

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

DID YOU KNOW?

The city of Colorado Springs ranks 47th among the nation's 100 largest cities.

80% of the nation's 100 largest cities have a Human Relations Commission; Colorado Springs does not.

Colorado Springs is only one of three cities in Colorado with a population of 50,000 or more that does not have a Human Relations Commission.

CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

As of 2009, there were 414,658 people living in the city of Colorado Springs.

- White: 78.6%
- Hispanic/Latino: 14.1%
- Black/African American: 6.8%
- American Indian/Native Am: 0.9%
- Asian: 2.8%
- Native Hawaiian: 0.2%
- Other: 6.4%
- Two or more races: 4.3%

POVERTY STATISTICS

78,000 people or 19% of the city's population lives in poverty. 59% are Anglo-Americans. The remaining 41% are minorities.

"The Human Relations Commission will lead to a reduction in crime, greater access to transportation, employment, social services and education – all of these things help promote a more vibrant economy and stable workforce, that's what we need in Colorado Springs."

Charles Irwin, President of Old Colorado City Merchant's Association

**The Colorado Springs
Human Relations Commission**

**For More Information:
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PROMOTING PEOPLE
PROVIDING SOLUTIONS

COMMISSION HISTORY...

In 1968 the City of Colorado Springs was urged to develop a Human Relations Commission to address racial tension in the city. Initially, it was designed to lessen discrimination and prejudice against African Americans and Hispanic Americans in the community.

The Commission focused on equality in employment, housing, and education. It was also concerned with poverty, unemployment, public school retention, homelessness, drug & alcohol abuse, mental health, police/community relations and much more.

From 1971 to 1993 the Commission functioned as the city's education, advocacy, and mediation agency.

Despite originally being created to advocate for racial minorities, the commission also did a great deal of work for the population living in poverty, which is dominated by Anglo Americans.

In 1995 the group disbanded. But not before successfully helping to procure city grant funds, opening a day care center and creating an after school youth program in a low-income area of the city. It also tirelessly continued working to educate on discrimination issues and to promote unity and tolerance.

WHY DO WE NEED A HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION?

Despite the fact that the city has gone for 15 years without a Human Relations Commission, disenfranchised and underrepresented groups remain. A mechanism to promote, educate and advocate for such groups is still needed.

Such groups include:

- Minorities
- Military Personnel & Families
- The Homeless
- The Elderly
- The Poor
- Youth

The quality of life for all residents could be enhanced by re-establishing the HRC. The Commission would improve the community and protect its social well being by...

- Providing assistance, mediation & reconciliation for all residents
- Improving police/community relations
- Supporting youth programs
- Performing informed advocacy
- Promoting equality
- Working to close the achievement gap and improve graduation rates
- Support public transportation for the poor and disabled

THE PROPOSAL: REINSTATING THE HRC

The Colorado Springs Human Relations Commission will engage in conflict prevention and resolution, while promoting acceptance through educational programs.

This will be achieved through mediation and reconciliation activities, education and community outreach.

The HRC will not have regulatory authority or enforcement powers. Instead, it will make referrals to the Colorado Civil Rights Division.

QUICK FACTS:

- The nine member commission will be made up of citizen volunteers.
- City Council will appoint the commission members.
- Members will have staggered terms and appoint the Chair & Co-Chair of the Commission.
- Meetings will be monthly.
- Records will be kept by a secretary and made public.
- It will not require a budget.