Purpose
The Human Relations Advisory Board advises the City Council about racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, disabilities or other human relations issues affecting the City of Mesa and delivery of City services to Mesa residents, businesses, and visitors. The Board recommends policies to eliminate discrimination and prejudice and to promote mutual understanding and harmony. The Board serves as the public forum for citizen input on human relations issues. Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Lower City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street or other locations throughout the City. Members are appointed for staggered terms of three years and represent the City’s diverse population.

Human Relations Advisory Board Mission
Create an inclusive, respectful, and equitable community.

Human Relations Advisory Board Vision
The City of Mesa is a community that includes, respects, and is enriched by its diversity.

Human Relations Advisory Board Goals
#1 The Human Relations Advisory Board is recognized by the community as the place to go for dialogue and leadership on diversity-related issues.

#2 The Human Relations Advisory Board is aware, educated and responsive to human relations issues in the community.

#3 The Human Relations Advisory Board recommends actions to the City Council and city leadership to ensure that Mesa’s diverse populations have equal access to and equal treatment in receiving City services.
FY 2015/2017 HRAB Work Plan

The Human Relations Advisory Board's work plan includes standing activities that the Board carries out every year and new activities that further the mission and goals of the Board.

**Goal #1** The Human Relations Advisory Board is recognized by the community as the place to go for dialogue and leadership on diversity-related issues.

**Standing Activity:** Participate in the regional human relations commission meetings and regional events such as the annual Unity Walk and Pride Parade. (Lead: Full Board)

**Standing Activity:** Designate a liaison to participate in the planning of the annual Mesa MLK event and keep the Board informed of progress. (Lead: Cliff Moon)

**Standing Activity:** Monitor and provide updates regarding the Police Community Forums and keep the Board informed of the progress. (Lead: Colleen Byron).

**New Activity:** Monitor reporting and statistics of police activity in the community. (Lead: Colleen Byron)

**Goal #2** The Human Relations Advisory Board is aware, educated and responsive to human relations issues in the community.

**Standing Activity:** The Disabilities Action Team will raise community awareness about issues impacting people with disabilities, and evaluate the adequacy of services and programs for people with disabilities and the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008. (Lead: LuAnn Schmidt)

**Standing Activity:** Monitor transportation services for people with disabilities including reviewing a quarterly report and annual report on East Valley Dial-A-Ride (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

**Standing Activity:** Monitor the Mesa City Court protocol for diverting defendants who have mental health issues, veterans, or are homeless (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

**Carryover Activity** Create options for the best methods and topics to educate business and leadership on mental health and substance abuse issues. (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).
**Carryover Activity:** Provide input about design standards for adapting housing for people with disabilities. (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

**Carryover Activity:** Increase the presence of the Board and people with disabilities at the two Celebrate Mesa events as a first step to creating a community resource fair. (Lead: Lu Ann Schmidt and Full Board)

**New Activity #1:** Raise awareness and educate the public about dementia and Alzheimer's disease. (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

**New Activity #2:** Create a report on the findings for the need for and feasibility of creating an inpatient behavioral health facility in the East Valley and determine options for how to proceed based on the findings. (Lead: Full Board).

**Standing Activity:** Continue the Indie Lens Pop-Up! Series public education and civic engagement initiative featuring monthly screenings (between September and May) of films from the Emmy Award-winning PBS series Independent Lens. (Lead: Staff)

**Carryover Activity:** Expand the high school portion of the Indie Lens Pop-Up! Series to more than Dobson High School (Lead: Youth Diversity Education Team).

**Carryover Activity:** Work with the MLK Committee to organize a Youth Leadership Development conference (Lead: Youth Diversity Education Team).

**Carryover Activity:** Increase the number of speakers enrolled in the Speaker's Bureau and market the availability of the Speaker's Bureau as a community resource. (Lead: Cliff Moon/Full Board)

**Carryover Activity:** Plan a diversity education project (including the topic of bullying) with the Baha’i community, Anti-Defamation League, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Gay Lesbian Education Network. (Lead: Youth Diversity Education Team).

**Goal #3** The Human Relations Advisory Board recommends actions to the City Council and city leadership to ensure that Mesa’s diverse populations have equal access to and equal treatment in receiving City services.

**Carryover Activity:** Create and evaluate options and recommendations for the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report. (Lead: Inclusion and Diversity Report Action Team)
**Carryover Activity:** Identify and evaluate options for addressing the issues that impact the LGBT population as identified in the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report. (Lead: Inclusion and Diversity Report Action Team)

**Carryover Activity:** Identify and evaluate options for addressing the issues that impact Hispanic or Latino residents as identified in the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report. (Lead: Inclusion and Diversity Report Action Team)

**Diversity and Inclusion Report Action Team:** Colleen Byron, Denise Heap, LuAnn Schmidt

**Disabilities Action Team:** Cheryl Anderson, Colleen Byron, Denise Heap, LuAnn Schmidt, and Mark Tompert

**Youth Diversity Education Action Team:** Denise Heap, Frank Johnson, Nadia Khalighi, Robert Martinez, Cliff Moon, and Talmage Pearce
**Board Roles**

1. Raise the visibility of the Human Relations Advisory Board to become the "go to" body for the community.

2. Identify what is happening in the community regarding human relations through forums and outreach.

3. Educate ourselves, the City Council, and the community about human relations issues in Mesa.

4. Recommend action to the City Council when issues identified in the community require action.

**Ways Board Members Can Carry Out Their Roles**

- Bring contacts for speakers and subject matter experts on issues explored by the Board.
- Regularly attend meetings prepared to participate in the meeting. Need a quorum.
- Participate in major diversity events (i.e. MLK, Unity Walk, Pride Parade, forums etc.)
- Ask people what they think – taking the pulse of the community.
- Tell people about your work on the human relations advisory committee. Raise the visibility of the Board.
- Help with the research. Bring information and sources to the Board.
- Work on a subcommittee or ad hoc committee and take assignments.
- Read, study and learn. Listen and seek to understand multiple sides to an issue.
- Share information with each other and the Council.
- Build coalitions – reach out to other groups and individuals.
- Network with other jurisdictions. Find out what other communities are doing.
- Bring the community together for dialogue. (Need clarity on the ordinance that created the HRAB.)
- Must follow the open meeting law (i.e. Do not hit 'reply all' on Board emails, cannot poll individual Board members outside of meetings, meetings must be posted in advance, etc.).
- Cannot speak to the media on behalf of the Board unless the Board has adopted an official position on an issue.
**Board Process**

Process: Board goes out into the community ---- Document what the Board has learned (either as general education or specific issues) ---- Present to the City Council with the Board presenting.

**Advisory Board Reporting Relationship**

Mesa City Council

Mesa City Manager

Office of Diversity - staff liaison to Board

Mesa Human Relations Advisory Board reports to City Council

**Is This A Human Relations Board Issue?**

- How does the issue affect Mesa City government and the delivery of city services?
- Does the Board's involvement work toward eliminating discrimination and prejudice?
- Does the Board's involvement promote mutual understanding and harmony?
Human Relations Advisory Board's Accomplishments 2014-2015

• Completed and forwarded to the City Council *Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Diversity and Inclusion Report* with twenty-two recommendations.

• The Mesa City Council recommended three of the action items included in the report:
  • Braille embosser, which has been installed at the Main Library
  • Anti-discrimination ordinance (has not been implemented yet)
  • Gender identity transition policy (has not been implemented yet)

• The HRAB Chair spoke before the Mesa City Council in support of the three action items adopted by the City Council.

• The Board participated in community events such as the Unity Walk, MLK events, and Phoenix Pride Parade. Last year, there were only a few representatives from Mesa. This year, there was a Mesa Fire truck filled with people. The crowd and the parade organizers were cheering on Mesa.

• HRAB members participated in the Regional Human Relations Commission meeting in Scottsdale.

• The Disabilities Action Team held a Town Hall meeting to educate the community on mental health and substance abuse issues.

• The Disabilities Action Team completed and distributed an educational pamphlet on service animals.

• Hosted the Community Cinema series. Had six events at the Mesa Arts Center, as well as several events at Dobson High School and Mesa Public Library.

• Members attended the Mayor's Diversity luncheon.

• The HRAB Chair served on the planning committee for the fair housing conference.

• The HRAB sent a letter of support for changes to the City's Housing Plan.

• The HRAB Chair sat on the General Plan committee. Diversity was added as part of the General Plan and was approved/adopted by the general electorate.

• In conjunction with Care Partnership, offered a youth personal finance education seminar. Twenty youth attended.
• The Veteran’s Court was established in January. The HRAB heard a presentation for it and supported it. The Court has streamlined the process. The same is needed for mental illness.

• The One Mesa Pledge was adopted by the Board.

• The HRAB heard presentations on the need for an East Valley Psychiatric Recovery Center.

**Assessment of the Human Relations Advisory Board**

**HRAB Strengths:**

• The members have a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds.

• The members are passionate about the issues.

• Members take responsibility for working on issues they care about.

• Leadership – the chair has done a great job of keeping the Board engaged and progressing on issues.

• The members work to broaden awareness about the issues they care about.

• The Board has established credibility with the City Council by using a research methodology to address issues.

• The members actively listen to each other.

• The members have a global perspective of what constitutes diversity.

• The members can handle dissension. They can listen and respect each other and can disagree. They find a way that they can live with each other.

• The Board carries out its role primarily by:
  - Attending meetings of other groups;
  - Inviting people to the Board;
  - Talking to people;
  - Convening forums;
  - Working with a public face and a private face;
  - Bringing people together, as well as connecting people and groups to address issues.

**HRAB Limitations:**

• Time – so much to do and not enough time.
• Not getting the full participation (attendance) at Board meetings. This changes the group dynamics. We have more creative ideas and more brain power when we have more participation.

• Contradicting points of view are not always expressed at Board meetings.