines great." - Emily Shields, Commissioner
LGBT ADVISORY COUNCIL

MISSION STATEMENT:

The LGBT Advisory Council raises awareness, educates, and advocates for the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer residents and visitors of Des Moines to ensure the city's department and services are fair and inclusive.

Formed in April 2017, the Commission’s Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Advisory Council is comprised of members who are active in the community and possess demonstrated experience and knowledge in a variety of issues, with the goal of achieving diversity and representation for LGBTQ+ residents throughout all sectors of Des Moines.

LGBTAC has represented the Commission at the 2017 and 2018 Pride Week, hosted LGBTQ+ specific listening sessions with the community, launched a six month survey to assess the gaps between services and the LGBTQ+ community, and hosted the 2017 Coming Out Day Celebration where Commission liaison, Donna Red Wing, was recognized for her LGBTQ+ rights activism.

"As part of the LGBT Advisory Council, I have had the unique opportunity to assist in creating something powerful from the ground up. It has always been a passion of mine to help others find their voice and the LGBTQ community is especially vulnerable to being silenced.

The Advisory Council has allowed me to be able to understand the needs, experiences and perceptions of a community that has been marginalized and face incredible amounts of discrimination.

My hope is that through ongoing participation with the Advisory Council we can continue the important and necessary work to connect city leaders and individuals of the LGBTQ community to create important dialogues about the needs and experiences of the community." - Joby Holcomb, LGBTAC Member
**2017-2018 LGBTAC SURVEY RESULTS**

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION**
48% responded that they identify as Gay or Lesbian
- Lesbian: 24%
- Gay: 24%
- Bisexual: 19%
- Straight: 22%
- Other*: 11%
* incl. Queer and Pansexual

**GENDER IDENTITY**
8% of respondents identify as Transgender
- Men: 36%
- Women: 55%
- Non-Binary*: 7%
- Other: 2%
* incl. Genderqueer

**AGE GROUP**
32% are within the age group 25-34.
- Under 18: 0%
- 18-24: 25%
- 25-34: 50%
- 35-44: 10%
- 45-54: 10%
- 55-64: 5%
- 65-74: 2%
- 75 or older: 2%

**DISCRIMINATION**
28% responded that they have experienced discrimination in Des Moines

Housing, Employment, and Public Accommodations are the top areas where respondents reported experiencing discrimination, however, despite the fact that 63% of total respondents know about the Civil and Human Rights Department, only **28%** of all respondents stated they would file a complaint.
"...We both have an interest and passion in advancing social justice, though my own passion is newly emerged and his has been lifelong, but I was struck with the risks he had taken to live that out. He started his own non-profit which is a huge risk in my eyes. One of my fears is taking on a big cause and failing to put something meaningful together. He took the risk and it has been doing well. He detailed the various organizations he had worked with or started and the initiatives he had worked on and what he saw as their successes and failures. While we had similar views on recent events, I was impressed with his earned wisdom and boldness to get things done and felt he was someone I could really learn from."

"I have a non-violent felony for distribution of cannabis here in Iowa. So it shouldn't be hard to imagine that actually inviting a police officer, a former narcotics officer no less, into my home left me with an array of mixed feelings. On our first meeting I told her that I have extreme prejudice and discrimination towards the police. I see a badge, a gun and handcuffs and forget all about the person residing behind the uniform... I hope to have changed her mind about what a felon looks and acts like, but she seems to be more open to the juxtaposition of our lives than I... I can say in complete honesty that this program has changed the way I see the world."

"...She prepared a traditional Japanese meal: miso soup, sushi, and Japanese dumplings. Everything was DELICIOUS. We talked about holiday plans and experiences and her recent trip to Utah for a skiing getaway. We also discussed the upcoming Olympics and political events. I felt thoroughly relaxed in her home: she and her husband are both incredibly welcoming and conversant in numerous topics, and it seemed we never hit an awkward or uncomfortable silence. We might be from different countries, but we have so much in common, and I am so thankful to have meet her through Breaking Bread and Building Bridges!"
On April 16, 2018, Donna Red Wing passed away after battling lung cancer.

Donna was a national leader in the fight for equality, advocating for the LGBTQ community for over three decades. Over the years, she held leadership roles at organizations like Human Rights Campaign, GLAAD, the Gill Foundation, Interfaith Alliance, and others. While directing the Lesbian Community Project in Oregon, she was featured in a Sundance Award-winning film about the 1992 struggle (and victory) against Ballot Measure 9, a proposed amendment to Oregon’s constitution that, among other things, compelled schools to teach youth that being LGBTQ is “abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse”. She advised both President Barack Obama and Howard Dean on LGBTQ issues.

Donna moved to Iowa in 2012 to begin her tenure as executive director of One Iowa, a statewide LGBTQ advocacy organization. Despite living here for a relatively short time, she made an enormously positive impact in our state. In addition to leading One Iowa for four years, she served as Commissioner and launched the LGBT Advisory Council, the first community-specific subcommittee in years. One month before she passed, the Commission renamed the Lifetime Achievement award after her to honor her extraordinary work.

Donna’s legacy continues to be celebrated and the torch of her impact will be carried on by all whose lives she touched throughout her work.

Rise in Power.

ERICA BARZ
MEMBER, LGBT ADVISORY COUNCIL
2018
THANK YOU, DES MOINES

TOGETHER, WE ADVANCE
JUSTICE, EQUALITY, & HUMAN RIGHTS
FOR ALL

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ADVANCING OPPORTUNITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

HOW TO CONTACT THE COMMISSION

Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Visitors are received by appointment or as walk-ins.

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