

Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission

Quarterly Report

October to December 2025

I. Discrimination Complaints

A. Pending from previous quarters

1. Commissioner Jackson's racial discrimination in housing case
 - a. Filed July 2025
 - b. NPC found October 2025
 - c. Complainant appealed but rescheduled several times. Final appeal scheduled for January 2026
2. Commissioner Coover's gender identity discrimination in housing case
 - a. Filed August 2025
 - b. Complainant withdrew November 2025 following accommodation.
3. Commissioner Baker's disability discrimination in housing case
 - a. Filed September 2025
 - b. NPC found December 2025

B. New cases

1. Commissioner Bensberg's disability discrimination in employment case
 - a. Filed November 2025
 - b. Investigation in progress

II. Miscellaneous Inquiries

- A. A woman with long COVID was unable to respond to issues raised in a housing inspection in the time she was allotted. Recommended she request an accommodation, which she did; the property manager provided the accommodation. She later reported further issues but stopped responding to follow-ups.
- B. A man reported that staff at a local business had mocked him for his disability. Invited him in for an interview, but he declined as he did not want to pursue the issue.
- C. A woman reported that she had requested to move to a different apartment in her complex during mediation of black mold, but that her apartment complex had told her she would have to pay. Suggested she contact her doctor for a letter of accommodation and to contact us again if this was unsuccessful.
- D. A person requested assistance with an eviction case but did not believe it was related to discrimination. Referred to Indiana Legal Services and CJAM.
- E. A woman said that she had been evicted and experienced property loss and damage. She attributes her experience to discrimination based on her income level, which is outside of the HRC's parameters. She reported that Indiana Legal Services was also unable to help her because she was seeking monetary damages.

- F. An individual stated that he believed the sheriff and police department were harassing and monitoring him. The HRC cannot investigate governmental bodies. He reported that he would speak to a lawyer about the issue.
- G. A Black man expressed that his landlord was treating him unfairly by changing policies about keeping items on his porch. Spoke to him in an intake interview and then spoke to the property manager, who explained that the policies were in his lease and implemented fairly and that they were working with him to address the issues.
- H. A family member reported that a maintenance worker had been fired for “speaking up” about a property manager’s abusive treatment of tenants. Expressed that it was not in our purview but recorded information about the situation.
- I. An IU student shared information about a publicized event where a lecturer had been removed from her class for speaking about “Make America Great Again” in terms of white supremacy. Shared the article for information and discussion purposes in the *Rights Stuff* newsletter.
- J. A woman felt she was being discriminated against because she had not been moved up on a Section 8 housing list. She lived out of county and was not part of a protected class.
- K. A man alleged sex discrimination in family court. Directed to judicial complaint form and Indiana Civil Rights Commission.
- L. A man living out-of-state reported problems with his ex-wife and children that were not related to discrimination. Referred to Indiana Legal Services.
- M. A man said that his landlord had not renewed his lease but did not mention if he was a member of a protected class.
- N. A woman alleged that her employer began to treat her more negatively after she disclosed her mental illness. Working with her to develop an affidavit.
- O. A writer called to look for insight after he lost his job following a disagreement. Following up.
- P. An individual stated that she had been discriminated against in an educational opportunity due to her age. The HRC can only take age discrimination cases in employment due to the structure of laws.
- Q. A man with a smoke allergy related to disability said that his property manager was not enforcing a nonsmoking rule. Recommended getting a letter from a doctor, making a formal accommodation request, and calling back if it did not work.
- R. An individual called about a complex housing issue including allegations of crimes. Stated that we could only address discrimination, not criminal matters, but that he was welcome to fill out an intake form. He did not follow up.
- S. A Hispanic individual asked for insight about a settlement he had been offered following an internal harassment investigation by his employer. He had already started negotiations, but we provided some support.
- T. A man originally from a West Asian country alleged national origin and age discrimination in employment while living in Bloomington and working remotely. Scheduling an intake interview.
- U. An unhoused individual shared with the Office of the Mayor that staff at a local shelter had made racist remarks to him. Following up with him for more information.

III. Publicity

- A. The Human Rights Commission published its monthly newsletter, *Rights Stuff*, in mid-October and December.
- B. Updated BMCHRC Facebook Page with relevant human rights stories and articles.

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. Vosmeier moderated discussion at the December meeting.
- 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. Vosmeier completed the Community Mediation, Facilitation, and Restorative Justice course with the Community Justice and Mediation Center, which ran from September 3–October 11, 2025.
- I. Vosmeier attended the "Name and Gender Marker Changes" education session presented by Indiana Legal Services to Spencer Pride on October 14, 2025.
- J. Shermis tabled at a Council of Neighborhood Associations event on October 18, 2025.
- K. Shermis and Vosmeier hosted and Baker attended Gather 'round the Table, a Council for Community Accessibility event, on October 27, 2025.
- L. Shermis and Vosmeier hosted Meet the Funders, a Nonprofit Alliance event, on October 29, 2025.
- M. Shermis presented and Vosmeier assisted at an accessibility training for Parks and Rec on December 16, 2025.
- N. Shermis attended a training on "Workplace Tech that Works: Practical Tools, Rights, and Resources" (October 22, 2025).

V. ADA and Accessibility

- A. A man inquired about pedestrian and accessibility concerns around 10th Street and the bypass. Directed him to the Indiana Department of Transportation.

- B. An individual submitted a uReport regarding the Bloomington Transit transit station's restroom, which did not have the toilet paper in the correct location. Provided information to BT on accessibility specifications.
- C. A local theater company inquired about providing ASL interpretation at a performance. Discussed accommodation requests, financial considerations, and possible solutions.
- D. An individual reported that a clothing retailer was using its accessible changing room for storage. Contacted the owner, who was extremely responsive and returned the accessible changing room to service. Connected the business with a full accessibility survey through the Council for Community Accessibility (CCA).
- E. A woman with a disability was concerned about the number of accessible spaces in public and private lots. Discussed our limited ability to enforce this in private parking and shared how the CCA advocates for more accessible spaces.
- F. An individual with a disability felt that a contractor repairing her home after a fire did not take her mobility issues into consideration. Suggested she talk to her insurance agent about mediating the problems and to get accommodation letters from her doctor.
- G. A staff member from another city department asked for guidance regarding an online form. Under the circumstances, recommended allowing someone to submit the information over the phone if they were not comfortable with online forms.
- H. A woman in a wheelchair reported that she became stuck in a snowed-over curb cut on a damaged sidewalk on City land and found herself in a dangerous situation where she needed to call the police department. Recommended she fill out a uReport, which she did.
- I. The development director of a nonprofit outside City limits requested potential accessibility training. Agreed that it would be a possibility, although there would be some kind of cost as it is outside City limits.
- J. A woman reported that her apartment complex had not shoveled/salted appropriately during the snowfall, which caused a neighbor in a wheelchair to get stuck outside. She had also slipped and fallen. Recommended that she call back if this happens in a future snowfall. HAND cannot enforce shoveling on private property; however, she can file a rental complaint with them. We may also be able to approach it as an accessibility issue.