

*City of Morgantown*

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

*Annual Report  
for  
Program Year 2014*



**December 31, 2014**

*Commission Address:*

**Morgantown City Hall  
389 Spruce Street  
Morgantown, WV 26505**

## Human Rights Commission Annual Report for 2014 and Priorities for 2015

During calendar year 2014, the City of Morgantown Human Rights Commission met on the third Thursday of each month except during the months of April and June. In addition, the HRC made formal presentations at City Council meetings on February 4 and October 30, attended two Neighborhood Coordinating Council meetings as well as six neighborhood association meetings. On November 15, 2014, representatives traveled to Charleston to attend the annual State conference and awards presentation session of Fairness WV.

The Commissions work has been augmented in 2014 by the significant contributions of volunteers. Directing the Human Rights Need Survey for the Commission has been Bob Jones, a former WVU faculty member. Jones provided significant contributions in the design and redesign of the survey, supervision of data, coordinating the input and participation of Commissioners and working with a helpful City staff publicist, Susan Sullivan.

Also assisting with the survey data has been Lynn Castro, a former Extension Service employee and provider of volunteer services to local organizations.

The final survey report was prepared by Donna L. Spencer, PhD, a native Morgantowner and a senior researcher at the University of Minnesota. Copies of the report with a slide presentation were presented to the Morgantown City Council. City Council formally received the report as a resource for decision-making and authorized it for distribution.

### The specific accomplishments of the Commission in relation to the priorities established for 2014 have been...

1. Preparing a resolution in support of a bill in the State Legislature for the passage of an Employment and Housing Non-Discrimination Act and a resolution in support of Equality in Marriage. Both resolution received a 6-0 endorsement of the Morgantown City Council and were referred on to members of the Monongalia County State Legislative Delegation.
2. Implementing a six months Human Rights Need Survey completed by 657 City residents and preparing a report on the survey. This report was presented to the City Council on October 30, 2014.
3. Making preparations for the development of an inclusive City plan by using the data gathered in the Human Rights Need Survey, collaborating with representatives of local organizations and the general public, and researching pertinent best-practice information.
4. Initiating the redrafting of the City of Morgantown Affirmative Action Plan and related documents by establishing a Committee on Representation, collaborating

- with City officials and the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and researching best-practice information from other communities.
5. Gathering information to increase public awareness on Fair Housing and Universal Design standards.
  6. Making the decision to redraft Commission bylaws as internal operating procedures in order to utilize the document as an enhanced resource on Commission procedures. The Internal Operating Procedures were adopted by the Commission on December 18, 2014 after having been drafted for preliminary approval in March of 2013.
  7. Partnering with West Virginia University Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to establish an annual WVU Community Human Rights Film Festival. The plan has since received an initial endowment of \$25,000 and is schedule to begin during 2015.
  8. Advocating with the City Office of Publications Management to achieve substantive progress toward upgrading the City of Morgantown web site to be in compliance with Section 508 federal regulations to improve the site's usefulness for persons with disabilities as well as the general public.
  9. Implementing a calendar for monthly HRC operations throughout the year.
  10. Developing a Human Rights Awareness Calendar and posting the calendar on the City website.
  11. Working in collaboration with 27 partnering community organization in order to generate access to diverse participants in the need survey process and to create a foundation for sustaining the relationships for future planning, education and advocacy.
  12. Receiving the annual Ian Gibson Smith Award from Fairness West Virginia in recognition of advocacy on behalf of LGBT persons in the Morgantown area and throughout the State of West Virginia.

Commission Priorities adopted for 2015 include the following:

1. Organize and conduct a town meeting on human rights and inclusivity for the purpose of developing goals, objectives, and action plans for addressing priority human rights needs as identified by the 2014 Human Rights Need Survey.
2. Prepare a three year plan for making progress toward building an inclusive city.
3. Establish LGBT liaisons with job descriptions for the City Manager's Office and Police Department.

4. Establish a 24/7 human rights telephone information, referral, and message system at the City Hall.
5. Establish criteria, nomination and presentation procedures for a Human Rights Day Award for honoring annually City organizations that make outstanding contributions toward protecting human rights during the year.
6. Continue work toward preparing a plan that improves the City of Morgantown affirmative action, equal opportunity, and diversity representation in the volunteer services, staffing, and outsourcing for services, commodities and products.
7. Support the development and implementation of the first annual WVU Community Human Rights Film Festival
8. Research options for increasing youth awareness of human rights history and develop a plan for implementing a best option(s) in coordination with the Board of Education.
9. Complete the annual Municipal Equality Index managed by Human Rights Campaign for the Morgantown City Council.
10. Develop a resolution for City Council on the importance of affordable and accessible housing to promote increased awareness by City departments and the general public of local needs and the importance of Fair Housing, ADA, and universal design accessibility standards.
11. Coordinate with the Municipal Green Team in expressing public concern for the rights of Mother Earth and in identifying shared concerns of sustainability for the City.
12. Meet with the Neighborhood Coordinating Council and each neighborhood association to provide updates on HRC progress no less than once during the year.
13. Assist the City Council by advising on emerging issues and by making written reports to the Council no less than annually.
14. Make diverse presentations on the Human Rights Commission to increase both local and state awareness of the work of the HRC and to reach out to better understand emerging issues and public concerns.
15. Support human rights-related City priorities with the state and federal legislative representatives.

Commission Membership for 2015:

Jan Derry, Chair	Dave Bott – Administration Representative
Mike Fike, City Councilor	Tim Hairston – Liaison w/ State HRC
Brian Jara	Bob Jones – Research Consultant
Anne Marie Lofaso	Lynn Castro – Research Assistant
Anne Marlene Robinson-Savino, V. Chair	Donna L. Spencer – Research Analyst
Don Spencer, Secretary	
Fran Whitman	