Legislation Text

File #: 2026-0766, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Human Resources Department
Staff Name and Phone Number: Janell Crane, 707-565-2885; Meira Bowcut 707-565-1851
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:
The Commission on Human Rights 2026-2027 Work Plan

Recommended Action:

Accept a report on the 2026-2027 Commission on Human Rights Work Plan

Executive Summary:

The Commission on Human Rights' 2026-2027 Work Plan advances its mission through committee work and community programs centered on education, advocacy, and equity, with an emphasis on supporting marginalized populations. Priority efforts include public engagement, communications, capacity building, and surveillance initiatives, as well as the "Understanding Human Dignity" workshop and the West Sonoma County Soup and Community Project. The plan also continues the Youth Commission Educational Program and the annual Kathleen Finigan Award Ceremony, which honors an individual or organization serving the unhoused community.

Discussion:

The Commission on Human Rights will continue advancing its mission through a range of ad hoc committees and community-based initiatives focused on leadership, education, advocacy, and public engagement. These efforts are intended to promote dignity, equity, and access to human rights for all members of the community, particularly individuals and groups who are marginalized, underserved, or experiencing violations of their rights.

Current ad hoc initiatives include:

1. Events, Forums, and Spotlight Ad Hoc will plan events, community forums, and spotlights during the 2026-2027 fiscal year to increase awareness of the Commission on Human Rights, provide education and resources, and create opportunities for public engagement, including at least one major event such as a potential 2027 Human Rights Summit, while also facilitating forums for residents to share concerns that may be elevated to the Board of Supervisors.

2. Communications and Visibility Ad Hoc will enhance Commission on Human Rights outreach by sharing human rights information, data, and educational materials, strengthening digital platforms and public engagement, and advancing the Visibility Project's survey and data efforts to increase awareness, accessibility, and collaboration across Sonoma County's human rights and community networks.

3. Commission on Human Rights Capacity Building and Shared Leadership Ad hoc strengthens the Sonoma County Human Rights Commission by improving leadership, training, accountability, and strategic planning through a Human Rights Framework grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to better identify and address community needs and advance equity, dignity, and inclusion.

4. Surveillance Ad Hoc reviews the use of surveillance technologies in Sonoma County through a human rights lens, promoting transparency and public dialogue while informing recommendations to ensure privacy, civil liberties, equity, and human rights are protected.

Current projects include:

1. Understanding Human Dignity: A Civic Education Workshop that uses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to guide reflection and dialogue with incarcerated individuals on respect, accountability, and dignity, supporting personal growth, self-awareness, and understanding of how human rights principles can inform positive decision-making and stronger, more equitable communities.

2. West Sonoma County Health Center and Community Services Soup and Community Project expands on Project 100 by West County Health Services, a monthly community soup program in the lower Russian River area that addresses food insecurity and limited access to care by bringing together local

partners to provide free healthy meals and connect residents to health and social resources, supporting dignity, wellness, and basic human rights.

In addition, the Commission will continue supporting the Youth Commission Educational Program, which empowers local youth through leadership development and human rights education and will host the annual Kathleen Finigan Award Ceremony. This award recognizes an individual whose exceptional leadership and service reflects former Commissioner Kathleen Finigan's commitment to supporting the unhoused community.

Strategic Plan:
N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?
No

Prior Board Actions:
March 14,2023 (2022-1365) Commission on Human Rights 2021-2023 Work Plan

FISCAL SUMMARY
N/A
Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:
N/A
Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):
N/A

Attachments:
Work Plan

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:
N/A