



International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies

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 Prince William Room
2:00 pm–6:00 pm	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION Alaska Ballroom
4:00 pm–5:00 pm	OPENING WELCOME & RECEPTION Top of the World (Rooftop) Dr. Alisa Warren , IAOHRA President <i>Executive Director, Missouri Commission on Human Rights</i>
5:00 pm–6:00 pm	FIRESIDE CHAT Top of the World (Rooftop) Dr. Calvin E. Williams <i>Bartlett Community Forum</i>

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025

7:00 am–5:00 pm	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION Alaska Ballroom
7:00 am–8:00 am	BREAKFAST (ON YOUR OWN)
9:00 am–5:00 pm	Alaska Native Artisan Vendors (Monday only, Mezzanine Level)
8:00 am–9:00 am	OPENING CEREMONY
Alaska Ballroom	Alaska Native Dance Group Dr. Alisa Warren , IAOHRA President <i>Executive Director, Missouri Commission on Human Rights</i> Robert W. Corbisier , Executive Director <i>Alaska Commission for Human Rights</i>
	CONFERENCE OVERVIEW Diane Clements-Boyd , Conference Planning Committee Chairperson <i>Executive Director, Evansville-Vanderburgh Human Relations Commission</i>
9:00 am–10:10 am	OPENING PLENARY
Alaska Ballroom	Bringing Human Rights Home: We Rise Together Charles F. Coleman Jr. <i>Civil Rights Attorney/Legal Analyst/Guest Anchor, MSNBC</i> Introduction: Dr. Alisa Warren , IAOHRA President, Missouri Commission on Human Rights
10:10 am–10:20 am	REMARKS Jordan Long , The Carter Center
10:20 am–10:30 am	BREAK
10:30 am–11:45 am	BREAKOUT SESSIONS/TRAINING AREAS
Leadership	
Resilient Leadership: Building Bridges in a Divided Era Dillingham Room Cleveland L. Horton , Executive Director, Maryland Commission on Civil Rights <i>In today's climate of heightened polarization and uncertainty, leadership in human and civil rights work requires more than resolve—it demands resilience and a commitment to bridge-building. This session will explore how leaders can remain grounded in their mission while navigating divisive challenges, fostering collaboration across differences, and maintaining trust in the communities they serve. Participants will gain insight into strategies that strengthen resilience, inspire unity, and ensure that our collective pursuit of equity and justice continues even in the most challenging times.</i> Facilitator: James Davis , City of Durham Community Partnerships & Engagement	

Enforcement

"No Section 8": The Impact of Housing Choice Voucher Discrimination | Katmai Room

Kenneth Gunn, *First Deputy Commissioner, Chicago Commission on Human Rights*

This session will examine the far-reaching impact of Housing Choice Voucher discrimination on communities.

Facilitator: Tarnya Whitmire, *South Carolina Human Affairs Commission*

Policy

Leveraging International Human Rights Mechanisms to Advance and Promote State & Local Progress | King Salmon Room

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

Janica Puisto, *United Nations (UN) Office of Human Rights*

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

Learn about the potency of the UN's global human rights accountability mechanisms, principally the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, by reviewing the U.S. participation in the process since the UPR's inception in 2007. A case study of Los Angeles County will provide an example of the potential value of IAOHRA member agencies to be engaged with the UN human rights system. Also highlighted will be the UN Human Rights Office's efforts to engage local and regional governments, such as the core human rights treaty on economic, social, and cultural rights.

Facilitator: Kyla Hanington, *Prince Georges County Office of Human Rights*

Social Justice

Building Capacity to Fight Misinformation | Iliamna Room

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.

Facilitator: Heather McVay, *Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission*

11:45 am–1:00 pm

PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON

Alaska
Ballroom

Greetings: Leon Russell, *Chairperson, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)*

Artificial Intelligence: AI's Perils and Promise for Human Rights

Keynote Speaker: William Dyson, *Tech Visionary and Creator of Sojourner AI*

Presiding: Dr. Alisa Warren, *IAOHRA President*

1:15 pm–2:30 pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS/TRAINING AREAS

Leadership

Harnessing the Power of the Next Generation of Human Rights Advocates | Dillingham Room

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.

Facilitator: Dr. Leah Raby, *Louisiana Commission on Human Rights*

Enforcement

Beyond Boundaries: Navigating Intersectionality in Discrimination Law Compliance | Katmai Room

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.

Facilitator: Tierra Thompson, *Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations*

Policy

2024 Survey: A Snapshot of Alaskan Perspectives on Discrimination | King Salmon Room

Rob Corbisier, *Executive Director, Alaska Commission for Human Rights*

Diane Hirshberg, *Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage*

Ivan Moore, *Public Opinion Research, Alaska Survey Research*

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

Facilitator: Keoki Kim, *Alaska Commission for Human Rights*

Social Justice

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

Justin Lock, *Executive Director, Not in Our Town; former Interim Director of Community Relations Service (CRS), U.S. Department of Justice*

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.

Facilitator: Anthony Lewis, *Michigan Department of Civil Rights*

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** | Dillingham Room**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.

Facilitator: Cleveland Horton, Maryland Commission on Civil Rights**Enforcement****Resolving Disputes in 2025: A Guide to Housing and Employment Mediations and
Conciliations in this New Frontier** | Katmai Room**Marci Y. Anavitate-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.

Facilitator: Dr. Leah Raby, Louisiana Commission on Human Rights**Policy****Conflict Resolution and its Role in Threat Assessment and Targeted Violence Prevention** | King Salmon Room**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.

Facilitator: Tierra Thompson, Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations**Social Justice****Bridging Law and Practice: Collaborative Safeguards for Protecting Individual Rights** | Iliamna Room**Steven R. Bryson**, Attorney, van der Veen, Hartshorn, Levin & Lindheim

By the end of the session, participants will understand how foundational federal laws such as Title VII, the ADA, the Fair Housing Act, Title VI, and § 1983 provide a framework for rights-centered investigations. They will learn how to translate these legal principles into practical safeguards investigators can apply in their daily work, including trauma-informed interviewing, language access, retaliation prevention, disability accommodations, and bias-mitigation tools. The workshop will also highlight collaboration models that strengthen agency capacity and public trust, while allowing participants to practice applying safeguards through case studies and scenario-based exercises.

Facilitator: Anthony Lewis, Michigan Department of Civil Rights

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025 (CONTINUED)

4:00 pm–6:00 pm

RECEPTION (Hors d'oeuvres) | Alaska Ballroom
Hosted by the Anchorage Visitor and Convention Bureau

ENTERTAINMENT: Pamuya
An Inuit-soul musical group that blends Yup'ik culture
with influences from around the world.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2025

7:00 am–8:00 am

BREAKFAST (ON YOUR OWN)
Please grab coffee in the Alaska Ballroom

HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE TOUR (Bring a coat)

8:00 am–5:00 pm

Buses will load on 3rd Street (1st level)

Ship Creek/Grandma Olga Statue
25 Small Boat Launch Road, Anchorage, AK 99501

Anchorage Museum
625 C Street, Anchorage, AK 99501

LUNCH

Alaska Native Heritage Center
8800 Heritage Center Drive, Anchorage, AK 99504

Mountain View Community Council
3701 Mt. View Drive, Anchorage, AK 99503

DINNER (ON YOUR OWN)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025

8:00 am–9:00 am

BREAKFAST (ON YOUR OWN)

9:00 am–10:15 am

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Atlantic Region, **Kyla Hanington**, *Regional Representative* | Dillingham Room
Midwest Region, **Angela Phelps White**, *Regional Representative* | Katmai Room
Southern Region, **Dr. Love Jones**, *Regional Representative* | King Salmon Room
Western Region, **Heather McVay**, *Regional Representative* | Iliamna Room

10:20 am–10:30 am

BREAK

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025 (CONTINUED)

10:30 am–11:45 am	PLENARY SESSION
Alaska Ballroom	Legal and Policy Updates Jurisdictional Justice: Rethinking Civil Rights from the Ground Up Carol Johnson, Attorney, Johnson Consulting Group <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> Immigration Legal Update Daniel Cortes, Assistant Professor of Law, Villanova University School of Law <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> Facilitator: Paul Valenti, Office of Human Rights, City of Alexandria, VA
12:00 pm–1:15 pm	FAIR HOUSING LUNCHEON
Alaska Ballroom	Fair Housing Forward: NAR's Efforts to Advance Fair Housing & Home Ownership Opportunities in the Current Climate Keynote Speaker: Colette Massengale, Senior Policy Representative Fair Housing Policy, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® <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> Facilitator: Diane Clements-Boyd, Evansville-Vanderburgh Human Relations Commission



1:30 pm–2:45 pm**BREAKOUT SESSIONS****Leadership****Why and How to Implement Human Rights in Your City, County or State Agency** | Dillingham Room**Moderator:** *Jordan Long, The Carter Center***Aneisa Bolton and Robin Toma,** *Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission***Dr. Alisa Warren,** *IAOHRA, Missouri Human Rights Commission***Domenico Zipoli,** *Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights*

Why should human rights be a priority for state and local governments? And as a practical matter, how can this be done? This will be an interactive workshop that will highlight a case study of a local government implementing human rights (such as major sports events); provide examples of the impact that state and local governments can have on national government; and identify useful resources for IAOHRA agencies (including tribal/indigenous nations) such as partner networks, digital tools, internet sites, to facilitate engagement with the UN's global human rights system. We will invite the audience to ask questions and present challenges as to how they can carry out human rights education and implementation in their cities, counties, and states.

Enforcement**What's In Your Toolbox?** | Katmai Room**Jamie Reyes,** *Human Rights Director, Lincoln Commission on Human Rights***Rob Rowan,** *Senior Civil Rights Investigator, Lincoln Commission on Human Rights***Cailin Daly Dejillas,** *Director, Omaha Human Rights and Relations***Laura Aryeetey,** *Senior Investigator, Omaha Human Rights and Relations*

To provide an opportunity to learn about different tools available to enforcement agencies during an investigation, discuss best practices, and take away ideas.

Facilitator: *Nikki Quintana, Fort Wayne Metropolitan Human Relations Commission***Policy****Reimagining Human Relations for Success in a New Sociopolitical World** | King Salmon Room**Anne Little,** *Community Engagement Director, City of Salisbury, NC***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.

Facilitator: *Ray Sexton, Lexington-Fayette County Human Rights Commission*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025 (CONTINUED)

Social Justice

Rise Up Against Racism | Iliamna Room

Elyse Applegate, Founder, Elysian World Editing

Alex Roider, Special Projects Attorney, Alaska Commission for Human Rights

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.

Facilitator: Charles Johnson, Henderson County Human Rights Commission

2:45 pm–3:00 pm

BREAK

3:00 pm–5:00 pm

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

6:30 pm–8:00 pm

AWARDS DINNER

Alaska
Ballroom

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–10:00 pm

UNITY CELEBRATION: DJ Ondago

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025

9:00 am–10:00 am

PLENARY SESSION (BREAKFAST PROVIDED)

Aleutian Room

How Fair Are You: A Fair Housing Decision-Making Lab

Joshua Barr, Chief Strategist & President, Raising The Barr, LLC

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.

Facilitator: Tarnya Whitmire, South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

10:15 am–11:15 am	PLENARY SESSION
Alaska Ballroom	Why International Human Rights Should Matter to State and Local Governments, Especially Now Moderator: Dr. Alisa Warren, <i>Executive Director, Missouri Human Rights Commission</i> Jamil Dakwar, <i>Director, Human Rights Program, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)</i> Robin Toma and Aneisa Bolton, <i>Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations</i> Felix Kirchmeier, <i>Geneva Academy for Humanitarian Law and Human Rights</i> <i>Civil rights are human rights. The moral/ethical and legal responsibilities of city, county, and state governments to protect and strengthen human rights protections for our most vulnerable communities are supported and complemented by global human rights systems, especially when federal, state, and local civil rights programs are under attack. There are practical ways for state and local governments to engage, and a growing number of specific tools and resources available, and partnerships with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can be effective. The upcoming FIFA World Cup (2026) and the Olympics (2028) require human rights action plans of participating host cities/nations like Los Angeles, providing a chance to promote and strengthen human rights for our most vulnerable communities.</i>
11:30 am–12:00 pm	CLOSING REMARKS
	CONFERENCE ADJOURNMENT

