



International Association of
Official Human Rights Agencies

2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AGENDA

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 | Riverbend Ballroom

Dr. Alisa Warren, IAOHRA President

Commissioner, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

▶ 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 J. Satpathi

Partner, Pelican State Partners

Moderator: Dr. Leah Raby, Louisiana Commission on Human Rights

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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

Dr. Alisa Warren, IAOHRA President
Commissioner, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

Dr. Leah Raby, Executive Director
Louisiana Human Rights Commission (Local Host)

► **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

Keynote Speaker: Marc H. Morial
President and CEO, National Urban League

"Understanding the Moment"

Facilitator: Diane Clements-Boyd
Evansville-Vanderburgh County Human Relations Commission

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10:30am - 11:45am

► PLENARY SESSION II | Grand Ballroom

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

Facilitator: Ken Gunn, Chicago Commission on Human Relations

12:00pm - 1:15pm

► PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON | Grand Ballroom

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, **Tejash Sanchala**, Regional Representative | **Salon Room**

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

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

Western Region, **Pierre I. Arreola**, Regional Representative | **Chairman's Room**

3:00pm - 4:30pm

► PLENARY SESSION III | Grand Ballroom

Fair Housing Forward

Keynote Speaker: Colette Massengale, Esq.

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

Facilitator: James Davis, City of Durham, Community Partnerships & Engagement

2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 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
12:30pm	► "IAOHRA Hits-the-Streets" LOCAL CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR Chartered Bus shuttle from Westin Hotel to Flood Wall Mural Group A • Tchoupitoulas Art Corridor Flood Wall Mural Tour • Chartered Bus shuttle from Flood Wall Mural to LA Civil Rights Exhibit Group A • Leon "Duce" Brown II Quintet starts performing at the LA Civil Rights Exhibit, Panel Discussion, Reception: New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center to Welcome Group A • Chartered Bus shuttle from LA Civil Rights Exhibit to Hotel Group A and pick up Group B/C
2:00pm	Chartered Bus shuttle from Westin Hotel to Flood Wall Mural Group B (REPEATED)
3:30pm	Chartered Bus shuttle from Westin Hotel to Flood Wall Mural Group C (REPEATED)
	<i>Note: Chartered Bus maximum capacity is 56-passengers)</i>
12:30pm - 6:00pm	► Self-Guided Tours (Create Your Own Experience) • French Quarter (0.5 miles) • Jackson Square (0.4 miles) • Garden District (1.9 miles) • Riverfront Streetcar (0.1 mile to the nearest stop) • Canal Street Streetcar (0.1 mile to the nearest stop) • Lower Ninth Ward/Hurricane Katrina sites (4.5 miles) • Supreme Court Museum—Plessy v. Ferguson exhibit (0.4 miles) • Tate, Etienne and Prevost Center (4 miles) • William Frantz Elementary School (3 miles) • The National WWII Museum (0.7 miles) • Louisiana Civil Rights Museum (0.2 miles) • Whitney Plantation (45 miles) <i>Note: Distances are approximate and measured from The Westin New Orleans, 100 Iberville Street. Transportation, admission fees, and reservations for self-guided tours are the responsibility of participants.</i>

2026 IAOHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 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.

Facilitator: Tarnya Whitmire, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

Terrace Room

► **CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT**

Civil Rights in a Digital Society: State Innovations to Address AI Bias

This session will offer a clear and practical overview of the evolving landscape of algorithmic discrimination and responsible AI within government agencies. We will examine how civil rights offices can proactively interpret, enforce, and modernize protections to ensure new technologies do not reproduce or exacerbate existing inequities. Additionally, we will explore actionable strategies for identifying, assessing, and responding to algorithmic discrimination at the state and local level, including approaches to enforcement, public sector procurement, community engagement, regulatory design, and cross sector collaboration.

Presenter: Yolanda N. Melville, Director NJ Division on Civil Rights

Presenter: Oneshia Herring, Sr. Vice President & Counsel National Fair Housing Alliance

Facilitator: Shadrach Mensah, Evansville-Vanderburgh County 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

Facilitator: Anthony Lewis, Michigan Department of Civil Rights

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Executive 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. Jolivet, Political Strategy, Organizing and Creative Consultant Power Coalition for Equity & Justice

Facilitator: LaSandra Hutchinson, Cook County Department of Human Rights and Ethics

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

Facilitator: Lauren Harris, City of Charlottesville, Office of Human Rights

Terrace Room

► CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT

Fair Housing in a Climate of Fear: National Origin Discrimination and the Rights of Immigrant Communities

This workshop addresses national origin discrimination in the current climate of heightened attacks on immigrant communities. The session will cover fair housing protections for immigrant communities under the Fair Housing Act, relevant fact patterns, practical investigation techniques, and best practices for navigating these cases while protecting impacted communities.

Presenter: Azadeh Hosseinian, Associate Chief Counsel, California Civil Rights Department

Presenter: Nassim Moallem, Attorney, California Civil Rights Department

Facilitator: Tarnya Whitmire, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

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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

Facilitator: Jennifer Booz, Anchorage Equal 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

Facilitator: Dana Bridgewater, City of Alexandria(VA), Office of Human Rights

12:00pm - 1:15pm

► LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON | Grand Ballroom

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.

Facilitator: Dr. Leah Raby, Executive Director Louisiana Human Rights Commission

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. We will also look at this as a case study of how the human rights role and purpose of your agency could be strategically expanded

Presenters:

Randy Duque, Deputy Director, Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations

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

Deysy Donis-Santos, Program Manager, Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission

Facilitator: Dr. Alisa Warren, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

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

Facilitator: James Davis, City of Durham, Community Partnerships & Engagement

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

Facilitator: Anthony Lewis, Michigan Department of Civil Rights

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Executive 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

Facilitator: Lauren Harris, City of Charlottesville, Office of Human Rights

3:00pm - 4:15pm

► LEGAL UPDATE PLENARY SESSION | Grand Ballroom

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

Facilitator: Tejash Sanchala, Westchester County Human Rights Commission

6:00pm - 8:00pm

► HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS DINNER | Grand Ballroom

ARTHUR L. GREEN AWARD

Presented to an IAOHRA member for their lifelong advocacy of civil and human rights for the advancement of racial and/or social justice.

Recipient: Marvin Caldwell, Chief of Staff, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

BILL HALE AWARD

Presented to an organization or individual who promoted civil and human rights in their official capacity and has provided leadership in the development of programs to safeguard the human and civil rights of all people in their corporation and beyond.

Recipient: Denise Miranda, Commissioner, New York State Division of Human Rights

INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Presented to an IAOHRA member for their continuing commitment to equal opportunity and civil rights, demonstrated through efforts to create and implement high-caliber programs for civil rights enforcement professionals and their communities.

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

INTERNATIONAL AWARD

Presented to an individual or organization for outstanding international efforts to advance civil and human rights.

Recipient: Robin Toma, Executive Director, Los Angeles Human Relations Commission

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6:00pm - 8:00pm

HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMPION AWARD

Presented to a local non-IAOHRA member advocate or organization for outstanding efforts to advance "Human Rights At-Home."

Recipient: Loyce Pierce-Wright, Board President of the New Orleans YWCA, and retired Executive Director of the Louisiana Human Rights Commission

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Distinguished award presented to notable national human and/or civil rights leaders and the out-going IAOhRA President.

Recipients:

Kristen Clarke, General Counsel, NAACP

Lieutenant General Russel L. Honoré, Retired- U.S. Army

Marc H. Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League

Dr. Alisa Warren, IAOhRA President (2022-2026)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2026

8:30am - 8:50am

► INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

9:00am - 10:00am

► CLOSING PLENARY SESSION | Grand Ballroom (BREAKFAST PROVIDED)

Keynote Speaker: Michael Li, Senior Counsel, Brennan Center Democracy Program

"The Battle for Fair Maps: Law, Power, and the People"

Facilitator: Diane Clements-Boyd, Evansville-Vanderburgh County Human Relations Commission

10:15am-11:15am

► WRAP-UP

From Statute To "My" Street: Civil Rights, Human Rights, And The Rule Of Law

Presenter: Tarnya Whitmire, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

Facilitator: Dr. Alisa Warren, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

11:15am-11:30am

► CLOSING REMARKS AND CONFERENCE ADJOURNMENT