

# City of Grand Haven – Human Relations Commission

## Policy and Procedures

---

### Alleged Discrimination Complaint Process

#### I. PURPOSE

To establish a formal procedure to receive, document, and investigate all alleged discrimination complaints.

#### II POLICY

The Grand Haven Code of Ordinances states in Chapter 20-3 (5) that the Human Relations Commission will "Receive, investigate, and evaluate complaints of discrimination against any person, groups of persons, organization or corporation; whether placed by private persons, associations, or corporations. The Commission shall seek to correct practices of discrimination through negotiation and education. Problems which the Commission is unable to solve shall be referred to that agency or organization which the committee (Commission) deems appropriate, or to the City Council or Michigan Civil Rights Commission.

#### III. CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

- A. All citizen complaints pertaining to alleged discrimination shall be documented and investigated by the Commission. A citizen who has a complaint expects action. All complaints shall be accepted in a courteous, understanding, and professional manner.
1. Complaints must be given in writing within 180 days of the incident and be addressed to the Chairperson of the Human Relations Commission, 519 Washington Street, Grand Haven, MI 49417.
  2. Anonymous complaints, or complaints from citizens who wish their names to be held in confidence, shall be accepted for investigation. Citizens offering anonymous complaints should be advised that our ability to investigate the complaint may be limited by their anonymity.
- B. Any member of the Commission or any staff member of the City Clerk's Office who is approached for such assistance shall accept citizen complaints.
1. The Commission Member or any staff member of the City Clerk's Office shall document the complaints in writing, using the approved alleged discrimination complaint form.

# City of Grand Haven – Human Relations Commission

## Policy and Procedures

---

2. The Commission Member or any staff member of the City Clerk's Office will provide the citizen with the alleged discrimination complaint form. She/he will explain the method for completing the form and respond to any questions the citizen may have in completing the form.
    - a. In every case, where a citizen indicates physical inability or lack of minimum writing skills to complete the alleged discrimination complaint form, the member shall prepare it for the citizen.
    - b. Should the citizen refuse to submit the complaint on the citizen complaint form and/or sign it, or if the citizen wishes to remain anonymous, the Commission Member or any staff member of the City Clerk's Office shall note such refusal or anonymity on the form and submit it to the Chairperson.
    - c. Citizens who are unable to speak and/or write in the English language should be encouraged to submit the alleged discrimination complaint forms in their native language.
      1. Complainants may also request by telephone to have a form mailed to them for completion.
    - d. The complainant(s) may attach to the form any additional documents or other information to support their complaint
  4. The completed form shall be forwarded to the Chairperson.
- C. The Chairperson will record the complaint and make copies of the complaint to be distributed to all Commission Members.
1. All completed alleged discrimination complaint forms will be given a sequential investigation control number, preceded by the year, i.e., 2000-01, 2000-02, etc.
  2. The Chairperson or designee will notify in writing, along with a copy of the procedures, the party or parties against whom the complaint is made and offer an opportunity to write the Commission and/or the complainant regarding the matter.

**GHHRC  
Policy and Procedures**

---

3. The Commission will review the complaint and the Chairperson will assign a member or members of the Commission to investigate the complaint when necessary or:
  - a. The Chairperson may also suggest at any time that the complainant(s) and the respondent(s) meet informally to discuss the matter and:
    1. If requested by either party or parties, the Chairperson may offer to arrange for no more than two Commission Members to meet with them and discuss the issues in the complaint in an attempt to come to some type of mutual resolution.

**D. Contact with Complainant**

1. If a formal investigation is conducted, the Chairperson shall contact the complainant within five (5) working days and advise them that the matter is under investigation.
2. The Chairperson shall periodically contact the complainant and advise them of the status of the complaint.
3. At the completion of the investigation, the Chairperson, or designee, shall advise the complainant in writing of the findings of the investigation and any recommendations or referrals.
  - a. All Commission Members will receive a copy of the findings and recommendations given to both parties.

**IV. COMMISSION MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- B. Each member of this commission and any staff member of the City Clerk's Office is responsible for accepting and documenting alleged discrimination complaints following the procedures prescribed herein. All complaints shall be accepted in a courteous, understanding, and professional manner.
- B. After receiving a complaint, members will forward the complaint, without delay, to the Chairperson.

**V. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**GHRC  
Policy and Procedures**

---

- A. In the event that the Commission Member receiving a alleged discrimination complaint considers it to be of a very serious nature or an emergency circumstance, the Chairperson shall be notified immediately.

**VI. DISPOSITION OF COMPLAINT**

- A. At the completion of the investigation, all information obtained will be turned over to the Chairperson.
- B. Copies of the information and findings will then be distributed to all Commission Members.
- C. At the next scheduled Commission meeting, the members shall seek to correct practices of discrimination through negotiation and education.
- D. Problems which the commission is unable to solve shall be referred to that agency or organization which the commission deems appropriate, or to the City Council or Michigan Civil Rights Commission.

**VII. RECORD KEEPING RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. File Maintenance
  - 1. All files shall be maintained by the Chairperson.
  - 2. The Chairperson, or designee, shall have the following responsibilities:
    - a. Maintain a complaint log.
    - b. Maintain a central file for complaints in a secured area.

\* \* \* \*