



International Association of
Official Human Rights Agencies

ANNUAL CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA 2026

From Statute to Street: CIVIL RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, *and the RULE OF LAW*

📅 August 16-20, 2026

📍 Westin New Orleans | New Orleans, LA

📅 **SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2026**

12:00pm - 2:00pm

▶ **IAOHRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING** | Cotton Room

4:00pm - 6:00pm

▶ **CONFERENCE REGISTRATION** | Living Wall

6:00pm - 7:30pm

▶ **OPENING WELCOME & RECEPTION** | Grand Ballroom 1

Dr. Alisa Warren, IAOHRA President

Executive Director, South Carolina Commission on Human Rights

▶ **FIRESIDE CHAT: VOICES OF NEW ORLEANS**

Speakers:

Cynthia Butler-McIntyre

Renowned educational consultant, education advocate and served as the 24th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Rodney C. Braxton, Esq.

Owner, Managing Partner of Southern Strategy Group, LLC

Suchitra Satpathi

Owner, Managing Partner of Southern Strategy Group, LLC



2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2026

7:30am - 5:00pm	► CONFERENCE REGISTRATION Living Wall
7:00am - 8:00am	► BREAKFAST (OWN YOUR OWN)
8:00am - 9:00am	► OPENING CEREMONY Grand Ballroom 1 Dr. Alisa Warren, IAOHRA President Commissioner, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission Dr. Leah Raby, Executive Director Louisiana Human Rights Commission (Local Host) Honorable Helena Moreno, Mayor of New Orleans (Invited) ► CONFERENCE OVERVIEW Diane Clements-Boyd, Executive Director, Evansville-Vanderburgh County Human Relations Commission IAOHRA Conference Planning Committee Chairperson
9:00am - 10:15am	► OPENING PLENARY Grand Ballroom 1 Keynote Speaker: Marc H. Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League “Understanding the Moment”



2026 IAOhRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA

10:30am - 11:45am

► PLENARY SESSION II | Grand Ballroom 1

International Human Rights Framework

Presenters:

Desirée Cormier Smith

Co-Founder and Co-President | The Alliance for Diplomacy
and Justice Senior Fellow | Harvard Kennedy School Carr-Ryan Center for Human Rights
Fellow | Howard University Bunche Center Global Futures Collaborative

Robin Toma

Executive Director, Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission

12:00pm - 1:15pm

► PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON | Grand Ballroom 2

Dr. Alisa Warren, IAOhRA President (Presiding)

Keynote Speaker:

Kristen Clarke, General Counsel, NAACP

Former Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S.
Department of Justice (2021-2024)

1:30pm - 2:45pm

► REGIONAL MEETINGS

Atlantic Region, Vacant, Regional Representative | **Salon Room**

Midwest Region, **Angela Phelps White**, Regional Representative | **River Room**

Southern Region, **Dr. Love Jones**, Regional Representative | **Terrace Room**

Western Region, Vacant, Regional Representative | **Imperial Room**

3:00pm - 4:30pm

► PLENARY SESSION III | Grand Ballroom 1

Fair Housing Forward

Keynote Speaker: Colette Massengile

Senior Policy Representative, Fair Housing Policy
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®



2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA

 **TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2026**

7:30am -8:30am

► **BREAKFAST ON YOUR OWN**

9:00am - 11:30am

► **IAOHRA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING | TERRACE ROOM**
Resolutions, Elections, and Other Organizational Actions

12:00pm - 5:00pm

► **HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE TOUR - TBA**





2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA

 **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2026**

8:00am - 9:00am

► **BREAKFAST ON YOUR OWN**

9:00am - 10:15am

BREAKOUT SESSIONS I

Salon Room

► **LEADERSHIP & AGENCY MANAGEMENT**

From Policy to Practice: Embedding Human Rights Principles into Organizational Culture

How do civil and human rights principles move from policy to practice? This session explores how leaders embed rights-based principles into organizational culture, accountability systems, and workforce practices. Participants will gain practical strategies for translating legal and policy commitments into measurable outcomes that strengthen equity, public trust, and organizational effectiveness.

Presenter: Tawana Bhagwat, Founder and CEO of Organization At Its Best, Inc.

Terrace Room

► **CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT**

Strengthening Civil Rights Investigations Through Effective Case Management

This session offers a practical look at case management and best practices within administrative civil rights enforcement, drawing from FHAP/FEPA experience. The discussion will cover agency roles, the life of a case, resolution strategies, and maintaining effective processes from intake through hearing.

Presenter:
Nikki Quintana, Executive Director
Ft. Wayne (IN) Metropolitan Human
Relations Commission

Presenter:
LaKisha Woods, Staff Attorney
Ft. Wayne (IN) Metropolitan Human
Relations Commission

River Room

► **POLICY & LEGISLATION**

So, You Want to Add New Protected Classes?

In 2025, The City of Minneapolis added four new protected classes to our Civil Rights Ordinance. In this session, attendees will learn about the meaningful process staff engage in to turn ideas into actionable protections. Presenters will share details about the new protected classes, engagement strategies, and lessons learned.

Presenter:
Manire T. Vaughn, Esq.
Complaint Investigations Director
Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights

Presenter:
Kaela McConnon Diarra, Esq.
Interim Director,
Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights



2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA

Imperial Room

► SOCIAL JUSTICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Soul of Resilience: Cultivating Trust and Measurable Community Impact

This session explores how understanding structural inequities allows us to build deep community trust and drive measurable empowerment. Participants will learn to engage diverse populations respectfully, foster collaborative problem-solving, and design initiatives rooted in lived experience that challenge systemic barriers and deliver tangible social justice.

Presenter:

Jolan H. Jolivette, Political Strategy, Organizing and Creative Consultant
Power Coalition for Equity & Justice

10:30am - 11:45am

BREAKOUT SESSIONS II

Salon Room

► LEADERSHIP & AGENCY MANAGEMENT

Language Access Testing: A New Tool for Evaluating Government Agencies and Improving Services for LEP Residents

This workshop will demonstrate how the Equal Rights Center's language access testing program (sometimes called "secret shopping" or "field auditing") allows the DC Office of Human Rights to effectively enforce the DC Language Access Act, ensuring that residents with Limited English proficiency can access crucial services. Through this program, the ERC and DCOHR have helped move away from a human rights compliance structure that depends on residents to file complaints once services have failed, to systematic, cost-effective data gathering, proactively helping agencies comply with civil rights laws.

Presenter: Elias Cohn, Strategic Initiatives Specialist, Equal Rights Center

Terrace Room

► CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT

Fair Housing Testing: Investigative Tools on a Systemic Scale

Testing functions as a unique tool to examine patterns of discrimination against protected classes. CLA uses testing as a method of data collection to uncover challenges tenants face. Within new federal constraints, we explore testing strategies that provide the same crucial framing for our work.

Presenter: Theo Peierls, Fair Housing Testing Coordinator, Community Legal Aid



2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA

River Room

► POLICY & LEGISLATION

Safeguarding the Mission: How Human Rights Commissions Navigate Legislative Challenges

This panel brings together representatives from Human Rights Commissions across the country to discuss their experiences navigating legislative challenges that threaten the scope and effectiveness of their work. Panelists will share strategies for responding to restrictive policy proposals, drawing on recent success stories—including Kentucky’s successful pushback during the most recent legislative session.

Presenter: Ray Sexton, Executive Director, Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission

Imperial Room

► SOCIAL JUSTICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

From Statute to Street: Advancing Civil Rights for Survivors of Violence Through Outreach and Education

Using California’s outreach and education efforts related to workplace civil rights protections for survivors of violence as a case study, this interactive workshop explores how civil rights agencies can increase awareness of rights and responsibilities of civil rights protections through plain language publications, language access, community partnerships, and strategic outreach.

Presenter: Ana Mendoza, Senior Counsel, California Civil Rights Department, Outreach and Education Unit

12:00pm - 1:15pm

► LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON | Grand Ballroom 2

Keynote Speaker: Lieutenant General Russel L. Honoré (Retired)

“Leadership for a More Just and Inclusive Future”

A decorated U.S. Army leader with 37 years of distinguished service, Lt. Gen. Honoré is best known for leading the military’s response to Hurricane Katrina. His calm, decisive leadership during one of our nation’s greatest natural disasters earned him the respect of millions. Today, he continues to inspire leaders across the country through his work in emergency preparedness, environmental resilience, public policy, and servant leadership.



2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA

1:30am - 2:45pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS III

Salon Room

► LEADERSHIP & AGENCY MANAGEMENT

Leading with Purpose: Strengthening, Safeguarding and Antidiscrimination Through Strategic Agency Management

This session will explore the process in developing a comprehensive safety plan to combat hate, racism, and discrimination for the FIFA World Cup and discuss lessons learned to show how HRCs can play active roles in addressing discrimination, hate, and extremism during mega-events in their own jurisdiction.

Presenter: Randy Duque,
Deputy Director, Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations

Terrace Room

► CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT

Disaster Civil Rights Investigation & Resolution Model

DCIRM Foundations Workshop introduces participants to the Disaster Civil Rights Investigation & Resolution Model (DCIRM), a structured framework for equitable, trauma-informed, and legally defensible civil rights investigations within disaster recovery systems.

Presenter: Stella Adams, SJ Adams Consulting

River Room

► POLICY & LEGISLATION

Taking Legislation and Policy Ideas to the Finish Line

Having a policy or legislative idea can be easy. Taking that idea into implementation can be a challenge. This presentation will discuss legislative and policy mechanics and real-world scenarios of creation and implementation through an equity lens. Participants will explore ways to utilize these tips in their own jurisdictions.

Presenter: Jamie Reyes, Director, Lincoln Commission on Human Rights



2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA

Imperial Room	► SOCIAL JUSTICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT Beyond the Surface: A Simulation for Equity and Structural Change Participants will learn about historical and current barriers that perpetuate inequities, then engage in a simulation as investigators, complainants, and respondents with different lived experiences and gain understanding of structural barriers. Participants will leave with increased empathy and renewed ideas to improve their structures for equitable and just community impact. Presenters: Karina Sanchez, Senior Investigator, City of Des Moines Manisha Paudel, Director and Chief Equity Officer, City of Des Moines
3:00pm - 4:15pm	► LEGAL UPDATE PLENARY SESSION Grand Ballroom 1 Civil Rights, Human Rights & the Rule of Law Presenters: Samuel T. Brandao, Director, Civil Rights & Federal Practice Clinic, Tulane University Law School Christopher Brancart, Partner, Brancart & Brancart
6:00pm - 8:00pm	► HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS DINNER Grand Ballroom 2

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2026

8:30am - 8:50am	► INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS
9:00am - 10:00am	► PLENARY SESSION Grand Ballroom 1 (BREAKFAST PROVIDED) From Statute To “My” Street: Civil Rights, Human Rights, And The Rule Of Law Presenters: TBA ► CLOSING REMARKS AND CONFERENCE ADJOURNMENT Grand Ballroom 1