



# STRATEGIC PLAN

CITY OF LITTLE ROCK  
RACIAL & CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMISSION

2020-2025



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM THE RACIAL & CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMISSION .....	1
ABOUT THE RACIAL & CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMISSION.....	3
RCDC CIRCLE OF FRIENDS LOGO.....	4
BACKGROUND: FUTURE LITTLE ROCK.....	5
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAST 20 YEARS.....	7
THE 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW: MISSION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	11
THE 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN--FOUR PRIORITIES.....	13
RACIAL & CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMISSION MEMBERS & STAFF.....	17
STRATEGIC PRIORITY ACTION COMMITTEES.....	18



# A MESSAGE FROM THE RACIAL & CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMISSION

What is the state of race relations?

According to the report *Race in America 2019* published by the Pew Research Center, about 60 percent of Americans believe that the state of race relations in the United States is poor with little hope of it improving. Over half of those surveyed believe that race relations have become worse over recent years. Confirming this belief, the Federal Bureau of Investigation released a report in 2017 which showed a 17 percent surge in hate crimes from the year before, marking an increase for three years in a row. The report also revealed that three out of five offenses targeted people due to their race and ethnicity.

The public sentiment, the data, the current climate of divisive and racial rhetoric headlining in the media, underscore a greater urgency for strategic work to bring forth racial justice. To that end the Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission - a Commission tasked with dismantling racism - has renewed its vigor by developing a 5-year strategic plan to identify the Commission's priorities and its approaches to implementing them. The plan will guide our programs, policy recommendations, and services.

Anchoring our strategic plan are four broad priorities which will serve as focal points to allocate our energy and resources. Some of the established priorities result from a combination of discussion and data identifying critical areas where racial disparities exist. Our priorities address: (1) Income and Economic Empowerment, (2) Community Justice and Law Enforcement, (3) Inclusiveness on Boards and Commissions, and (4) Multicultural Education and Celebration.

This plan is a living document; it is a dynamic framework subject to updates and adjustments as we respond to conditions in our community, continue to engage residents, and take in new information. However, our commitment to our mission remains steady and resolute.

As we work to meet our identified priorities, we believe our efforts will foster hope and optimism in our fellow citizens and inspire them to labor with us on this mission of goodwill. We imagine a Little Rock that will serve as a model for other communities determined to face down racism and strengthen their home by increasing racial and cultural diversity throughout their city.

Sincerely,  
Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025



## **GLOBAL IMAGINATION STAGE PERFORMANCE**

Children from all over the state of Arkansas have participated in cultural activities at World Fest since 1994.

*Performance by Horace Mann Middle Magnet School  
(Little Rock School District)*



# ABOUT THE RACIAL & CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMISSION

Established, August 2, 1994, by Ordinance 16,722, the Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission was formed as a race relations advisory body. Among the Commission's duties and powers are to advise and assist the City in combatting racism and to promote equal opportunity and full exercise of civil rights for all persons without discrimination because of race, ethnicity, color or national origin. On January 20, 1998, by Ordinance 17,665, it was determined that the Commission should be reconstituted and its function reorganized to have a closer relationship with the Mayor.

In accordance to Ordinance 17,665, the Commission's purpose is to promote equal opportunity and ensure the full exercise of civil rights for all citizens of the City. It is committed to dismantling racism and reducing prejudice within the City through modeling, education and policy development.

The Commission's size and membership structure have varied over the years. Currently, the Commission is a thirteen (13) member advisory body. [Ordinance 20,746]

The thirteen (13) member body comprise of one member selected from each of the City's seven (7) wards; one (1) member selected from the Little Rock School District and five (5) members are selected on an at-large basis. Additionally, the Commission is assigned a non-voting, liaison from the Little Rock Board of Directors.

Each member is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by majority vote of the Little Rock Board of Directors. All Commission members serve on a volunteer basis and meet regularly, at least, once a month.

In 2014, as a part of its 20-year anniversary commemoration, the Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission adopted a new logo, the *Circle of Justice and Friendship*.

# RCDC CIRCLE OF FRIENDS LOGO



The Circle of Justice and Friendship features a circular seal. Forming the circle are five individuals, varied in color to represent racial and cultural diversity. With open and outstretched arms, the figures welcome the community with friendship. In the center of the figure is the lodestar of justice is formed- the shining guide sits at the very heart of the Commission. Encircling the star, the figures stand back-to-back, yet shoulder-to-shoulder, their overlapping arms are an expression of interconnection, unity and solidarity—all necessary to uphold and defend their shared pursuit of justice.



# BACKGROUND: FUTURE-Little Rock

Over 20 years ago, FUTURE-Little Rock, an initiative consisting between 400-600 local residents, was created. Local residents came together to research and propose solutions to address youth crime and other social challenges plaguing our City. Though the spread of drugs and youth crime were palpable, the undercurrent of race continued as a pervasive predictor throughout the community.

As a part of FUTURE-Little Rock, a group of diverse community members formed The Racial and Cultural Diversity Taskforce. The Taskforce took stock of past and present racial problems in the City of Little Rock. Issues spanning from Law Enforcement, Education, Employment and Income were researched by interviewing citizens, City leadership and other public officials.

Their efforts resulted in a report published December of 1992 that identified the need for the formation of a City, high-priority, race-relations Commission. The Taskforce recommended the following:

*The Racial and Cultural Diversity Task Force* strongly recommends the city government of Little Rock begin now a continuing program of anti-racism and make it an official activity with equal priority to combating crime, fighting fires or paving streets.

We are grateful for the insight, dedication and hard work of local residents who came together to propose the formation of the Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission. As a result of their efforts, The Little Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission was formed in August 1994.





*Residents learn about Boards and Commissions and the benefits of public service.*







*Whether it's creating a platform for individuals to be heard or meeting with innovative change makers, RCDC has been there.*



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAST 20 YEARS

- Reforming the Boards and Commissions Application Process
- Voting Rights Restoration Workshops
- World Fest/ Global Village, Global Imagination Stage
- Healing Racism Institute and Diversity Training Classes
- Boards and Commission Recruitment Events
- International Visitors Program
- Film showings: The Children's March, Bridge to the Ballot, Viva La Causa, & Selma: Bridge to the Ballot
- Arkansas Fair Housing Commission
- Supported Policies to increase racial diversity on Land Bank Commission
- Youth Diversity Councils
- Cultural Programming
- Recommendations to the Board of Directors & City Manager, Tech Park, Boards & Commissions
- Cultural Competency and LRPD Recommendations
- Keepin' It Real Conferences
- Dr. Fred Gray Breakfast
- Reinstatement of LRPD cadet program
- Rights After Wrongs - A Day of Service/Lifetime of Change



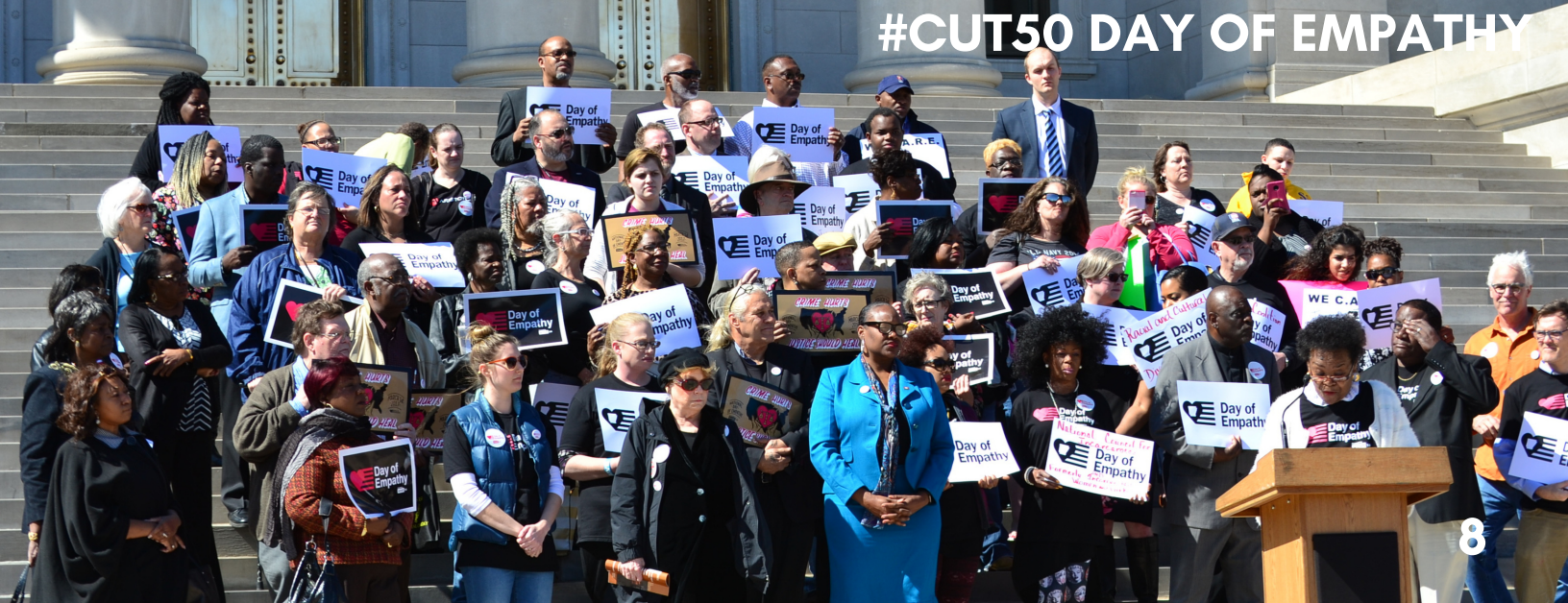
# 2018 MAYORAL DEBATE ON RACE



# RCDC 20TH ANNIVERSARY LOGO UNVEILING



# #CUT50 DAY OF EMPATHY





# ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH



# IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH





# WORLD FEST





# THE 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

## MISSION STATEMENT:

The Little Rock Racial & Cultural Diversity Commission has the full-time mission of promoting equitable opportunity and the full exercise of civil rights for all residents of the City. The Commission is committed to dismantling racism and reducing prejudice within the City through modeling, education, policy development and diversity celebration.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The Racial & Cultural Diversity Commission tackles its strategic priorities with a commitment to the following guiding principles:



EQUITY



EMPOWERMENT



ADVOCACY



EDUCATION



ENGAGEMENT



POLICY





# Breakfast with Dr. Fred Grey

RCDC hosts breakfast with  
legendary Civil Rights Attorney  
Dr. Fred Grey



# The 2025 Strategic Plan: Four Strategic Priorities

## PRIORITY 1.0 —BOARDS & COMMISSIONS INCLUSIVENESS

*GOAL: Increase racial and ethnic diversity on the City's 30+ Boards & Commissions to Reflect City Demographics.*

- Strategy 1.1: Assess the demographic make-up of Boards and Commissions applicants bi-annually.
- Strategy 1.2: Examine current Boards and Commissions administrative processes, policies and practices to identify areas of strength and opportunities.
- Strategy 1.3: Implement quarterly community outreach efforts to increase public awareness about boards and commissions opportunities.
- Strategy 1.4: Improve recruitment efforts to attract racially and ethnically diverse applicants to Boards and Commissions.
- Strategy 1.5: Research and formulate best practices and recommendations toward the City meeting its Inclusiveness goals on Boards and Commissions.
- Strategy 1.6: Empower all Boards and Commissions to actively participate in the recruitment of a diverse applicant pool for their respective bodies.



# The 2025 Strategic Plan: Four Strategic Priorities

## PRIORITY 2.0 — MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION & CELEBRATION

*GOAL: Recognize, celebrate and showcase the contributions and richness of various racial and ethnic groups in the community.*

*GOAL: Promote interest, dialogue and cultural exchanges between individuals of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.*

*GOAL: Foster an environment that appreciates and values racial and cultural diversity.*

Strategy 2.1: Develop an Intercultural Speaker's Bureau to promote cross cultural education.

Strategy 2.2: Host multicultural events to celebrate the richness of various racial and ethnic groups in the community.

Strategy 2.3: Continually assess the City's public spaces for micro inequities to ensure racial and cultural inclusion.

Strategy 2.4: Formulate recommendations to City leadership to further the stated Multicultural Education goals.

# The 2025 Strategic Plan: Four Strategic Priorities

## PRIORITY 3.0 — COMMUNITY JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

*Goal: Advocate for a more equitable criminal and juvenile justice system, particularly addressing issues of racial disparity in policing and corrections.*

*Goal: Challenge systems of inequality through education, empowerment and advocacy.*

*Goal: Create community platforms for citizens to engage with public officials.*

Strategy: 3.1: Take steps to reduce bias and improve cultural competency within the City of Little Rock.

Strategy: 3.2: Increase availability of reentry resources through community programming and education.

Strategy: 3.3: Formulate and advocate for policies and recommendations that advance a more equitable society for all people.



# The 2025 Strategic Plan: Four Strategic Priorities

## PRIORITY 4.0 — INCOME & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

*Goal: Ensure minority enterprises have an equitable opportunity to contribute to the growth of the City of Little Rock.*

- Strategy: 4.1: Collaborate with the City of Little Rock Purchasing and Procurement division to increase minority contracts.
- Strategy: 4.2: Assist in developing educational resources to minority entrepreneurs that create a pathway to doing business with the City of Little Rock.
- Strategy: 4.3: Make policy and administrative recommendations to address economic challenges faced by minority-owned businesses.

# Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Members & Staff

## **COMMISSIONERS**

Westley Ashley

Jerry Bailey

Amber Booth-McCoy

Rachael Borne

Ellen Brown

Juliana Flinn

LeQuieta Grayson

Kiral Gunter

Michal Harris

Hosea Long

Bryant Warr

## **STAFF**

Ericka Benedicto - Diversity Program Manager

Juanenna Williams- Diversity Program Assistant

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Rachael Borne, Amber Booth-McCoy, Juliana Flinn, LeQuieta Grayson, Ericka Benedicto, Juanenna Williams, Nicole Freeman\*  
(\*Former Commissioner)



# THE 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN: ACTION COMMITTEES

## **World Fest Committee**

The World Fest Committee is responsible for planning the Commission's annual student-oriented multicultural festival in which students learn about and celebrate diverse ethnicities. Committee tasks and responsibilities include generating ideas to enhance the festival, identifying and bringing in new partners that fit within the World Fest mission, and working with staff to organize and execute event.

## **Income & Economic Empowerment Committee**

The Income and Economic Empowerment Committee addresses issues related to economic opportunity and economic disparity faced by people of color. This Committee works closely with the City of Little Rock's Purchasing Division to develop programming and policy and administrative recommendations that increase business opportunities for minority entrepreneurs.

## **Boards & Commission Recruitment Committee**

The Boards and Commission Committee is responsible for the ongoing recruitment, tracking of the demographics of those applying and appointed to these governing bodies. Committee members research and make policy/administrative recommendations to City leadership to increase diversity on the City's over 30 Boards and Commissions.

## **Community Justice & Law Enforcement Committee**

The Community Justice and Law Enforcement Committee identifies critical issues in the justice system and develops programming (i.e. Voting Rights Restoration Workshops) or makes policy/administrative recommendations to address various needs. The committee continues work with LRPD leadership and develop community initiatives to promote civic engagement and educate the public about their rights. Stay current on local, state and national issues to anticipate and identify issues that may have relevance to the Little Rock community.



# R.A.W.

## Rights After Wrongs: A Day of Service, a Lifetime of Change

Service Providers  
offering information  
& resources to  
individuals with  
criminal convictions.





# A Seat at the Table

## Recruitment event for Boards and Commissions of the City of Little Rock

Panel Discussion, Q & A session, networking, tabling from various city commissions.







# MLK Holiday

## Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday film showing

City employees watch  
a civil rights film  
featuring Dr. King.

City employees  
have also  
participated in  
sharing their  
thoughts of what  
Dr. King and his  
impact on film.

*Join us as we Remember the Legacy of  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*



Friday, January 18th, 2013  
11:30 a.m.

Little Rock City Hall Board Room Chambers

*A 30-minute documentary film produced by the City of Little Rock's RCDC and LRTV*

*Starring...  
City of Little Rock Employees*









[www.littlerock.gov](http://www.littlerock.gov)