FY2020 Annual Report to the Board of County Commissioners
Community Relations Committee (CRC)

For over 50 years, CRC has represented an inclusive community, successfully built relationships and promoted harmony.

CRC is a 45 member team of professionals and volunteers who serve as civil rights and human relations advocates. This committee also provides counsel to Community Relations staff.

CRC works to ensure fairness for all and remove barriers that impede the community from living in harmony.
CRC Subcommittees

Each committee member participates in at least one of six subcommittees:
- Commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Communications
- Education and Young Leaders
- Intercultural Relations
- Police-Community Relations
- Programs/Speakers

Subcommittee updates, events and workshops are summarized in the CRC newsletter.

Community Relations staff assist each subcommittee in developing informed and appropriate human relations services.

This has included meetings with over 30 local nonprofits, community organizations and city departments.
In April 2020, the Community Relations Committee performed a subcommittee reset. The subcommittees focus areas were realigned more closely with the work of the Community Relations Department, with emphasis on increased community engagement.

The Programs and Speakers subcommittee was tasked with tracking member engagement and active participation on subcommittees.

In June 2020, the CRC recommitted to become more vocal and engaged in activism and calls to action to ensure social and racial equity in policies in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

**Vision & Mission**

**VISION:** Be recognized as a global model in building community harmony by advocating for diversity, equity and access for all.

**MISSION:** CRC empowers, collaborates, engages and promotes opportunities to create positive outcomes.
Subcommittee Highlights

- CRC’s annual commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. took place in January and brought together nearly 6,000 individuals of different backgrounds to promote harmony and community building through:
  - A parade along North Tryon St.
  - MLK Call to Service featuring family-friendly service projects
  - Recognition of our communities unsung heroes
  - A high school basketball showcase on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University
  - A memorial wreath laying in Marshall Park
  - The National Observance and CMS Writing and Arts Contest
    - Ambassador Andrew Young served as the keynote speaker
Subcommittee Accomplishments

Communications

• Developed a revamped look and format to the CRC newsletter, and relaunched in May.

• The newsletter was distributed to 8,000 City employees, 714 community members, and requested to be sent to all County employees.

• The newsletter had an open rate of 36%, was forwarded or reopened 893 times.

• There have been more than 39 persons who requested to be added to the distribution list.

• The newsletter is available at charlottenc.gov/crc

Education/Young Leaders

The Education and Young Leaders Subcommittee held two “Dress to Impress” events at the Belmont Regional Center.

• Local fashion designers were available to advise high school students on how to present themselves visually for an interview.

• Students were given the opportunity to choose clothing, such as, trousers and jackets, donated by the community, from several racks.

• The Subcommittee will be working with staff to provide conflict resolution, leadership development and truancy reduction efforts with CMS students.
Subcommittee Accomplishments

**Intercultural Relations**

- The Subcommittee coordinated a CRC general meeting at the Hindu Center of Charlotte. The event featured cultural education.
- Identifying organizations with shared focus to participate in Roundtable Dialogues that allow the organizations to communicate with each other and achieve common goals.
- Begin a process of reviewing the City of Charlotte’s Ordinance’s to examine our local policies through an equity lens, and make recommendations to the City Council on suggested changes.

**Programs and Speakers**

- Focus on inward operations like membership training and engagement for CRC members and staff.
  - Providing orientations for new members and newly assigned leadership
  - Collaborating with other subcommittees to assist them with their initiatives
Subcommittee Accomplishments

Police-Community Relations

• Due to COVID-19, the signature Police Community Relations Awards Program was cancelled.

• Prior to COVID-19, the Subcommittee had received 165 nominations from community members to honor CMPD officers.

• There were 10 sponsors committed for the May 2020 Police Community Relations Awards.
  • $11,000 was committed in sponsorship but cancelled due to COVID-19
  • Sponsors requested the Subcommittee retain $7,400 in sponsorship funds for the 2021 Police Community Relations Awards.
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

• ADA guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities.
• There are five titles of ADA: Employment, Public Service, Public Accommodation, Telecommunication and Miscellaneous.
• Community Relations serves as the lead agency for city ADA coordination and leads the ADA network team comprised of city and county agencies.
• Individuals can file ADA complaints and grievances (within 60 days of the alleged violation) to the Community Relations ADA program office at charlotteADA@charlottenc.gov.

Community Affairs

• The Community Affairs team develops, implements and supports programs and initiatives that advance the mission of the department.
• Focus areas include: police-community relations, engagement, diversity and inclusion, strategic planning and community partnerships.
• This team is also involved in review boards, community dialogues, youth programs, peer mediation in schools and conflict resolution training.
Community Relations Divisions

**Dispute Settlement Program (DSP)**

- Community Relations has been providing mediation and conciliation services to Charlotte-Mecklenburg residents since 1983.
- DSP’s focus areas include: landlord tenant, private warrant court, juvenile offender, Medicaid, misdemeanor cases, truancy/school issues, Charlotte Housing Authority hearings, worthless check conciliation and 50-C No Contact cases.

**Fair Housing & Public Accommodations**

- The Fair Housing team works to ensure that equal access to housing and public accommodation is a right and not a privilege.
- Formal complaints are accepted from anyone who feels discriminated against in a public place or in housing because of their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, familial status or disability.
- Staff documents and investigates complaints and conducts standardized testing of alleged violator’s facilities/properties within the city and county.
Community Relations Trends (FY20)

Dispute Settlement Program
- Cases mediated - 1,015
- Court hours saved - 1,530
- Court dollars saved - $153,000
- Landlord Tenant Calls - 1,020
- Conflict Resolution Trainings - 242
- People Trained - 2,358

Fair Housing & Public Accommodations
- Fair housing cases investigated - 14
- Fair Housing Conciliations - 48
- Education and outreach trainings - 17
- People trained - 796
- Case settlement dollars - $200,000+

Police Community Relations
- Chain of command hearings attended - 45
- Appeals processed - 2
- Complaints processed - 451
- Officers nominated for annual awards - 569
- Private sector dollars raised to cover costs annual awards - $14,500

Additional trends to note:
- Volunteer hours secured: 2,664
- In-kind dollars saved: $67,745.52
- Taxpayer dollars saved: $455,017.27
Community Relations Trends (FY20)

**Americans with Disabilities Act**
- Consultant interviewed 30 City departments
- Consultant analyzed approximately 1,230 City programs, services, and activities
- Hosted a ADA Transition Plan Public Forum
- Completed assessment of 180 City-owned facilities
- Created a GIS database for City-owned facilities to be inspected
- Produced a Public Service Announcement on the ADA Transition Plan
- ADA Trainings - 42
- Persons Trained - 501

**Other**
Employees received an average of 49 training hours
Public and Private Revenue - $234,271.75

**Community Engagement**
- Collaboration and Partnerships Developed - 350
- People Attended - 3,055
- Community Dialogues - 30
- People Attended - 247

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
- Diversity Trainings - 28
- Persons Trained - 809

**Additional trends to note:**
- Partnerships with International Community: 73
- Persons in Attendance: 869
- Interpretation Services Provided: 124
Community Initiatives

**Racial and Social Disparities Town Halls**
Hosted COVID-19 Racial & Social Disparities virtual town hall meetings focused on the impacts of COVID-19 on communities of color. Community members were encouraged to participate in conversations on racial and social disparities and share their ideas for policy innovations that will produce more equitable outcomes for communities of color.

**Eviction Mediation During COVID19**
Used trained, neutral third-party mediators to work with landlords and tenants to reach an agreement, provide access to resources for paying restitution for damages, losses or rent as an alternative to court conviction or other court action. Mediation is available virtually or in-person.

**Segregated by Design Community Dialogue**
Provided community members the opportunity to view the video and have dialogue about the history of how our federal, state and local governments unconstitutionally segregated every major metropolitan area in America through law and policy.
Training & Education

Community Relations develops and delivers free training to Charlotte-Mecklenburg area neighborhood associations, civic organizations, schools and other groups.

**Trainings include:**

**Conflict Resolution** – teaches skills and provides tools to help individuals handle conflict effectively, in a non-violent manner

**Diversity** – focuses on cultural competency, strengths of a diverse community, checking assumptions and accepting differences

Diversity trainings conducted: 28; Total trained: 809

**Fair Housing** – provides education to realtors, apartment associations, tenants and others on federal, city, county fair housing and public accommodations laws to proactively curb discriminatory practices

**ADA** – provides training on ADA titles, grievance procedure and compliance

ADA trainings conducted: 42; Total trained: 501
Celebrations

**Police Community Relations Awards**
Annual event honoring officers who have made outstanding contributions to neighborhoods and communities in the area.

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Holiday**
To reach the entire community and in recognition of the dream and vision of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Community Relations organizes an annual celebration during Dr. King's holiday.

**MLK Medallion Award**
The MLK Medallion Award is a focal point of the Dr. King celebration where individuals from all walks of life in Charlotte-Mecklenburg are presented with the award for exemplifying the ideals of Dr. King.
Thank you for your continued support of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee.

We feel our partnership is vital to a healthy community in promoting harmony, facilitating resolution and celebrating diversity.

Please contact us for any assistance.

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