



**Bloomington/Monroe County
Human Rights Commission**

**September 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Hooker Conference Room, City Hall
5:00 p.m.**

The Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission met at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 15, 2025, in the Hooker Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

Commissioners Attending: Sharon Baker (online via Zoom), Katie Bensberg (online via Zoom), Stephen Coover, Amy Jackson, Ryne Shadday, Emma Williams (online via Zoom), Lilliana Young.

Staff Attending: BMCHRC Liaison Michael Shermis, BMCHRC Assistant Annabelle Vosmeier, Assistant City Attorney Taylor Brown.

Public Attending: None.

Call to Order

1. Shadday brought the BMCHRC to order at 5:01 PM and presented the Land and Labor Acknowledgment.

Approval of Minutes of August 18, 2025 Meeting

1. Coover moved to approve the minutes from August 18, 2025. Jackson seconded. Passed unanimously by roll call vote, 6-0, Baker absent at beginning of meeting.

Report from Staff

1. **Pridefest:** Commissioners and staff reported that the event went smoothly and that a good number of people came to the table and seemed very interested.
2. **UNICEF Presentation:** High school students who previously presented to the BMCHRC have founded a UNICEF Club at Bloomington South and invited staff to present on the work of the Commission on October 6.
3. **MEI:** The process for receiving last year's MEI scorecard was very complex. However, this year's update process is greatly simplified. Last year, we received 95 points with 7 flex points, for a total of 102 points (100 maximum). We will not receive the missing 5 points for gender-affirming care insurance coverage because youth gender-affirming care is banned in Indiana. We are submitting additional information to see if we can get more flex points for city support for the LGBTQ+ community.
4. **Hate Crime Reporting Data:** Shermis contacted Monroe County about hate crime reporting and received a state-wide hate crime reporting dataset updated to 2022, which includes IUPD data.

Reports from Commissioners

1. **Shadday and Jackson** reported on The Front Door, a new Bloomington LGBTQ+

nonprofit for which they are on the board. Last year, they began speaking to Melanie Davis, a community member, about her long-held dream of opening an LGBTQ+ center in Bloomington. A 501(c)3 has been established, along with a board and bylaws, the name has been selected, and they are working on grant opportunities to get the center open in the next year. Jackson said that they named the center based on an online poll, with the Back Door's blessing. They had a good response at Pridefest and will be at Spencer Pride as well.

Open Cases

1. Bensberg's racial discrimination in employment case: A NPC determination has been issued after a very thorough investigation.
2. Williams's racial discrimination in housing case: A NPC determination was issued and the appeal date has passed.
3. Coover's gender identity discrimination in housing: The respondent has sent a position statement and the investigation remains in progress.
4. Jackson's racial discrimination in housing: The investigation is moving forward with interviews, with several scheduled and the first occurring this morning. The case is very complex.
5. Young's racial discrimination in employment: A NPC determination was issued and the appeal date has passed.

Statute of limitations: The complainant in Jackson's case came in on the 180th day after the incident most directly related to alleged discrimination. Due to the complainant's disability and trouble with memory, it took multiple weeks to establish the story and file the case. One incident the complainant attributed to discrimination took place several months later, well within the statute of limitations, but this incident would not have been the respondent's responsibility. The respondent objected to a perceived untimeliness of the complaint. Shermis stated that the extenuating circumstances, particularly the complainant's disability, mean that we intend to continue investigation although the respondent might object if it ever went to court. After consultation, Legal recommended informing the Commission. In future, if a similar situation arose, the complainant would be asked to write a few sentences and notarize it immediately before elaborating on the story in an amendment. Bensberg stated that the respondent would not have legal grounds in court if they had previously stated that they consider the charge timely. She also suggested creating memos on procedure.

Assignment of New Cases

1. After some quieter weeks, six to eight calls have been received in the past week or so. Among others, these include an ESA issue, an accessible parking issue at an apartment, and several walk-ins, including a racial discrimination in employment issue.
2. A long voicemail was left by a self-described Christian Republican soon after Charlie Kirk's shooting on the issue of hate speech and discrimination by the left against the right. Legal is drafting a response.

Unfinished Business

1. **Municipal ID program:** Jackson stated that an administrator at Stone Belt thought the

program would be a good fit for the Milestones office. She is meeting with another nonprofit soon. Young is meeting with Mayor Thomson to speak about the ID program and the resolution in support of the transgender community.

2. **Eviction Sealing Resource:** A new eviction sealing handout based on Williams's research was created and reviewed by the Commission. Many potential complainants have encountered issues with being turned down by landlords based on past evictions and do not seem to have a clear understanding of the eviction sealing process. The commission discussed what resources to direct people to for assistance. Bensberg thought that Indiana Legal Services remained the best option despite being consistently overlooked. Staff often hears from complainants that "tried" ILS and did not get a response. Brown stated that paper versions of the forms can be found with the clerk of the court.

New Business

1. None.

Public Input

2. None.

Adjournment: Chair Shadday adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.