



International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies

TENTATIVE CONFERENCE AGENDA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2025

"Strength in Unity: Human Rights in the Present"
Hilton Anchorage • Anchorage, Alaska

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2025

12:00 pm–2:00 pm	IAOHRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING Portage Room
2:00 pm–6:00 pm	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION Aleutian/Alaska Room
4:00 pm–5:00 pm	OPENING WELCOME & RECEPTION Rooftop <i>Hosted by the Anchorage Visitor and Convention Bureau</i> Dr. Alisa Warren , IAOHRA President <i>Executive Director, Missouri Commission on Human Rights</i> Keynote Speaker: Dr. Calvin E. Williams <i>Bartlett Community Forum</i>
5:00 pm–6:00 pm	ENTERTAINMENT Rooftop

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025

7:30 am–5:00 pm	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION Aleutian/Alaska Room
7:00 am–8:00 am	BREAKFAST (ON YOUR OWN)
8:00 am–9:00 am	OPENING CEREMONY
Aleutian/Alaska Room	<p>Dr. Alisa Warren, <i>IAOHRA President</i> <i>Executive Director, Missouri Commission on Human Rights</i></p> <p>Honorable Suzanne LaFrance, <i>Mayor of Anchorage</i></p> <p>Aaron Leggett, <i>President of the Native Village of Eklutna</i></p>
	<p>CONFERENCE OVERVIEW</p> <p>Diane Clements-Boyd, <i>Conference Planning Committee Chairperson</i> <i>Executive Director, Evansville-Vanderburgh Human Relations Commission</i></p>
9:00 am–10:10 am	OPENING PLENARY
Aleutian/Alaska Room	<p>Bringing Human Rights Home: We Rise Together</p> <p>Gay McDougall (Invited) <i>United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination</i> <i>Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence, Leitner Center on International Law and Justice</i> <i>Fordham University Law School</i></p>
10:15 am–10:30 am	BREAK
10:30 am–11:45 am	BREAKOUT SESSIONS/TRAINING AREAS
Leadership	
<p>JUST Leadership Development Spruce</p> <p>Presenter: Rudy F. Jameson, Ed.D., <i>Executive Director, Jacksonville Human Rights Commission</i> <i>Participants will gain an intimate understanding of what it means to be an industry-thought leader.</i></p>	
Enforcement	
<p>No Section 8: The Impact of Housing Choice Voucher Discrimination Aspen</p> <p>Presenter: Kenneth Gunn, <i>First Deputy Commissioner, Chicago Commission on Human Rights</i> <i>This session will examine the far-reaching impact of Housing Choice Voucher discrimination on communities.</i></p>	

Policy

Leveraging International Human Rights Mechanisms to Advance and Promote State & Local Progress | Firewood

Presenter: Amy Bergquist, Associate Program Director for International Justice
The Advocates for Human Rights

This workshop will provide participants with an overview of the United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process as well as the United States' participation in the process since the UPR's inception in 2007.

Social Justice

Building Capacity to Fight Misinformation | Willow

Presenter: Theo Dolan, Director, Civic Resilience Consulting, LLC

This practical session will provide guidance for human rights agencies on how they can build their resilience to manipulative information of all kinds. The session will provide a building block for training staff (and citizens) on digital and media literacy and the psycho-social factors which shape human vulnerability to mis- and disinformation.

11:45 am–1:00 pm

PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON

Aleutian/Alaska Room

Keynote Speaker: Leon Russell, Chairperson
National Association for the Advancement of Color People (NAACP)
Dr. Alisa Warren, IAOHRA President (Presiding)

1:15 pm–2:30 pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS/TRAINING AREAS

Leadership

Harnessing the Power of the Next Generation of Human Rights Advocates | Firewood

Presenter: Melody Vidmar, Dash-Muse Teaching Fellow & Supervising Attorney
Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute

This session will address the changing role of state & local human rights agencies; discuss current trends in law students and recent graduates regarding human rights careers; cover strategies to begin building relationships between human rights agencies and law school programs to create pipelines and increase sustained student interest in working for human rights agencies.

Enforcement

Beyond Boundaries: Navigating Intersectionality in Discrimination Law Compliance | Aspen

Presenter: Jennifer Booz, Executive Director, Anchorage Equal Rights Commission

This interactive workshop explores intersectionality and its impact on discrimination. Participants will engage in hands-on activities, analyze case studies, and develop inclusive strategies. The session aims to enhance understanding and practical application of intersectional approaches in ensuring compliance with discrimination laws, fostering empathy and solidarity across diverse communities.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025 (CONTINUED)

Policy

2024 Survey: A Snapshot of Alaskan Perspectives on Discrimination | Birch

Presenter: Rob Corbisier, Executive Director, Alaska Commission for Human Rights

Learn what people across Alaska think about discrimination in their communities.

Social Justice

Tools for a Week of Action: Uniting Your Community to Address Hate and Bias | Willow

Presenters:

Patrice O'Neill, Founder, Not in Our Town

Robin Toma, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission

The goal of the session is to provide examples and tools for IAOHRA members to take back to their communities for a week of action and awareness on how to address hate and bias.

2:30 pm–2:45 pm

BREAK

2:45 pm–4:00 pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS/TRAINING AREAS

Leadership

Navigating Inclusion in a Polarized Climate: Tools for Courageous Leadership in Human Rights Work | Firewood

Presenter: Tawana Marie Bhagwat, CEO, Organization At Its Best, Inc.

This session will equip public sector and nonprofit human rights professionals with tools to advance inclusive values that align with workplace culture while navigating political scrutiny and resistance. Participants will explore how to reinforce fairness, belonging, and equity through strategies grounded in legal compliance, policy alignment, and courageous leadership.

Enforcement

Resolving Disputes in 2025: A Guide to Housing and Employment Mediations and Conciliations in this New Frontier | Willow

Presenter: Marci Y. Anavitarte-Jordan, EEO and Housing Mediator/Conciliator
Texas Workforce Commission-Civil Rights

Join our roundtable discussion on mediating housing and employment cases. We will explore best practices, common fears, and challenges that can either lead to a successful resolution or an impasse.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025 (CONTINUED)

Policy

Conflict Resolution and its Role in Threat Assessment and Targeted Violence Prevention | Aspen

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

Learn about behavioral assessment and management and its function to prevent targeted violence. Expand understanding of how conflict resolution skills can be applied to targeted violence and extremism prevention. Discover possibilities to begin engaging in the space of critical incident prevention and response.

Social Justice

Sustaining the Mission: Creating a Human Rights Culture from the Inside Out | Birch

Presenter: Dr. Kimberly Hill Davis, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Savannah State University

This two-part workshop series explores both the micro (individual) and macro (institutional) levels of sustaining human rights work. In a field driven by justice, too many practitioners face burnout, disconnection, and misaligned work environments. These workshops offer an integrated roadmap to help participants reflect, reset, and redesign how they sustain themselves and their organizations.

4:00 pm–6:00 pm

DINNER (ON YOUR OWN)

6:30 pm–7:30 pm

FIRESIDE CHAT

Showing Up: Best Practices in Leading Human Rights Agencies

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2025

7:30 am–8:30 am

BREAKFAST (ON YOUR OWN)

HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE TOUR

8:00 am–4:00 pm

Anchorage Museum

Speaker: **Aaron Leggett**, Curator

Alaska Native Heritage Center

Speaker: TBA

LUNCH

Ship Creek

Mountain View Community Council

Speaker: TBA

DINNER (ON YOUR OWN)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025

8:00 am–9:00 am	BREAKFAST (ON YOUR OWN)
9:00 am–10:15 am	<p>REGIONAL MEETINGS</p> <p>Atlantic Region, Kyla Hanington, <i>Regional Representative</i> Aspen</p> <p>Midwest Region, Angela Phelps White, <i>Regional Representative</i> Spruce</p> <p>Southern Region, Dr. Love Jones, <i>Regional Representative</i> Birch</p> <p>Western Region, Heather McVay, <i>Regional Representative</i> Willow</p>
10:30 am–11:45 am	PLENARY SESSION
Aleutian/Alaska Room	<p>Legal and Policy Updates</p> <p>Jurisdictional Justice: Rethinking Civil Rights from the Ground Up Presenter: Carol Johnson, Attorney, Johnson Consulting Group</p> <p><i>An examination of 2025 Executive Orders to end DEI and other protections, and the Department of Justice Civil Rights Fraud Initiative with discussion on national responses to the Department of Justice May 19, 2025, memo leveraging the False Claims Act against states and municipalities. How are state and local jurisdictions responding to its impact and what does this mean for DEI and Civil Rights?</i></p> <p>Immigration Legal Update Presenter: Daniel Cortes, Assistant Professor of Law, Villanova University School of Law</p> <p><i>Participants will learn about common forms of immigration relief, an overview of recent changes, and practical application of the immigration law. Participants will have an opportunity to share some of the needs the immigrant community is facing, and panelists will provide resources for common needs within the immigrant community.</i></p>
12:00 pm–1:15 pm	FAIR HOUSING LUNCHEON
Aleutian/Alaska Room	<p>Fair Housing Forward: NAR's Efforts to Advance Fair Housing & Home Ownership Opportunities in the Current Climate</p> <p>Keynote Speaker: Colette Massengale, Senior Policy Representative <i>Fair Housing Policy, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®</i></p> <p><i>Use NAR research to paint a picture of the obstacles first-time/first generation buyers are facing around discrimination, supply, accessibility and affordability, discuss NAR's legislative efforts, talk about the Fair Housing Policy Committee's priorities, highlight our progress with NAR's Fair Housing ACT! initiative, share success stories with NAR's fair housing grants, describe the fair housing resources we are developing, emphasize solutions that are having an impact.</i></p>



1:30 pm–2:45 pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Leadership

How to Implement Human Rights in Your City, County or State Agency | Firewood

Presenters:

Robert Sowell and Aneisa Bolton, Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission

Domenico Zipoli, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

Dr. Alisa Warren, IAOHRA, Missouri Human Rights Commission

After a brief recap of the ways in which international human rights can be centered by local governments, this will be an interactive workshop that will highlight a case study and invite participant jurisdictions to raise questions and present challenges about how they can carry out human rights education and implementation in their cities, counties and states.

Enforcement

Language Access Testing: A New Tool for Evaluating Government Agencies and Ensuring Access for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Residents | Aspen

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

As the federal government rapidly restructures federal social service organizations, it is now more important than ever that immigrant communities with limited English proficiency (LEP) have reliable access to state and local government services. The Equal Rights Center (ERC) has developed an innovative strategy to ensure that language access barriers do not prevent DC residents from accessing the government services they need. Through its Language Access Testing Program, the ERC has adapted “civil rights testing” methods (sometimes called “secret shopping” or “field audits”) to perform annual comprehensive language access audits of government agencies, providing invaluable data concerning the language access obstacles DC’s LEP communities face.

Policy

Reimagining Human Relations for Success in a New Sociopolitical World | Willow

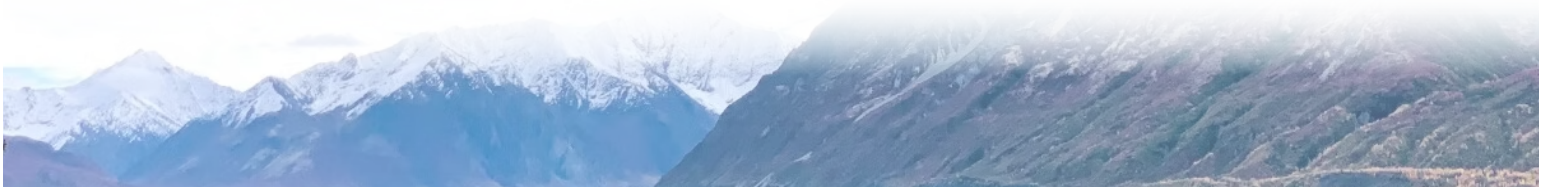
Presenters:

Anne Little, Community Engagement Director, City of Salisbury, NC

Willie Ratchford, Executive Director, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations

Dr. Anthony Wade, Senior Consultant, Pontifex Consulting Group

Public sector human relations and departments have historically promoted fairness within organizations and communities. However, the current political environment has led to reductions in staff and funding and/or the elimination of departments and commissions. If your commission or department is facing challenges, it is crucial to develop a new business case for its sustainability, taking this opportunity to adapt to changing sociopolitical climates and refocusing on effective practices that allow the continuation of the work.



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025 (CONTINUED)

Social Justice

Rise Up Against Racism | Birch

Presenter: Elyse Applegate, Founder, Elysian World Editing

The Heroes of the Last Frontier graphic novel represents collaboration between the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, and the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission to bring to life the struggles and triumphs of individuals that changed Alaska's history. This commission required writing and illustrating stories from the ground up through months of research and interfacing with descendants of these real-life heroes to create storylines designed to entertain middle school-aged children while inspiring them about human rights and teaching Alaska history.

2:45 pm–3:00 pm

BREAK

3:00 pm–5:00 pm

**IAOHRA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
RESOLUTIONS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIONS**

6:30 pm–8:00 pm

AWARDS DINNER

Aleutian/Alaska
Room

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: TIM WISE

*Tim Wise is among the most prominent anti-racist writers and educators in the United States. He has spent the past 25 years speaking to audiences in all 50 states, on over 1500 college and high school campuses, at hundreds of professional and academic conferences, to dozens of corporate, government, entertainment, media, law enforcement, military, non-profit, and medical industry professionals about issues of systemic racism and methods for dismantling racial inequity in their institutions. Wise is the author of nine books, including his latest, *Dispatches from the Race War*, and his highly acclaimed memoir, *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*. He has appeared on hundreds of radio and television programs and is a regular contributor to discussions about race on CNN and MSNBC.*

8:00 pm–9:30 pm

UNITY CELEBRATION: ENTERTAINMENT



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025

9:00 am–10:00 am	PLENARY SESSION
Aleutian/Alaska Room	<p>How Fair Are You: A Fair Housing Decision-Making Lab</p> <p>Presenter: Joshua Barr, Chief Strategist & President, Raising The Barr, LLC</p> <p><i>Data-Driven Insights: Understand the prevalence and impact of housing discrimination through compelling real-life cases and statistical data. Identify your own potential biases and how they might influence your professional decisions. Learn how to navigate complex fair housing scenarios with confidence and legal compliance. Commit to specific actions to promote fair housing and create a more equitable housing market.</i></p>
10:15 am–11:15 am	PLENARY SESSION
Aleutian/Alaska Room	<p>Why International Human Rights Should Matter to State and Local Government, Especially Now</p> <p>Presenters: Jamil Dakwar, Director, Human Rights Program, American Civil Liberties Union Dr. Alisa Warren, Executive Director, Missouri Human Rights Commission Robin Toma, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission Felix Kirchmeier, Director, Geneva Academy for Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (invited)</p> <p><i>This session will provide an overview of applicable global human rights standards and systems which support and complement the moral/ethical and legal responsibility of city, county and state governments to carry out their critical work, especially during times when federal and state civil rights programs are under attack. These include the opportunity for international sporting events such as FIFA and the Olympics that require human rights action plans by the hosting organization.</i></p>
11:30 am–12:00 pm	CLOSING REMARKS
	CONFERENCE ADJOURNMENT

