

Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee



**Promoting
Harmony**

**Facilitating
Resolution**

**Celebrating
Diversity**

CRC Message

Our team of professionals and volunteers serve as civil rights and human relations advocates. We believe that we have an obligation to ensure fairness and help remove barriers that impede the community from living in harmony and equally experiencing all that Charlotte-Mecklenburg has to offer.

The word community is more than just a part of our name. It represents an inclusive group of friends and neighbors of different races, colors, faiths, ethnicities, ages, incomes, disabilities, sexual/gender orientations and nationalities. For half a decade, we were known as the Community Relations Committee. As a result of the progress we've made, coupled with the relationships we've built with our community partners, we can now say we've grown into Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations.

For the next 50 years and beyond, we plan to continue building a Charlotte-Mecklenburg known for its tolerance, understanding, bridge-building and harmony for all residents, including immigrants.

Our Staff and the Committee

The focus of Community Relations staff is on building relationships and solving problems in four main areas: Dispute Settlement Program (DSP); Fairness in Housing; Training & Education; and Police-Community Relations.

Staff relies on counsel from 45 volunteers comprising the Community Relations Committee. Appointed by Charlotte City Council and the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners, they are an integral part of the human relations support system and help promote quality of opportunity for all citizens/residents, and understanding, respect and goodwill among the many diverse groups who call Charlotte-Mecklenburg home.

As a resident of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community, you have rights. Community Relations remains steadfast in its commitment to ensure those rights are protected.

Subcommittee Contributions

Each committee member participates in at least one of seven subcommittees: Commemoration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Communications, Crisis Response, Education and Young Leaders, Intercultural Relations, Police Community Relations, and Programs/Speakers.

Staff assist each subcommittee in developing informed and appropriate human relations services. This has included meetings with over 30 local nonprofits, community organizations and city departments, including the Mayor's Mentoring Alliance, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, and Charlotte Fire Department. These "Nonprofit Connect" meetings facilitated collaboration allowing participants to convey opportunities and challenges they face, share resources, publicize upcoming events, increase participation in programs, and gain awareness of resources in the community.

Additionally, once needs have been identified through community dialogs, subcommittee members have hosted various workshops, including grant-writing and financial literacy workshops. The public is kept informed of the committees work through a quarterly newsletter, called "Link."

Dispute Settlement Program

Since 1983, the CRC has been providing mediation and conciliation services to Charlotte-Mecklenburg residents.

- * Private Warrant Court
- * Landlord Tenant
- * Juvenile Offender
- * Medicaid
- * Misdemeanor Cases
- * Truancy/School Issues
- * Charlotte Housing Authority Hearings
- * Worthless Check Conciliation

DSP Trend – FY13 to FY17

- * **Cases mediated – 9266**
- * **Court hours saved – 18,532**
- * **Court dollars saved – 1,853,200.00**
- * **Mediation trainings – 67**
- * **People trained - 1700**

Fairness In Housing & Public Accommodations

The mission of the CRC is driven by the fact that equal access in housing and public accommodations is a right and not a privilege.

Formal complaints are accepted from anyone who feels discriminated against in a public place or in housing because of their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, familial status or disability.

Staff members document and investigate complaints and conduct standardized testing of alleged violators facilities/properties.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Fair Housing Act.

FH & PA Trends - FY13 to FY17

- * Fair housing cases investigated – 169
- * Public accommodations complaints investigated – 65
- * Education and outreach trainings – 276
- * People trained – 3367
- * Case settlement dollars - \$200K+

Police Community Relations

Community Relations works closely with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) to develop trust and communication between officers and citizens.

The work of our CRC/CMPD Community Coordinators involves specialized community relation services who respond to families of crime victims in conjunction with CMPD's homicide support teams, individuals and groups. They support the activities of CMPD, maintain contact with special interest and community groups, identify community needs and provide resources to meet those needs. Additionally they assist in the resolution to citizen's complaints relating to inadequate services or unfair treatment by police.

Additionally, they handle the police complaint review program, where assistance is provided in making allegations of officer misconduct and alternatives are given to registering complaints directly to the police department's internal affairs division.

PCR Trends - FY13 to FY17

- * **Chain of command hearings attended – 381**
- * **Appeals processed – 23**
- * **Complaints processed – 459**
- * **Police community dialogues – 30**
- * **PCRA Programs – 5**
- * **Officers Nominated – 2000+**
- * **Private sector dollars raised to cover costs - \$100,000+**

Americans With Disabilities Act

The ADA guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications. The purpose of the law is to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

The ADA is divided into five titles that relate to different areas of public life;

- * Title I- Employment
- * Title II - Public Service
- * Title III - Public Accommodations
- * Title IV- Telecommunication
- * Title V - Miscellaneous

If a grievant believes he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of a disability, the grievant should submit a written complaint containing information about the alleged discrimination, including the name, address and phone number of the grievant and location, date and description of the problem.

The complaint should be submitted as soon as possible but no later than 60 days after the alleged violation to: CharlotteADA@charlottenc.gov

Training and Education

Community Relations develops and delivers free training to Charlotte-area neighborhood associations, civic organizations, schools and other groups.

Through conflict management training, skills are provided to residents and groups on how to handle conflict in an effective, nonviolent manner and where the emphasis is on assertive communication skills.

Diversity training focuses on cultural competency, the strengths of a diverse community, how to check out assumptions and the acceptance of differences.

Fair housing practices are taught by Community Relations to Realtors apartment management companies, tenants and others in the housing industry. By educating people on the Federal, City and County fair housing and public accommodations laws, discriminatory practices are curbed proactively.

Celebrations

POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS AWARDS:

To honor officers who have made outstanding contributions to neighborhoods and communities in the area, the Police Community Relations Awards are presented annually to recognize these efforts.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CELEBRATION:

Community Relations makes every effort to reach out to the entire community and embrace diverse cultures. Playing a large part in these efforts is recognition of the dreams and vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Relations organizes an annual celebration during Dr. King's holiday.

The MLK Medallion Award is another focal point of the Dr. King Celebration and related community recognition efforts. Individuals from all walks of life in Charlotte-Mecklenburg who exemplify the ideals of Dr. King are presented with the award.

Community Dialogues

Community Relations recognizes a key component to having a successful community is the ability of its residents to feel trust for those with whom they come into contact regularly; particularly those who may be perceived as being "different" - racially, ethnically, economically, geographically, politically or generationally.

To bridge gaps and open lines of communication, trust and understanding, Community Relations periodically holds community forums inviting residents and local officials to build relationships through conversation, discussion and even debate. Whether the topic revolves around schools, budgets, religion, or basic human rights. Community Relations, along with partnering agencies like the Community Building Initiative (CBI) and Mecklenburg Ministries (MM), feel strongly that community dialogue can pave the road to a better future in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Additional Trends - FY13 to FY17

- * **Volunteer hours secured – 22,252**
- * **In-kind dollars saved – \$547,275**
- * **Taxpayer dollars saved - \$3,862,212**

Questions





**Thank You for your continuing support of the
Community Relations Committee.**

**We feel our partnership is vital to a healthy
community in Promoting Harmony, Facilitating
Resolution and Celebrating Diversity.**

Please contact us for any assistance.

**Patricia Albritton
Chairwoman
704-299-8761**

**Willie Ratchford
Executive Director
704-336-2195**