



County of Onondaga
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Onondaga County/Syracuse Human Rights Commission

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Minutes: pending approval

**ONONDAGA COUNTY/CITY OF SYRACUSE
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

March 19, 2025, ONONDAGA COUNTY/SYRACUSE HRC Meeting

_Hassina Adams	_Agnes McCray
_Liam O'Connor	_Lauren Rosenstein
_Leo Sanchez	_Roosevelt Baums
_Paul Harvey	_H. Bernard Alex (HRC CHAIR)
_Mary Grace Almandrez	_Duane L. Reese II

Absent: Hassina Adams, Liam O'Connor, Lauren Rosenstein, Roosevelt Baums, Agnes McCray, Paul Harvey. **Present:** H. Bernard Alex, Mary Grace Almandrez, Leo Sanchez, Duane L. Reese.

County staff present: Montanette Rocker, Monica Williams, and Anthony Heard.

Opening: In-person session began at 5:40 at the Central Library Branch on S. Salina St.

Welcome and Introduction: Commissioners welcomed Mary Grace Almandrez and Duane Reese to the Human Rights Commission. No members from the public were present.

Report and updates from ODI admin: International Human Rights Day is Dec. 10, 2025. Among some of the themes to celebrate during IHRD: "Equality and Dignity for all People" and "All Human, All Equal." Commissioners discussed contacting media outlets and conducting interviews with News Channel 9's Bridge Street and local radio outlets. The HRC wants to localize events around the 2025 International Human Rights Day theme.

Discussion: Commissioners discussed current news events happening in the country, including the dismantling of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives across the nation and the elimination of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Commissioners also asked the difference between the NYS Division of Human Rights and Onondaga County/Syracuse Human Rights Commission.

Outreach: Commissioner Leo Sanchez asked if fact cards could be printed to alert the community about the work of the HRC, specifically, "What do we do? What are you charged to do? And when should community members call the Office of DI to ask questions.

Previous HRC events : Commissioners discussed their past work in the community, including a forum with Focus Greater Syracuse; MLK Day panel discussion with the NYS Hate and Bias Prevention Unit; Guiding the Jordan-Elbridge Central School District on cultural competency; Being available to the Solvay Union Free School District regarding a sporting matter.

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Upcoming HRC events: Commissioners want to join members of the Deaf New American farmers and community members as they host an Open House of their farm Asha Laaya in Kirkville in July. Commissioners also want to be part of the training that the Deaf New Americans want to offer to local law enforcement agencies. Commissioners discussed the value and importance of law enforcement knowing how to interact with deaf individuals and people with developmental or physical disabilities. Commissioners discussed the Blue Envelope program in Onondaga County and other surrounding counties.

Follow up: Next meeting is April 16, 2025 at the Central Library on South Salina Street.

Meeting ended at 6:50 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Montanette Rocker on March 19, 2025