

# **Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission**

## **Quarterly Report**

**January to March 2025**

### **I. Discrimination Complaints**

#### **A. Pending from previous quarters**

1. Commissioner Shadday's national origin discrimination in housing case
  - a. Filed October 2024
  - b. Probable cause found and consent agreement signed in January 2025
2. Commissioner Jackson's racial discrimination in employment case
  - a. Filed October 2024
  - b. Complainant withdrew for nonresponse in February 2025
3. Commissioner Crisovan's racial discrimination in housing case
  - a. Filed November 2024
  - b. Investigation closed due to legal determination of lack of jurisdiction in January 2025. Referred to HUD
  - c. Case filed with the Indiana Civil Rights Commission in March 2025
4. Commissioner Baker's disability discrimination in housing case
  - a. Filed December 2024
  - b. Settled in March 2025

#### **B. New cases**

1. Commissioner Young's disability discrimination in housing case
  - a. Filed January 2025
  - b. Investigation in progress
2. Commissioner Coover's racial discrimination in public accommodations case
  - a. Filed March 2025
  - b. Investigation in progress
3. Commissioner Williams's disability discrimination in employment case
  - a. Filed March 2025
  - b. Investigation in progress
4. Commissioner Shadday's disability discrimination in employment case
  - a. Filed March 2025
  - b. Investigation in progress

### **II. Miscellaneous Inquiries**

- A. A man without a disability believed he was being moved down an apartment waitlist below those who are elderly or disabled. Corresponded about showing proof of his allegations.

- B. A woman who had previously corresponded about a disability accommodation asked about a different employment issue. Suggested she contact a lawyer to navigate the issue.
- C. A man left a voicemail stating that he was experiencing harassment and discrimination in housing but did not answer a return call or have voicemail set up.
- D. A woman from Michigan wished to file a complaint with us because she does not have a nearby agency that works with the EEOC. Shared contact information for the district EEOC office as we are unable to take a case outside of our jurisdiction.
- E. A woman with disabilities believed she was at risk of losing her place in line with a nonprofit agency if she declined an offered resource that was inaccessible to her. Corresponded with the organization, which clarified their documentation and promised accommodations.
- F. A couple alleged discrimination in public housing, which is outside of our jurisdiction. Referred to HUD.
- G. A woman claimed her privacy had been violated at a truck stop outside of our jurisdiction. Suggested she contact a private attorney.
- H. A woman who had recently had an injury and surgery sought information about requesting a reasonable accommodation of her landlord. Provided guidance and invited her to contact us if she encountered barriers; she did not call back.
- I. A man who had previously started the intake process with the BMCHRC alleged retaliation from his landlord. Suggested that he continue the intake process to file a complaint, but he did not reply.
- J. A mother called on behalf of her young daughter. She was worried that her daughter's school would not follow her new 504 accommodation plan, which would go into effect that day. Invited her to contact us if she felt the school did not respond appropriately; she did not call back.
- K. The newly established Muncie Ethics Commission requested to review the BMCHRC's rules and regulations, which we provided.
- L. A woman who works in a restaurant and makes less than new hires sought information about the living wage ordinance. Provided info from the website.
- M. A caller requested information about Know Your Rights/red cards and local ACLU chapters. Shared a printable card from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center and directed to the ACLU of Indiana.
- N. A representative of a nonprofit that had previously corresponded with the BMCHRC inquired about City event equipment available to nonprofits to borrow. Directed to Public Works.
- O. A Black man alleged discrimination in housing when his landlord did not alert him of more appropriate units becoming available. Pursuing additional information.
- P. A woman who had previously alleged housing discrimination with the BMCHRC shared a maintenance issue unrelated to discrimination. Directed to HAND.
- Q. A landlord requested information about her rights because her tenant's behavior made her uncomfortable. Directed to HAND.

- R. A woman working in a government office alleged that she was terminated and experienced retaliation after whistleblowing. Suggested that she contact an attorney, which she did.
- S. An out-of-state caller left an unrelated voicemail following his arrest.
- T. An individual spoke about a housing situation and asked if it was discrimination. It did not seem likely to be discrimination; shared additional resources and referred to HAND.
- U. A woman alleged that her landlord did not accommodate her disability, which exacerbated her health conditions, and gave her a poor reference as retaliation for her complaints. Chose not to pursue a complaint after canceling two intake interviews.

### **III. Publicity**

- A. Emailed monthly newsletter, *Rights Stuff*, to 100+ individuals and organizations and placed physical copies in City Hall and the Monroe County Public Library (downtown branch).
- B. Updated BMCHRC Facebook Page.
- C. The annual Art/Essay contest was publicized to local schools, churches, businesses, the library, and organizations that serve children such as Scouts, Girls Inc., and the Banneker Center. A Spanish-language version was placed in the Boletin newsletter. Over 90+ children submitted entries.

### **IV. Networking/Education**

- A. Shermis and Vosmeier attended monthly meetings for the Council for Community Accessibility (CCA).
- B. Shermis and Vosmeier attended monthly meetings for the CCA Accessibility Committee.
- C. Shermis attended monthly meetings for the CCA Transportation and Mobility Committee.
- D. Shermis attended monthly meetings of the City's Digital Accessibility Workgroup.
- E. Shermis, Vosmeier, and Coover attended monthly meetings for the Nonprofit Alliance's Community Outreach Breakfast.
- F. Shermis attended monthly meetings for the Indiana Consortium of City and State Human Rights Agencies.
- G. Shermis attended monthly meetings for ADA Indiana.
- H. Shermis attended the Disabilities Service Providers Coalition meeting on January 8, 2025.
- I. AccessAble board meeting on January 23, 2025
- J. Shermis and Vosmeier hosted NPA's "Meet the Media" event on February 12, 2025.
- K. Shermis and Vosmeier tabled at a Global and International Studies event on February 28, 2025.
- L. Shermis and Vosmeier attended the Black History Month Gala on March 1, 2025.
- M. Shermis presented the BMCHRC annual report to City Council on March 5, 2025.

- N. The Gender Diverse and Queer Clinic and Advocates for Immigrant Student Equity both presented at the BMCHRC meeting on March 17, 2024.
- O. Shermis presented two Nonprofit Board Trainings with the NPA on March 19 and March 26, 2025.
- P. Shermis and Vosmeier attended the Women's History Luncheon on March 27, 2025.
- Q. Jackson, Young, and Vosmeier tabled at Corizon de Jaripeo on March 29, 2025.
- R. Shermis attended trainings on "Disclosing a Disability" (01/08/2025), "Accessible Technology for People Who are Blind or Low Vision" (01/16/2025), "Common Myths and Mix-Ups: Accessible Parking" (02/19/2025), and "Accessible Means of Egress" (03/06/2025).

## **V. ADA and Accessibility**

- A. Shermis consulted with Parks and Rec and Engineering on the development of the Powerline Trail.
- B. Shermis consulted on outdoor dining, the parklets, and the Kirkwood closure.
- C. Shermis worked closely with Parks and Rec on developing the Switchyard Park tactile map.
- D. Shermis received and shared complaints by people with disabilities regarding plowed snow blocking accessible spaces in City lots and street parking.
- E. Shermis consulted with Parks and Rec on the development of a new restroom/pit toilet at Griffy Lake.
- F. Shermis advised Engineering on temporary ramps.
- G. Shermis worked with Engineering to get input from people who are blind on tactile directional indicators.
- H. Shermis spoke to a representative from Economic and Sustainable Development about a grant application they had received from a nonprofit to add automatic doors.