Mesa Human Relations Advisory Board

2017/2019 Strategic Plan

Adopted: December 6, 2017
Purpose

The Human Relations Advisory Board advises the City Council about racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, disability 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 a public forum for citizen input on human relations issues.

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

The City of Mesa Human Relations Advisory Board actively works to encourage, develop, promote, and strengthen respect for human rights and cultural diversity.

Goal #1 - Research

Gather information from the community through outreach and research to identify areas of need within the community.

Goal #2 - Educate and Act

Engage, educate, and outreach to the community at large through a variety of events and activities focusing on topics of diversity and to increase visibility of the Human Relations Advisory Board.

Goal #3 - Measure

Make all goals of the Board data driven and measurable in order to make accurate recommendations to Mayor and Council.
FY 2017/2019 HRAB Work Plan

Goal #1: Research

Carry Over Items:
1. Participate in Regional Human Relations Commission Meetings.
2. Monitoring:
   a. Currently established police community forums and initiatives.
   b. Reporting and statistics of police activity in the community.
   c. Transportation services for people with disabilities including Dial-A-Ride and Ride Share programs.
   d. Mesa City Court protocol for diverting defendants who are veterans, have mental health issues, or are homeless.

New Items:
1. Meet with various educators and educational institutions to assess strides being made to address diversity issues within school systems.
2. Order study done, potentially with CDBG funds, focusing on finding housing discrimination within the LBGTQ community.
3. Meet with LGBTQ community members to build and sustain relationships in order to foster future partnerships.

Goal #2: Educate and Act

Carry Over Items:
1. Attend regional and local events such as the Annual Unity Walk, Pride Parade, Celebrate Mesa, Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Events, Veterans Day activities, etc to share research and resources gathered.
2. Create a recommendation to Mayor and Council on providing City services to individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues.
3. Continue planning Annual Youth Peace Building Summits and other youth related education activities.

New Items:
1. Hold community forums in conjunction with Mesa Police Department to educate the community about 21st Century Policing with a focus on low to moderate income areas.
2. Actively recruit diverse community members to join advisory boards.
3. Enhance the Human Relations Advisory Board website to provide more information to the public and to highlight activity within the community.
4. Fairs and Events:
   a. Police and Community Coming Together Fair
   b. Women’s Empowerment Event

Goal #3: Measure

New Items:
1. Collect Board goal activity data and submit annual report to Mayor and Council.
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

- Seek out subject matter experts on issues explored by the Board.
- Regularly attend Board meetings
- Participate in major City events.
- Speak about the Board to raise visibility.
- Help with the research.
- Agree to take on work for the Board.
- Read, study and learn.
- Share information with each other and the Council.
- Build community coalitions.
- Network with other jurisdictions.
- Bring the community together for dialogues.

Is This a Human Relations Advisory Board Issue?

- How does the issue affect Mesa City government and the delivery of City services?
- Does the Board’s involvement in the community work toward promoting inclusion?
- Can the Board feasibly address the issue either through recommendation or action?
- Is it within the purview of the purpose, mission, and vision of the Board?
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
Human Relations Advisory Board's Accomplishments for 2015-2017 Strategic Plan

- Members of the Board were represented at annual events such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations (Banquet, Parade, and Festival), Annual Regional Unity Walk, Celebrate Mesa, and Phoenix Pride Parade.

- A member of the HRAB served as a member of the MLK Jr. Celebration Committee.

- Members of the Board researched and reported on issues and topics related to 21st Century Policing and remained apprised of the activities of various Police Community Forums.

- Members of the Board worked with MPD to obtain arrest data broken down by race to identify potential areas of improvement and learning opportunities for the police force.

- Members of the Board met with the City of Mesa Housing and Community Development Director along with the Zoning and Civil Hearing Administrator to discuss the requirement for adapting housing for needs of individuals with disabilities.

- The Disabilities Action Team received regular updates from the Transit Service Director on the East Valley Dial-A-Ride and Ride Share programs.

- The Disabilities Action Team received regular updates from the City of Mesa Court Administrator and Senior Program Assistant on the Veterans Court program. They also received additional information on upcoming measures being taken to divert defendants who are veterans and are stuck in the cycle of the court system due to homelessness, substance abuse issues, or mental health issues.

- Members of the Disabilities Action Team attended a session of Veterans Court at the Mesa Municipal Court and gained firsthand knowledge of how the program is working within the community.

- The Board partnered with Marc Community Resources to publicly present information regarding hiring practices of individual with mental health and substance abuse issues. This effectively fulfilled the second leg of a three-part plan.

- The Board distributed flyers related to an event held at Marc Community Resources raising awareness and educating the public on Alzheimer’s Disease and dementia.

- The Board did significant research on the need and feasibility of an in-patient facility in the East Valley. In October of 2015 the Board heard from members of Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care that there had been significant expansions of two psychiatric intake
facilities in the East Valley. The Board was excited about the developments and agreed to revisit this development in the future.

- The Youth Diversity Education Team host its first two Annual Youth Peace Building Summit. The second year Summit saw significant growth and there are plans to continue the Summits in the future.

- The Youth Diversity Education Team held two children’s reading activities that focused on diversity topics at Mesa Care Partnership. There are plans to hold more reading activities and possibly enhance the program.

### Assessment of the Human Relations Advisory Board

**HRAB Strengths:**
- There are individuals/organizations that wish to promote understanding of differences within the community.
- Energetic and active members of the Board.
- Changing demographics demand that we address diversity.
- Support from Mayor and City Council on diversity.
- Optimism and moving forward to help the ever-changing topic of diversity.
- Increasing awareness of the importance of diversity in the world today.
- Data driven metrics expertise.
- Unity, voice, passion, diversity

**HRAB Weaknesses**
- Public unity
- Board cohesion
- Public acceptance
- Public uniformed
- Lack of passion
- Lack of empathy
- Fear of not being taken seriously when speaking to diversity issues.
- Not truly understanding the implications of diversity.
- Embracing assimilation. Being “normal” like the majority of people.
- Lack of publicity and outreach.
- Multiple commitments of all Board members- limited participation.
- Lack of resources, particularly monetary resources.
- Difficulty finding focus or evaluating priorities.
HRAB Threats:

- Status quo imposed by the majority.
- Political divisiveness
- Implicit biases
- Fear of change and the need to give up power.
- Fear of those who are oppressed.
- The “privileged” not willing to acknowledge their access to unearned benefits.
- Strong beliefs in the concept of “meritocracy.”
- We need Native American participation.
- Mistrust of police and government.
- Underrepresentation
- Censorship/assault on free speech and the press.
- Lack of respect for the public.
- Conflict/communication among diverse populations. Trouble communicating with different people.
- Stereotyping
- Extremists
- Bias
- Fear
- Lack of education
- Bullying of youth and adults
- Racism
- Bigotry
- Short sighted vision of the world
- Ego in government
- Lack of knowledge

HRAB Opportunities:

- Community connections through networking, visibility, and partnerships
- Unity
- Inclusion- Race, class, education, orientation
- Change your perception and views
- Youth opportunities
- Opportunities for activities
- Working with schools in educating students, educators, and indirectly, the families of students on diversity related issues.
- Working with the police department in creating “community policing” that addresses diversity of the community.
- Educate business community on the benefits of a diverse workforce and customer base.
- Engaging the faith based community
- Increase visibility to the City Council and community businesses.