

OFFICE OF EQUITY & HUMAN RIGHTS WORK PLAN
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, **PRINT** YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

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Submitted by the Urban League of Portland
July 19, 2012

Council Members, my name is Katie Sawicki, I am a Policy Associate at the Urban League of Portland, and we are here today to congratulate the Office of Equity and Human Rights in its release of a One Year Work Plan.

So much has happened over the past year to advance equity and racial equity in Portland. The Portland Plan was finalized and released, outlining the critical first steps of an equity agenda; the Office of Equity and Human Rights was advocated for and established; and the Partnership for Racial Equity, a group of community and city government equity advocates, is in the final stages of releasing a Racial Equity Strategy Guide. We have started the work and we want to congratulate Dante James and the Office for doing the same with energy and a collaborative spirit.

On both a large and small- scale, the city of Portland is beginning to ask the question: How do we improve employment, education, housing, and health outcomes for the entire community? This has led to more questions about how we best develop strategies to change daily practice in city operations to achieve those outcomes. The Urban League believes that the mammoth task of organizing, refining and replicating existing equity work in the city, and building new and effective models is the main challenge ahead. It's an exciting challenge worthy of Portland's innovative spirit and necessary to reach the Portland Plan's equity and racial equity goals. We need a way to ensure progress on all fronts, and begin developing a culture of equitable practice and outcomes including Training, Technical Assistance as well as equity in Hiring, Contracting, Budget Expenditures, etc.

When the community came together to advocate for the creation of the Office, we did so with the desire to see an equity framework formed that would help lead the city's work and ultimately unite us around a common vision of *how* to remove the systemic barriers that lead to inequitable services and operations. While everyone from the Bureau and City Council leadership to individual city staff has a role to play in putting equity into practice, OEHR is shepherding the process.

The work plan outlines many important first steps of a city-wide equity initiative. Specifically, we are pleased with the focus on building staff capacity and the engagement of both Bureau leadership as well as community partners in the early stages of the Office's work. We encourage the Office to use its resources in the community as it moves forward with the plan. We also hope to see some additional definition and communication for all city staff as to what our city's equity strategy entails. In this first year, the Urban League hopes to see the Office outline and define the many of areas of work- both internal and external- in which equity belongs and use this plan as a roadmap to get there.