



Strategic Plan

2017-2022

Prepared: January 13, 2017



MISSION

To eliminate and prevent discrimination for all Alaskans

VISION

An Alaska free of discrimination

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Integrity in all we do

An organization built on mutual respect

Data-driven and accountable

Promoters of equality for all Alaskans

Meaningful application of resources

Continuous improvement

Respectful representation of the constituents we serve

Enforcement as a tool, not a goal

PURPOSE STATEMENT

“Discrimination not only threatens the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of the state, but also menaces the institutions of the state and threatens peace, order, health, safety, and general welfare of the state and its inhabitants. Therefore, it is the policy of the state and the purpose of this chapter to eliminate and prevent discrimination. It is also the policy of the state to encourage and enable physically and mentally disabled persons to participate fully in the social and economic life of the state and to engage in remunerative employment.” AS 18.80



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alaska State Commission for Human Rights was established in 1963 by Statute (A.S. 18.80.10 et seq.) with the overarching goal of eliminating and preventing discrimination in the State of Alaska. The purpose was twofold, to be a resource for public education on discrimination and to be an enforcement agency.

As the years progressed, although the education component was never abandoned, it became less and less prevalent and enforcement took a major role. A recent study (2016) conducted by EEOC shows that prevention training can result in fewer complaints of discrimination if the training transitions from the current focus on employer liability to a more inclusive, culturally based training that includes workplace civility and bystander intervention training. The commitment to a harassment free workplace must start at the top and be part of a company's culture. ASCHR has the opportunity to become a major player in restructuring training to include effective prevention training. It must be a critical part of our mission to educate the public on the law, what constitutes discrimination and how to prevent it in the workplace, in places of public accommodation, in housing, in financial institutions and in government services.

Conducting this outreach throughout the State will greatly enhance our effectiveness and promote the achievement of our mission. Business owners and managers, state agencies and landlords need to see us as a resource to help them address internal factors that contribute to incidents of discrimination. Too often, we are viewed as the enemy because they see us or hear from us only after a complaint has been filed.

We also should be at the leading edge of analyzing our statute and making recommendations for change that will help us better serve all Alaskans. As social change takes place and the business climate follows suit, we must ensure our laws and regulations under AS 18.80 are addressing the needs and concerns of our constituents, the people of Alaska.

Internally, ASCHR has an opportunity to improve our efficiency by implementing and applying technology, by monitoring workflow throughout each step of the process to ensure timely resolution of all cases and by providing opportunities for professional development for our employees.

In the past five years we have taken 8,819 inquiries and processed 2,122 complaints. These statistics are similar to those of other state and federal human rights agencies. Factors contributing to this figure include allegations, even when



founded in truth, that are difficult to corroborate, employers that settle with the complainant prior to a finding of discrimination, and our own successful mediation program which resolves cases prior to the investigation process by providing an opportunity for complainant and respondent to communicate and understand each other's viewpoints.

Our mediation program has an extremely high success rate with 64% of mediated cases settled prior to investigation. In 2016 we offered mediation in 200 cases, there were 42 mediations held with 26 successful closures. Our strategic plan will address ways to increase participation in this program. Among other strategies, our most important priority will be to divert an investigator position to mediation and outreach. This individual will be tasked with increasing mediation cases by a minimum of 10% annually as well as conducting outreach and training.

Our final, and perhaps biggest challenge, will be to deal with our counter-cyclical nature. When the economy is down, complaints go up. Proper allocation of resources will be essential to maintaining our agency as an effective deterrent to discrimination in a State that is rapidly changing and hosts the most diverse school district in the nation.

In this era of increased fiscal responsibility, we must aspire to self-sufficiency and innovate in order to increase our scope throughout Alaska. We will seek out grants, look for potential revenue streams and seek partnerships that add an element of sustainable self-sufficiency. We are dedicated to providing excellent service despite a declining budget forecast, and have identified efficiencies and opportunities – in technology, case processing, and community partnerships – that will allow us to move closer to our vision.



STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1: Create an environment where people feel appreciated and valued.

- 🌐 Develop an employee succession plan.
- 🌐 Create opportunities for advancement.
- 🌐 Provide training & professional development opportunities.
- 🌐 Increase Staff/Commission Interaction.
- 🌐 Improve inter-agency and intra-agency communication.
- 🌐 Enhance teambuilding opportunities.

Goal 2: Become a respected and welcomed resource to the community through public education, information and training.

- 🌐 Conduct outreach via presentations to professional and public groups.
- 🌐 Develop and implement workers' resource outreach.
- 🌐 Create a more interactive website and update regularly.
- 🌐 Advocate for important public policy issues (LGBTQ, immigrant community, etc.).
- 🌐 Create a training resource center.

Goal 3: Continue and expand our role as public advocates for the elimination and prevention of discrimination

- 🌐 Forge partnerships with other enforcement agencies for referrals beyond our jurisdiction.
- 🌐 Cultivate partnerships with like agencies for outreach, education, expense relief on training (EEOC/AERC).
- 🌐 Create and maintain involvement with Human Rights specific agencies on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Goal 4: Conduct timely investigations that strengthen the enforcement of Alaska anti-discrimination laws under AS 18.80

- 🌐 Implement Process Mapping as a tool for improvement.
- 🌐 Develop timelines for case types.
- 🌐 Eliminate backlog and maintain cases within designated timeframes.
- 🌐 Upgrade database to case management system with robust reporting capabilities able to provide data for thoughtful decision-making.