

City of Bangor, Maine

Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights

Annual Report, 2023

Established in October 2020 by the City Council, the committee has demonstrated significant progress in advancing the city's commitment to inclusion, equity, diversity, and belonging. The Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights (ACREIHR) consists of eight appointed voting members and four non-voting members and is comprised of city leaders, advocates, allies, and students, embodying a diverse range of perspectives and experiences.

The committee's mission is to cultivate a shared culture that embraces differences in age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, sexual identity, ability, language, family circumstances, and cultural backgrounds.

Accomplishments for the year include impressive efforts to formalize operations and participate with City partners and collaborators to drive change. This includes: a formal budget line being added to the City Manager's finances to support ACREIHR events and goals; the formation of subcommittees for focused efforts and accomplishments; a formalized process for agenda development and events, including a calendar of cultural and religious significant days for the city to ascribe to; and leadership development.

In fall 2023, the committee formalized four subcommittees based on City Council and City Administrators' recommended focus areas. These subcommittees, namely Accessibility, Community Events and Education, Human Resources, and Housing, are dedicated to addressing key issues. Another achievement is the improved process of identifying events and areas for member participation, facilitated by a well-defined calendar. This calendar prevents conflicts with City meetings, ensuring maximum community engagement. The committee also takes pride in its role in leadership development, with three former members, including the first openly neurodivergent chair, now serving on the City Council.

The Committee is also proud of the shared initiatives and contributions made through several collaborations in 2023 to advance City goals and outcomes. These include ACREIHR's participation in:

- Bangor's Comprehensive Plan review
- The City's Public Health Assessment
- Website updates and changes to the RFP review
- City Hall renovation feedback and recommendations
- Housing Action Plan, including a dedicated webpage for progress and review of new buildings by Penquis
- Community Presence: tabling at Pride and active participation in city events
- City Council Engagement: members presented on relevant issues

The ACREIHR will continue to focus on partnerships and collaborations which advance DEIB in the city. This includes the committee's work with the Bangor School Department DEIB Committee, including shared meetings, regular updates, and connections between members of both committees for a unified community approach. ACREIHR will continue its commitment to an increased community presence, striving for greater visibility in the Bangor region to ensure community awareness of our work and commitment. Lastly, the committee will continue to focus efforts on maintaining a strategic balance between proactively addressing city needs and providing formal support to the City Council.

The committee will continue to structure its meetings and agendas around focused efforts on Education, Ordinances, and Policy, as outlined in the charter.

In conclusion, the Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights remains dedicated to effecting positive change in Bangor. Looking forward, our commitment to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and diverse community remains unwavering.