Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission
Quarterly Report
July to September 2026

Discrimination Complaints

A. Pending from previous quarters
    1. Commissioner Jackson's race discrimination in public accommodations case
        a) Filed March 2026
        b) No probable cause found in June 2026
        c) Voluntary mediation took place in September 2026
    2. Commissioner Bensberg's national origin discrimination in public accommodations case
        a) Filed June 2026
        b) Investigation in progress
B. New cases
    1. Commissioner Baker's sex (pregnancy) discrimination in employment case
        a) Filed July 2026
        b) Investigation in progress
    2. Commissioner Henderson's disability discrimination in housing case
        a) Filed August 2026
        b) Investigation in progress

Miscellaneous Inquiries

A. A man with a disability reported difficulty in accessing medical records from past providers and communicating with his apartment complex. Discussed the issues with him, but were unable to find any connection to discrimination.
B. A man alleged that a property manager was discriminating against him due to his disability. Asked him to provide evidence after meeting with him for an intake interview; he did not follow up.
C. A woman experiencing housing insecurity made a series of complaints against many social service providers. Invited her to speak with us about potential discrimination, but she did not reach out.
D. A woman forwarded a description of anti-LGBTQ+ hatred directed toward two individuals by another group of individuals. Referred to Indiana Legal Services and the Front Door as no organizational discrimination was alleged.
E. A woman with possible mental illness reported that she feared violence from other people. Let her know that we could only address discrimination by an organization and referred her to the Bloomington Police Department.
F. A woman experiencing homelessness reported that she had experienced discrimination at a local shelter. Invited her for an intake interview, but she was unable to describe any discriminatory incidents.
G. A man reported that he believed two people he knew were being discriminated against during an eviction. Stated that we would be happy to talk to them, but they did not get in touch.

H. A man was fired after he used unapproved leave time around a medical appointment. He had filed with the EEOC; met with him to discuss the process and provide advice.
I. A member of the public proposed a declaration of transgender rights and a transgender safe-city framework. Invited her to a BMCHRC meeting and connected her with Crystal Ritter, the City's LGBTQ+ Liaison.
J. A woman reported that a friend was experiencing disability discrimination. She requested a recommendation for an attorney. While we are not able to provide recommendations for businesses, we directed her to Disability Rights Indiana and said that we could meet with the friend.
K. An individual reached out on behalf of an older family member who had been evicted, claiming that the apartment complex discriminated against seniors or residents with disabilities. Invited him for an intake interview; he did not follow up.
L. A woman with a disability reported that she believed her neighbors were harassing her. Explained that we cannot assist with a complaint against an individual, but referred her to the Fair Housing Center.
M. An employee sought a referral to file a complaint against an employer who had not paid out her tips. Directed her to the Wage and Hours Division of the Indiana Department of Labor.
N. A woman potentially experiencing homelessness or mental illness left a physical letter directed to the Human Rights Commission with a series of unclear demands as well as a voicemail directed to the Office of the Mayor. The City's Homelessness Response Coordinator reached out to connect her with resources.
O. A man claimed that he had been removed unfairly from a sober living program; reaching out to him to determine the structure of the program. If a group of individuals rather than an organization or business make decisions about membership, we are unable to investigate.

Publicity

A. The Human Rights Commission published its monthly newsletter, *Rights Stuff*.
B. Updated BMCHRC Facebook Page with relevant human rights stories and articles.
C. Awarded the annual Human Rights Award to Melanie Davis (individual) and Mother Hubbard's Cupboard (organization) at the City Council meeting on July 22, 2026.

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 meetings of the City's Digital Accessibility Workgroup and Accessibility Core Team.
E. Shermis and Vosmeier attended monthly meetings for the Nonprofit Alliance's Community Outreach Breakfast.

F. Shermis attended quarterly meetings for the Indiana Consortium of City and State Human Rights Agencies.
G. Shermis attended monthly meetings for ADA Indiana.
H. Shermis presented, and Vosmeier assisted at, an ADA training with the staff of Middle Way House on July 23, 2026.
I. Shermis and Vosmeier hosted with the CCA, and Baker and Henderson tabled at on behalf of the HRC, the ADA Anniversary Celebration on August 1, 2026.
J. Vosmeier attended the City of Bloomington's Deescalation training on August 20, 2026.
K. Vosmeier, Baker, Bensberg, and Young tabled at Bloomington PrideFest on August 22, 2026.
L. Vosmeier attended the City of Bloomington Volunteer Fair on September 5, 2026.
M. Shermis presented, and Vosmeier assisted at, an ADA training at the Monroe County Public Library's Staff Day on September 15, 2026.
N. Shermis, Vosmeier, and Jackson presented the work of the HRC to a cooperative homeschooling group on September 18, 2026.
O. Shermis attended a training on "Accessible Parking: Pushing Beyond Minimum Requirements" (September 3, 2026).

ADA and Accessibility

A. A man wanted to request an accommodation in the Monroe County court system. Referred to the County's ADA Coordinator.
B. A woman requested an advocate in court proceedings. Referred to the County's ADA coordinator.
C. A restaurant owner asked what he could say to a patron with a service animal. Told him the two legal questions ("Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?" and "What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?") he could ask.
D. A church requested information about affordable options for ASL interpreters. Referred to the IU Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences.
E. A man called after he was unable to get a golf cart at a Parks and Rec facility. Connected with Parks and Rec, who stated that golf carts were available on a first-come, first-serve basis.
F. A man reported that a new community area at his apartment complex was inaccessible due to pooling water on the concrete. A field review did not reveal any issues, and standing water in the area he described would not have prevented him from enjoying the rest of the space.
G. A man who will be having surgery needed a handrail installed in his apartment complex's stairwell for stability. The property manager refused the accommodation; the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana took up the case.
H. City staff requested verification that they could exclude a service animal from a City splash pad on the grounds that it was a sanitary issue. Confirmed that they could if the dog "fundamentally altered the environment" or caused sanitary problems, and that the individual could contact the ADA Coordinator with any questions.
I. A staff member with a local festival requested accessibility input on closing alleyways. Provided guidelines on the path of travel and an accessible checklist.

J. A woman was seeking a van with a wheelchair ramp. Connected her with the Mobility Aids Lending Library.
K. A woman with a disability reported a maintenance issue in her apartment that her property manager was not addressing. Directed her to submit a report to HAND.
L. A woman with a service animal reported that a future landlord had rejected her doctor's letter requesting the accommodation. Offered to look over the doctor's letter and confirm that it met the requirements.
M. A man reported that a landlord had asked his daughter to confirm whether she had a disability. Told him that this was an illegal question and referred him to the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana.
N. City Engineering received an accommodation request to be exempt from trimming overgrown vegetation. Suggested an interactive discussion to find an equitable solution and told them that an accommodation request would need to be accompanied by a medical provider's letter. Worked with the individual and connected her with a neighbor who could help. The individual ultimately decided to sell her home as she could no longer maintain it.
O. An individual requested information about unobstructed space around automatic door controls. Provided information.
P. A woman requested "Deaf Child" signage for her neighborhood. Engineering reported that they do not recommend such signage, as it has not been shown to change driver behavior over time.
Q. A new community center in Bloomington consulted on creating an accessible entrance. Worked with HAND and engineering to recommend a solution.
R. A caregiver sought advice on getting Medicaid reinstated for a relative with a disability. She is appealing; suggested speaking to Healthnet or her doctor's office for advice.
S. An official from Fishers, Indiana, asked specific questions about the AccessAbility decal program. Supplied those answers.
T. A HAND staff member consulted about resources for an individual whose disability made it difficult for him to prepare for a required inspection.
U. An individual confronted an IUPD officer who had parked in an accessible space. No enforcement capabilities over IU; referred to IUPD's internal reporting system and the IU Office of Civil Rights Compliance.
V. A woman described difficulties with using the bus station due to high use by the unhoused population. No ADA issues to address; directed her to Bloomington Transit and the Office of the Mayor.
W. A man in a wheelchair was moving to a first-floor apartment because the elevator in his complex was frequently broken. Asked if he could be reimbursed for the costs of accessibility improvements he had made to his upper-floor apartment. Suggested that he could ask his property manager and we could assist him in strengthening his request.
X. A woman reported accessibility issues at a local performance venue. Communicated with her and additionally connected her with the Arts Assistant Director at the City.
Y. An ADA Director at a state agency inquired about resources for white-cane training. Connected with a state representative for the National Federation of the Blind, who provided suggestions and an offer to help.

Z. A blind woman reported poor customer service by a taxi company. Contacted them to offer free ADA training.

AA. A man asked whether there were accessible voting machines in the county. The Elections Supervisor confirmed that they can accommodate voters who are blind, have Touch Writer accessible voting machines at every location, and have trained all their inspectors and leads on those machines for both early and Election Day voting.

BB. A City staff member inquired whether an ADA parking space was required if a business had no closest accessible path. Sent resources from the Great Lakes ADA Center.

CC. A woman reported that her apartment was not accessible, but decided she did not need assistance as she was moving to another, more accessible apartment.

DD. A woman complained that a restaurant was placing outdoor tables and chairs in a way that blocked the accessible path past on the sidewalk. Visited the restaurant to warn them of the need to keep the sidewalk clear, but have not yet seen the tables arranged in an inaccessible way.

EE. A woman whose son has a disability reported that there was no close accessible space at her apartment complex and that overgrown vegetation blocked the accessible path. Offered to meet and assist with an accommodation request; she did not follow up.

FF. An individual reported a comprehensive list of accessibility issues at their apartment complex. Connected with management, who has committed to addressing the issues.

GG. A man working in disability services spoke to a listing agent, who explained that she showed many homes with accessible features. Suggested he connect the listing agent with the Transportation, Mobility, and Housing Committee to talk about accessible features in local homes.