

Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission

Quarterly Report

July to September 2025

I. Discrimination Complaints

A. Pending from previous quarters

1. Commissioner Shadday's disability discrimination in employment case
 - a. Filed March 2025
 - b. Due to inability to dual-file, two cases were filed at BMCHRC and EEOC. EEOC case forwarded to ICRC, which took over investigation. BMCHRC cannot investigate simultaneously.
 - c. Withdrawn August 2025
2. Commissioner Jackson's disability discrimination in employment case
 - a. Filed April 2025
 - b. Settled July 2025
3. Commissioner Baker's sex discrimination in housing case
 - a. Filed May 2025
 - b. Settled August 2025
4. Commissioner Williams's racial discrimination in housing case
 - a. Filed May 2025
 - b. No probable cause found September 2025
5. Commissioner Bensberg's racial discrimination in employment case
 - a. Filed June 2025
 - b. No probable cause found September 2025

B. New cases

1. Commissioner Young's racial discrimination in employment case
 - a. Filed July 2025
 - b. No probable cause found September 2025
2. Commissioner Jackson's racial discrimination in housing case
 - a. Filed July 2025
 - b. Investigation in progress
3. Commissioner Coover's gender identity discrimination in housing case
 - a. Filed August 2025
 - b. Investigation in progress
4. Commissioner Baker's disability discrimination in housing case
 - a. Filed September 2025
 - b. Investigation in progress

II. Miscellaneous Inquiries

- A. An individual with a developmental disability reported several complaints about a service provider but decided to file in the court system.
- B. The Evansville Human Rights Director was seeking information regarding a potential gender affirming care resolution in their city. Discussed the structure of Bloomington's resolution.
- C. A Black woman alleged racism, discrimination, and threats to her safety at a shelter where she was staying. Did not follow up or respond to attempts to contact her.
- D. A man with a felony on his record had been turned down by a potential landlord. Directed him to the Fair Housing Center and provided resources but were unable to help him directly since past justice involvement is not a protected class.
- E. A woman was seeking resources for finding accessible housing in Bloomington. Suggested that she get involved with CCA and directed her to a HAND resource.
- F. A woman reported that her landlord was not renewing her lease because she had used rental assistance programs. She described additional problematic behavior, including racist language toward her biracial child. She had an appointment scheduled with CJAM; suggested she follow through with the CJAM process and call back if the issues were not resolved.
- G. A woman who has filed a complaint with the BMCHRC before called back about landlord-tenant issues. Directed her to CJAM and HAND.
- H. A woman wanted to file a complaint against a judge in the Monroe County Courts. Directed her to the Complaint Against a Judge form on in.gov.
- I. A man walked into City Hall and detailed several challenging situations, none of which were directly related to discrimination. Met with him to hear out his complaints. He described attempting to work with a local agency who insisted that he fill out a form online, which he was not comfortable with. Communicated with the agency about assisting him with the form in person as a reasonable accommodation.
- J. A woman described experiencing retaliation from her leasing company following complaints to HAND. She was waiting to hear back from CJAM; also referred her to Indiana Legal Services and directed her to let HAND know.
- K. A woman with a disability was concerned about a remodel in her unit that would require her to pack and move her belongings. Assisted her by reviewing an accommodation request.
- L. A woman experienced challenges working with her landlord to get emotional support animals approved for her children. Extensively mediated the situation, which was resolved when the animals were approved.
- M. A man with a disability in recovery from addiction experienced challenges moving into housing he had been previously approved for. Assisting him to mediate the situation.
- N. A man was having trouble finding housing because he had pending criminal charges. Referred him to resources from the Fair Housing Center.
- O. A Black man suggested that he was experiencing racial discrimination in both employment and housing but chose not to give full details until he decided whether to pursue a formal complaint.

- P. An individual asked a long series of questions about employment law and discrimination via email. Answered those questions that are relevant to the BMCHRC and requested more context.
- Q. A woman called the HRC line by mistake while looking for another City department. While on the line, she asked a clearly loaded question in an unpleasant tone about the availability of assistance for Hispanic/Latino families, suggesting that they should not be eligible for assistance. Transferred her to the department she was looking for without engaging.
- R. A Black woman alleged racial discrimination in her workplace; scheduling an intake interview.
- S. A Black woman alleged racial discrimination in employment during a walk-in. Asked her to fill out an intake form and schedule a time to come in, but she did not follow up.
- T. In the week following the assassination of Charlie Kirk, a man left a voicemail in which he described himself as a Republican and Christian army veteran and asked about being protected from hate speech from the left. City Legal provided a response regarding free speech rights.
- U. A woman sent in a complaint about mistreatment by a state agency. Following up for more information to assist with a referral.

III. Publicity

- A. The Human Rights Commission did not publish its monthly newsletter, *Rights Stuff*, in July, August, or September, as it remained on hold per the City Legal department.
- B. Updated BMCHRC Facebook Page with relevant human rights stories and articles.
- C. The Human Rights Award was awarded to the Bloomington Severe Winter Emergency Shelter at the City Council meeting on August 6, 2025. A press release was published the following day.

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 ADA Coordinators Roundtable event on July 17, 2025.

- I. Shermis and Vosmeier hosted, and Baker and Coover tabled at, the ADA Anniversary Celebration on August 2, 2025.
- J. Shadday presented the annual Human Rights Award to the Bloomington Severe Winter Emergency Shelter (B-SWERS) on August 6, 2025.
- K. Shermis, Vosmeier, Baker, Bensberg, Shadday, and Young tabled at PrideFest for the Human Rights Commission on August 23, 2025. Coover was present and tabled for another organization.
- L. Shermis attended the ADA Trainer Leadership Network Train-the-Trainer workshop from August 26–28, 2025.
- M. Vosmeier took the Mediation and Restorative Justice course with the Community Justice and Mediation Center from September 3–October 11, 2025.
- N. Shermis and Vosmeier hosted the ADA Coordinators Roundtable event on September 17, 2025.
- O. Shermis and Baker tabled at La Fiesta del Otoño on September 20, 2025.
- P. Shermis and Vosmeier attended the Indiana Consortium Virtual Panel “Hold the Line: A Discussion on Upholding Civil and Human Rights in Indiana” on September 24, 2025.
- Q. Shermis attended trainings on “Training: Your Voice, Your Vote—Accessible Polling Places and Election Supporting Technology” (August 7, 2025) and “Fighting for Civil and Disability Rights: Strategies to Overcome Barriers” (September 2, 2025).

V. ADA and Accessibility

- A. A local nonprofit wanted to know about accessibility modification grants. Directed to ESD and Zone Business.
- B. Mobile Integrated Health Unit was looking for information about providing ramps for a patient. Researched and worked on local options for a ramps funding program, but did not come to a resolution for 2025.
- C. An individual called to complain about a lack of accessible spaces at local grocery stores and the fact that people without disability permits park in accessible spaces. Suggested carrying informative “tickets” to leave on cars that park inappropriately.
- D. An individual reported that newly installed curb ramps included a large drop. The project was not yet finished, and patches were added to even the road.
- E. An individual representing a friend with a disability made a complaint about Bloomington Transit. Communicated with Bloomington Transit to address the issue in the future.
- F. A woman who is blind was hit by a car (luckily, she was not seriously injured) in the Walnut Street post office parking lot due to a lack of an accessible path of travel. Visited to look at the problem and got direct phone numbers for her to call.
- G. A man in a wheelchair was having trouble with a keycard sensor and automatic door in his apartment complex; specifically, the door delay was too short and delivery people placed boxes in front of the sensor. Communicated with the apartment complex to increase the delay and put a sign up about keeping the sensor clear.

- H. A caregiver for a person with a disability wanted the individual's apartment complex to add accessible parking. Provided the complex with resources and fair housing guidelines and communicated with the Great Lakes ADA Center. The complex declined to add accessible parking and argued that they were not technically required to.
- I. A man with a disability expressed a complaint about ADA parking signage. Scheduling a time to look at his concerns.
- J. Parks and Rec had an internal query about an accessible elevator. Provided guidance.
- K. Engineering had an internal query about the ADA transition plan and other documents for a state department. Provided guidance.