



ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

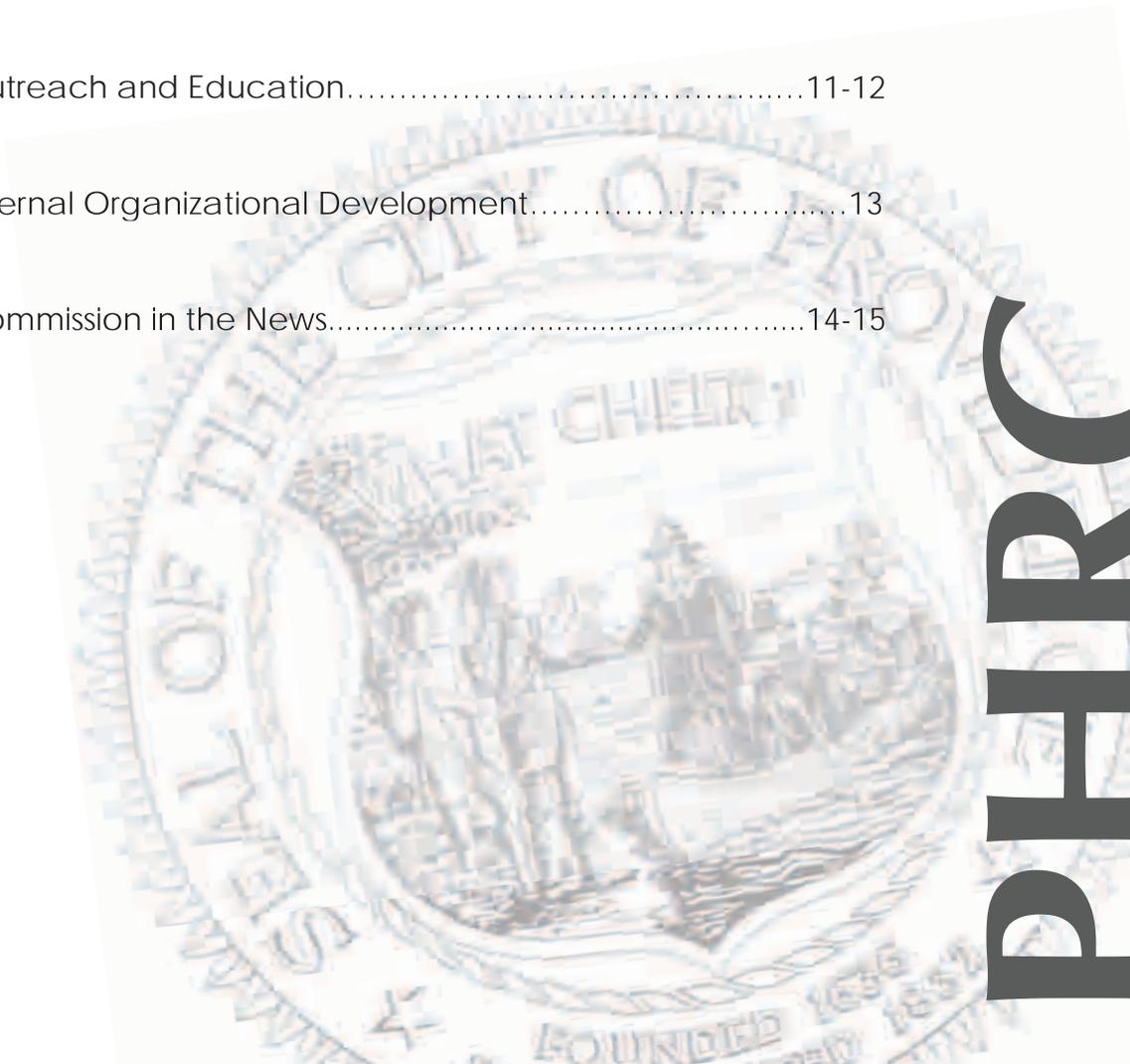
PROVIDENCE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION



Mayor David N. Cicilline

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PHRC

PROVIDENCE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Committed to
justice,
equality
and respect.



PHRC

PROVIDENCE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Honorable David N. Cicilline

The Honorable Members of the Providence City Council:

We respectfully submit the Annual Report for the Providence Human Relations Commission (PHRC) for FY 2007-2008, pursuant to Section 16-64 (K) of the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance.

The City of Providence has become one of the most diverse cities in the United States, and this has drawn attention to the role the PHRC plays in the city of Providence. The PHRC began a transformational and restructuring process to develop a new direction of the Commission. We strongly believe that community voices needed to be part of this process, thus we brought together community leaders to ask for their input.

The PHRC kicked off a comprehensive public awareness campaign entitled Discrimination is Illegal. The campaign was designed to inform people of their rights and provide information on how to report discrimination in the areas we investigate. The message, Discrimination is Illegal, was displayed on bus shelters, RIPTA buses, local newspapers; it was also broadcasted on local radio stations. This campaign was intended to help heighten awareness as the PHRC advances its goal of minimizing discrimination.

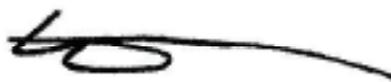
Over the past year, we continued to vigorously process complaints, enforce the city ordinance against discrimination, work diligently to strengthen the Human Relations Commission and ensure that it meets the current needs of our residents. We also developed a new outreach and education program to coordinate workshops and seminars on the regular basis.

Our major accomplishments this year can be summarize in the fact that we continue to promote social justice through advocacy, training and education and we stand ready to investigate any complaints of alleged discrimination. We are very excited and encouraged by the revival of the Providence Human Relations Commission after several months of dormancy and rebuilding. For this, we are very thankful for the cooperation, diligence and support of Mayor Cicilline and his staff.

Sincerely,



Melba Depeña
Executive Director



Thomas Whitten
Chairperson





Established in 1963, the Providence Human Relations Commission (PHRC) investigates complaints of alleged discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, gender, physical or mental disability, familial status, sexual orientation, nationality, or marital status in the areas of housing, employment, credit, education, and public accommodations. Additionally, the PHRC promotes understanding and builds positive relationships among the City's diverse populations.

Staff

Melba Depeña
Executive Director

Janette Thomas
Investigator

Wanda Escobedo
Secretary

Olajumoke Akinrolabu, Esq.
Legal Counsel
Law Department

PHRC Commissioners

Thomas P. Whitten
Chairperson

Sister Ann Keefe
Vice Chairperson

Wendy Becker

Everett Brooks

Kenneth Brown

Marilyn Cepeda-Sanchez

Sister Angela Daniels

Mary Dean

Bishop Robert E. Farrow

Special thanks to:

Pich Chhoeun and Joan Gelch who also served during this fiscal year.



The practice or policy of discrimination against individuals because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, disability, age or country of ancestral origin, is a serious concern for the city of Providence. Such discrimination threatens the welfare of our citizens as it lessens their standard of living, reduces their ability to provide for their families, and undermines our ability to thrive as a diverse city. The PHRC strives to safeguard the rights of Providence residents to be free from discrimination, and works to foster a climate of respect for the many diverse communities that make our city strong.

The mission of the PHRC is twofold:

1) to seek, investigate, mediate and/or adjudicate complaints of discrimination filed with the Commission and promote compliance with civil rights law.

2) to promote, facilitate, and foster positive relationships among and between the diverse groups and communities within the city of Providence through outreach, education, training and community building activities.

This year has been an exciting year of growth and development for the PHRC, as the staff has worked diligently to fulfill its critical mission of reducing discrimination and improving community relations in the City of Providence. Following a systemic internal organizational review resulting in the development of sound organization policies and procedures, the Staff heard and adjudicated complaints of civil rights violations, and provided education and training to the community on a wide range of civil rights-related topics. Additionally, to insure our work met the needs of the communities in Providence, the PHRC met with community leaders to engage them in a discussion of the Commission and its direction for the future.

What follows in this report are specifics about the work of the Commission including its work hearing complaints, providing educational workshops, outreaching to the community, and building organizational infrastructure.



The Process of Filing

Any person who claims to be aggrieved by an alleged violation of the law administered by the PHRC may contact our office by phone, mail or in person. The Commission's procedures does not commence until a formal application has been completed and signed in person.

Intake Form (blue form): The intake form is completed by the Administrative Assistant when inquiries are done by telephone. This form is submitted to the Investigator who then calls the inquirer for further details. The assigned investigator schedules an appointment with the person making the inquiry to get more in depth information about the alleged act of discrimination and to draft the complaint.

During this process the investigator must determined if the complaint falls within the law administered by the Commission, thus the following requirements must be met:

- 1.** The complaint must be filed within 180 days of the occurrence.
 - 2.** The incident must have occurred within the city of Providence.
- If statue of limitation and jurisdiction is established, the inquirer is asked to fill out a **"Petition Seeking the Filing of a Complaint" Form (white form)**. This must be done in person to establish the identity of the complainant. If the above requirements are not met the complainant is informed immediately and presented with other options that he/she may pursue.

Complaint Process: the Investigator and the complainant meet and fill out a "Petition Seeking the Filing of a Complaint" form including a detailed explanation of what has occurred. The PHRC process is explained to the complainant. The case is reviewed by the Executive Director and PHRC sends a letter requesting a Position Statement (the respondent view of what occurred) about the charge.

Fact finding Meeting: Once a position statement is received from the respondent, PHRC reviews both statements and a fact-finding meeting is scheduled for all parties involved. During this fact-finding meeting, questions are asked of both parties. If there is probable cause—evidence indicates that there is reason to believe that the anti-discrimination ordinance could be violated; we attempt to conciliate the case. If conciliation fails, the charge could go to an administrative hearing.

Investigations: All information sought is related to the complaint under investigation. Subpoenas, interrogatories, and depositions are the formal tools of discovery, although less formal means of discovery is also used by the staff. We gather facts from the person making the complaint, witnesses, respondents, and through site visits, and other means.



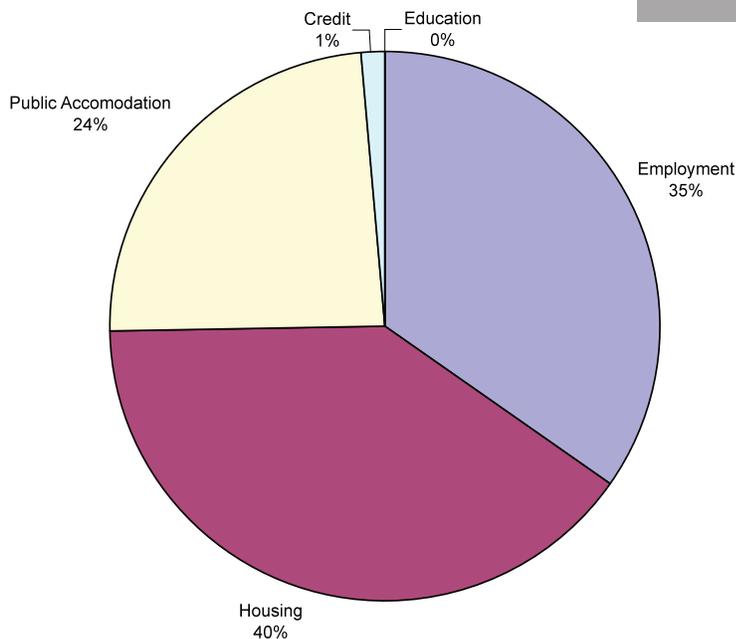
Numbers of Complaints of Discrimination Filed for 2007-2008

	Race/ Ethnicity	Religion	Disability	Age	Marital Status	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Employment	14	2	4	2		2	2
Housing	14		3	11	1	1	
Public	7		6				
Credit				2			
Education							

Disposition and Status of Complaints Filed for 2007-2008

Type	Count
Probable Cause	4
No Probable Cause	13
Settlement	3
Out of Jurisdiction	11
Statute of Limitation	3
Mediation	18
Open	10
Closed	13

Percentage of Cases by Discrimination Area for 2007-2008



SELECTED CASE EXAMPLES

The following three cases are an example of the type of cases we have investigated during this year. In order to preserve confidentiality, identifying information was omitted from the actual case.

1) An African America male, employee of a national chain restaurant, alleged that he was a victim of sexual harassment by coworkers, making demeaning and derogatory sexual remarks. He complained to upper management numerous times, including writing letters to the corporate office. He felt due to his race his complaints fell on deaf ears. He felt his only recourse was to file a complaint with the Providence Human Relations Commission. Once the complaint was filed and the investigation processes begun the corporation took immediate notice of the respondent's issues and settled for an undisclosed amount.

2) A middle aged Caucasian woman had been employed at a company for over ten years. A new company acquired this company, with new rules and regulations. This woman lost her position and she felt it was due to her age due to the fact that she was replaced by a much younger person. Furthermore, younger employees with similar qualifications retained her position. After a full investigation by the Commission a probable cause finding was entered. Due to her filing with the PHRC, she will be able to go back to her position.

3) A Caucasian woman went into a restaurant and felt the hostess discriminated against her because of the way she dressed, asking her, "Are you homeless?" She felt very offended and decided to file a complaint. Through the investigation it was found no probable cause but the restaurant owner did offer an apology to the women and offer to ensure that his business will do a better job of not judging customers by their appearances. The business owner was educated about issues of poverty and class, and a community member was satisfied with the apology.



During the fiscal year, the PHRC developed an education and training program for the community that included four well attended and well received workshops. The goal was to provide high-quality, quarterly workshops and seminars to the general public about issues related to inter-group relations and civil rights as well as the discrimination areas the PHRC investigates.

Workshops:

• **Intercultural Communication in the Workplace**

The goal of this workshop was to inform the Providence workforce about communication challenges in interacting with different cultures. The guest speakers were Reverend Matthew Kai, Pastor, Westside Tabernacle Baptist Church, George Ortiz, Chief Operations Officer from Progreso Latino, and Donna Fishman, from the Rhode Island Coalition for Affirmative Action. This interactive workshop was designed to help participants learn principles of effective communication within culturally diverse workplace and aimed at fostering better relationships among coworkers of different races and ethnicities. The workshop was held at the University of Rhode Island, Feinstein Providence Campus and there were over 60 participants.

• **Training for Landlords: Fair Housing is used often do you know what it means?**

The goal of this workshop was to instruct landlords on the state and federal fair housing practices and laws so they would avoid discrimination against tenants and rental applicants. The guest speakers were Doris De Los Santos, Coordinator, Lead Technical Asst. Center RI Housing Resource Commission, John Nimmo, Assistant Director, Housing Network of Rhode Island, and Katie Aliberti, Outreach Organizer, Housing Network of Rhode Island. The workshop was conceived because of the large amount of phone calls the PHRC and other organizations received from landlords on fair housing practices and concerns. Guest speakers covered the following: Who is protected by Fair Housing Laws, Screening & Selecting Tenants, Lead Inspections and how does fair housing affects you and your tenants? The workshop was held at the International Institute, Providence and over 25 landlords were present.

• **Is There Discrimination in the Workplace?**

Another interactive workshop designed to help participants learn the principles of the workplace discrimination and aimed at fostering better relationships among coworkers of different races and ethnicity. The guest speakers were Gertrude Jones, from Lifespan, Michelle Duso, Power4Good and moderator James Vincent, from the Rhode Island Affirmative Action Professional (RIAAP). This workshop was held at University of RI, Feinstein Providence Campus and there were 50 participants from local banks, companies and city departments.



• Foreclosure Prevention Day

The purpose of this activity was to provide city residents information about how to avoid foreclosure and protect their credit in this housing crisis. During the day, eight agencies that have trained foreclosure counselors participated to answer questions and assist those seeking help as they try to keep their home. Participating organizations included: Acorn Housing, The Elmwood Foundation, Housing Network of Rhode Island, State of RI Housing Resource Commission, Rhode Island Housing Help Center and West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation. This event was cosponsored by the Mayor's Office and the Office for Planning and Development.

Outreach Breakfasts

In addition to the workshops, the PHRC held community breakfasts for community leaders who work with people most affected by the work of the PHRC. These meetings were designed to engage the community in our mission, seek their opinions about our movement forward, and gain their support for our efforts.

PHRC Breakfast: Breakfast of Champions, June 28, 2007 Providence School Department, 797 Westminster Street, 3rd Floor, Superintendent's Conference Room, Providence, RI, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

The focus was to engage community leaders in a conversation about the new direction of the PHRC, and explain the work we will be doing. Sharon Chancellor, President of Chancellor HRD moderated the discussion, capturing insights and opinions of the 46 community leaders who attended.

PHRC Breakfast: Community Relations, March 26, 2008 Providence School Department, 797 Westminster Street, 3rd Floor, Superintendent's Conference Room, Providence, RI 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

The goal was for community leaders to inform the PHRC of the needs of the city and offer their perspective on the work the Commission should be doing. Community leaders were asked to answer questions in three small groups, and report their discussion to the larger group. This event was facilitated by Commissioner Wendy Becker with approximately 50 community leaders from diverse organizations attending.

A report highlighting the discussion and recommendations from these breakfasts was written and sent to all participants. The report made clear that participants wanted active engagement by the PHRC in facilitating regular community meetings among diverse groups in Providence, and ongoing discussions and trainings of the issues affecting us all. Further, community leaders wanted further clarification of our work as we move forward as an active voice on issues of civil rights and human relations.



In order to more effectively do the work of the commission, the staff was involved in important training over the course of the year.

MEDIATOR TRAINING

Community Mediation Center of Rhode Island
570 Broad Street, Providence, RI 02907

Both the Executive Director and Investigator are certified trained mediators, after completing a 34 hour Mediation Skills Training Program. Mediation is a process in which two sides discuss a dispute with a neutral third party. The role of the mediator is to assist them to reach a solution that works for both parties.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY- EEOC

Boston Area Office
JFK Federal Building, Boston, MA

Both Executive Director and Investigator attended the EEOC Training April 10, 2008.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is a federal agency responsible for enforcing employment discrimination laws. The Training Institute provides a variety of training to commissions to help them understand, and correct discrimination in the workplace. The training offered insightful and practical in theories of discrimination, investigative interview, investigative techniques, circumstantial evidence, documentary evidence, testimony and review of federal laws.

Trainings attended by the Executive Director

The following trainings were conducted by New Roots Providence.

- Developing Board Leadership
- Program Design
- Evaluation Training
- Revitalizing Your Board of Directors
- Clarifying your Mission, Vision and Purpose
- Introduction to Grantwriting



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SEARCH

Committed to Justice, Equality and Respect

By Peter C. Wells



Melba Depena, Executive Director of the Providence Human Relations Commission

Providence, RI- Melba Depena was born in the city of Santiago, Dominican Republic, the eldest of two children born to Narciso and Maria Depena. Melba arrived in the United States in 1982 and has lived in the City of Providence since her arrival and attended Roger Williams Middle School and Central High School. Melba earned both Bachelor of Science and Masters degrees in Human Development and Family Studies with a concentration in College Student Personnel. Melba has always been involved in human development and is credited with co-founding various vocaroo advocacy groups like Latina United for Change (LUCHA), the Latina Leadership Institute, Señoritas Latinas Unidas-URI Chapter, and De Mujer a Mujer; and has been an active participant in other community organizations such as Instituto Dauriano of Rhode Island, Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, Urban League of Rhode Island, Leadership for a Future, The Latino Political Action Committee, The Latino Civic Fund, and Dominican American National Roundtable.

Politically Melba coordinated political campaigns for Councilman Ricardo Patino, Senator Juan Pichardo, Secretary of State Matthew Brown and Myrah York. Professionally she has worked as the Executive Assistant to the Vice Provost at the University of Rhode Island Providence Campus, Field Director for Matt Brown's 2002 campaign for Secretary of State, Coordinator of Rhode Island Kids Count's Covering Kids Program, Coordinator of the Multicultural Center at the University of Rhode Island, and Executive Director of the RI Democratic Party, position that made her the first woman and the first Latina to ever run the Party. Currently, Melba Depena is the first Latina Executive Director of the Providence Human Relations Commission. It is leading her team into an era of active community outreach. Melba may walk softly but her role in City government requires that she carry a big stick. The Human Relations Commission was established by Ordinance in 1963 to enforce laws of equal opportunity for all Providence residents, at a time when civil unrest was sweeping many urban areas throughout the country. The Providence Human Relations Commission was created in response to the turmoil that the city was experiencing at the time. The purpose of the commission was to build a mutual understanding and respect among the city's diverse population.

Depena said she always believed in social justice and equality, but she didn't realize how important it was until she came to Providence. She said she was born in a small town in the Dominican Republic and she was the only girl in her family to go to college. She said she was the first woman in her family to go to college and she was the first woman in her family to go to college. She said she was the first woman in her family to go to college and she was the first woman in her family to go to college.

PHRC will also host several public events to seek community input. The message, Discrimination is illegal, can be found on bus shelters, RIPTA buses and in newspapers. It's also being broadcast on local radio stations. According to Human Relations Commission Executive Director Melba Depena, the goal of the campaign is to encourage residents who feel that they have been the victim of discrimination to file a complaint with the Commission. "We've worked hard over the past year to strengthen the Human Relations Commission to ensure that it meets the current needs of our residents," said Depena. "In addition to promoting social justice through advocacy, training and education, we stand ready to investigate any complaints of alleged discrimination."

Business as usual

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

NEWS BRIEFS

Providence Human Relations Commission unveils new awareness campaign

PHRC will also host several public events to seek community input

PROVIDENCE - The Providence Human Relations Commission (PHRC) has kicked off a new comprehensive public awareness campaign entitled Discrimination is Illegal. The campaign is designed to inform people of their rights and provide information on how to report discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, credit, education and public accommodations.

The message, Discrimination is illegal, can be found on bus shelters, RIPTA buses and in newspapers. It's also being broadcast on local radio stations. According to Human Relations Commission Executive Director Melba Depena, the goal of the campaign is to encourage residents who feel that they have been the victim of discrimination to file a complaint with the Commission.

28th in an effort to solicit input from community leaders on the agency's mission. Other upcoming events include:

Intercultural Communication in the Workplace - July 31st

Workshop aimed at fostering better relationship among co-workers of different race and ethnicity through communication.

Fair Housing in Rhode Island - August 7th

Workshop will review state and federal fair housing practices and laws as it applies to housing providers to avoid discrimination against tenants and rental applicants.

For more information on the Breakfast of Champions and the upcoming workshops, contact the Human Relations Commission at (401) 351-0475 or visit the City's Web site at www.providenceri.com.

"We've worked hard over the past year to strengthen the Human Relations Commission to ensure that it meets the current needs of our residents," said Depena. "In addition to promoting social justice through advocacy, training and education, we stand ready to investigate any complaints of alleged discrimination."

"We are very excited and encouraged by this tangible evidence of revival of the Providence Human Relations Commission after several months of dormancy and 'shut-downs,'" stated Thomas P. Whitten, Chairman, Human Relations Commission. "Thanks to the cooperation, diligence and support of Mayor Cicilline, the Commission now has a full complement of dedicated commissioners and a well prepared, highly qualified staff."

Providence En Español

Comisión de Relaciones Humanas convoca reunión

En contra de la discriminación

PROVIDENCE - Ante los cada vez más comunes casos de discriminación que tienen lugar en Providence en áreas tales como vivienda, empleo, acomodación pública, educación y estatus de crédito, la Comisión de Relaciones Humanas de la ciudad inició una serie de reuniones comunitarias en diversos centros y organizaciones no lucrativas de la zona.

Estos encuentros iniciaron el pasado lunes 14 de julio en la Asociación de Vecinos de Mt Hope, miércoles 16, en el Instituto Internacional y jueves 17, en el Centro Comunitario West End.

Las reuniones comunitarias continuarán el lunes 21 de julio, en John Hope Settlement House, a partir de las 5:00 de la tarde; jueves 24 de julio, en la Liga Urbana de Rhode Island entre 5:00 y 6:30 de la tarde, y en el Centro Da Vinci, los miércoles 30 de los corrientes, de 11:00 de la mañana a 12:00 del mediodía.

Los organizadores de la iniciativa destacaron que el objetivo de estas reuniones es afianzar su misión de poner fin a la discriminación de que son objeto muchas personas en las áreas antes mencionadas en la ciudad de Providence. Asimismo confiaron en que estos encuentros comunitarios tiendan a mejorar las relaciones entre grupos diversos que convergen en esta urbe.

"Estamos buscando una idea del público sobre sus experiencias en lo que respecta a la diversidad cultural, discriminación y proporcionando información acerca de cómo la Comisión de Relaciones Humanas de Providence (PHRC, siglas en inglés) puede asistirlos", adujo Melba Depena, directora Ejecutiva

Se recomienda encarecidamente a los residentes de Providence asistir ante PHRC, misma que sólo quiere ser receptiva a las necesidades de la comunidad a medida que avanzan sus iniciativas. La Comisión de Relaciones Humanas de Providence ha hecho grandes avances en el último año", dijo Mel Depena. "Pero queremos asegurarnos de que estamos abordando las necesidades específicas de todas las comunidades afectadas por la discriminación", concluyó.

Con el propósito de llegar a todos y cada uno de los residentes de Providence, PHRC ha organizado encuentros comunitarios en diferentes locaciones a través de la ciudad. Las personas, compañías, organizaciones interesadas en participar en estos encuentros gratuitos pueden comunicarse al la Comisión (401) 351-0475

Por Mansabell Brito Foto: Octavio Gómez

PROVIDENCE EN ESPAÑOL

PROVIDENCE - A pesar de que existen numerosas leyes en contra de la discriminación, en cualquier categoría en que se presente, ninguna de ellas grupo social o étnico no ha dejado de ser un problema a nivel mundial. La discriminación existe y por lo visto, subsistirá "por los siglos de los siglos". En esta ocasión, y de manera específica, tomamos como referencia el taller "¿Es la discriminación en el Workplace?" (¿Es la discriminación en el lugar de trabajo?), organizado por la Comisión de Relaciones Humanas de Providence, dedicamos un espacio de exploración sobre dicho tema, sus leyes y las categorías de evolución que más se practican en la actualidad.

El taller se realizó el martes 26 de febrero, en el Campus Providence Francés, de la Universidad de Rhode Island, teniendo como moderador al presidente de la Acción Alternativa de Profesionales del estado (Rhode Island Affirmative Action Professionals-RIAAP), Jen Vitor, y como asistentes invitados a Gertrudis Jones, directora de Diversidad de Utespan, y Michelle Duen, directora de PowerGood.

La primera sesión del taller se asistieron aproximadamente 40 personas, entre empleadores y empleados de compañías, se enfocó en la definición de "discriminación", la cual conceptualmente se presenta como una situación en la que una persona o grupo es tratado de forma desfavorable al causa de su raza, generalmente por pertenecer a una categoría social distinta.

Entre estas categorías se encuentran la raza, la orientación sexual, la religión, el origen socioeconómico, la edad y la discapacidad. Existe una amplia legislación contra la discriminación en materia de igualdad de oportunidades de empleo, vivienda y bienes y servicios.

Pero, a pesar de la amplia variedad de leyes, la discriminación puede ocurrir en los avisos de empleo, en la



Durante el taller de discriminación laboral, participaron como panelistas, Gertrudis Jones,

LA COMUNIDAD / COMMUNITY 08.03.07

Enseñan comportamiento laboral frente a diferentes culturas

Estilo Martínez Espinque Expreso

PROVIDENCE - Con la finalidad de que exista un buen ambiente entre empleadas y jefes de diferentes culturas e idiomas y que la comunicación no sea una barrera entre amigos. La Comisión de Relaciones Humanas, (PHRC) por sus siglas en inglés, de la ciudad de Providence, Rhode Island, dio desarrollo al taller titulado "Comunicación Intercultural en el lugar de empleo" el cual va de mano con el programa "La Discriminación Es Legal", puesto en vigencia por la misma entidad.

En el seminario se enfocó la interrelación entre compañeros de trabajo y lo difícil que es para un inmigrante trabajar con personas que hablan otra lengua diferente a la suya. Allí se enfocó a las asistentes, que sobrepasaron los 60, como tratar a una persona que

habla una lengua distinta y ya sea en una oficina, un lugar público o en un vecindario. Ciertamente, muchas personas se sienten incómodas cuando otras hablan diferente de ellas en inglés, por ejemplo, cuando no se comprende esta lengua. Fue el caso que surgió a que Gertrudis Martínez, una asistente al seminario, "Cuando llegué a este país fue muy difícil para mí cuando mi compañera hablaba con sus amigos en inglés. Cuando ella me hablaba, ellas se reían y yo sentí que había que no era de mí, que mi idioma no había sido aceptado, así me fastidiaba un poco. Ahora que se incluye gente de diferentes idiomas voy personas que me enseñan y de especial enfoque de 'Buenas'".

Situaciones embarazosas como la que contó Gertrudis Martínez, es que buscan evitar a los organizadores del taller "Iniciado por el PHRC, el lunes 30 de este mes. "Este seminario se trata



Melba Depena, directora ejecutiva de La Comisión de Relaciones Humanas del City Hall de Providence.

enseñar como evitar que la comunicación sea interpretada como racismo y discriminación", dijo Melba Depena, presidenta del PHRC. El propósito es dar claridad, los presentes aprendieron a buscar la manera de conocer personas que los puedan orientar, de compartir con los demás, mejorar la profesión al compartir fuera del trabajo, y como la cultura puede afectar la comunicación; además de la importancia de saber de donde vienen los compañeros de trabajo y de establecer un mismo idioma a compartir entre un mismo grupo sin tener que llegar a la interacción.

George L. Ortiz, ejecutivo de Progreso Latino y orador en el acto, indicó que el taller ayudad a las personas a entender como la cultura afecta a la comunicación y como se puede hacer. Esta misma efectiva aunque se comparte con personas de diferentes nacionalidades.

"Estamos examinando como la cultura impacta a la comunicación, como comunicarse en un trabajo con gente de diferentes países. Si estamos en una oficina y hay gente de varios países, lo primero que debemos hacer es considerar quienes son las personas para dar un mismo mensaje y tener una cultura profesional y tratarla a todos de la misma manera, algo que sea entendible por la cultura de la oficina o del jefe sin tener que ofender a los demás; para que haya una comunicación de una manera transparente", indicó Ortiz. Pastor Matthew Kai de la Iglesia Wesleyan Baptist, y Consejero del Ministerio de Libertad, Donna Fishman, Presidente de Rhode Island Coalition for Affirmative Action; y Jennifer M. Thomas, investigadora de PHRC, asistida de Da'Peña y Ortiz desarrollaron algunos puntos en el coloquio.

Comisionados del Comité Relaciones Humanas



Business as usual

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

Last Update: Jul 13 @ 3:07 PM SEARCH

Posted Jun. 29, 2007

City launches anti-bias ad campaign

PROVIDENCE — "Discrimination is illegal."

The campaign features print and radio ads, plus display ads on R.I. Public Transportation Authority buses and bus shelters.



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF PROVIDENCE

"WE STAND READY to investigate any complaints of alleged discrimination," said Melba Depena, the Human Relations Commission's new executive director, in announcing the PHRC's "Discrimination is Illegal" awareness campaign.

Melba Depena, the PHRC's new executive director, said the campaign's goal is to encourage residents who feel that they have been victims of discrimination to file complaints with the commission.

"We've worked hard over the past year to strengthen the Human Relations Commission to ensure that it meets the current needs of our residents," Depena said. "In addition to promoting social justice through advocacy, training and education, we stand ready to investigate any complaints of alleged discrimination."

The campaign was announced yesterday at a Breakfast of Champions for community leaders that was the first in a series of public events the PHRC is hosting, both to gain community input on how to better accomplish its goals and to reach out to those affected by discrimination.

Upcoming events include a July 31 workshop, Intercultural Communication in the Workplace, aimed at fostering better relationships among co-workers of different race and ethnicity; and an Aug. 7 workshop, Fair Housing, which will review state and federal fair housing practices and laws as it applies to housing applicants.

The Providence Human Relations Commission promotes understanding among the city's diverse populations and investigates discrimination complaints, police-community issues and complaints under the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information, visit www.providenceri.com.



ADVERTISEMENT

BUSINESS

SECTION F

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2007

Breaking down cultural barriers boosts understanding in workplace

The Providence Human Relations Commission sponsors a workshop on how supervisors can improve their "multicultural communication" skills.

BY LYNN ARDITI

PROVIDENCE — A handshake or a hug? A direct answer or a story? The way people communicate is rooted in their culture. And as the American workplace becomes increasingly multicultural, that means there is a lot of opportunity for, well, miscommunication.

personal space."

A generation ago, he said, workplace diversity tended to be limited to factories, where owners dealt with language barriers by hiring supervisors who spoke the workers' native tongue. Now, the global economy has helped diversify corporate America — and that, in turn, is requiring managers and employees to improve their "multicultural communication" skills.

The Reverend Kai, of the Westside Baptist Church and vice president of the Rhode Island State Council of Churches, was one of several guest speakers at the workshop sponsored by



The Rev. Matthew Kai, of the Westside Tabernacle Baptist Church, discusses workplace diversity yesterday.

SEE WORKPLACE, F2

Workplace

Continued from Page F1

The Providence Human Relations Commission and held at the University of Rhode Island, Feinstein Providence Campus. "When I used to work in a factory," the reverend said, "my supervisor didn't care if I understood what he asked me." In an office, he said, the just-labors-attitude doesn't work.

Ita G. Principe, education and training coordinator at Rhode Island Housing, said that Latinos such as herself often are "more indirect" when they communicate, often telling a story to explain what they mean rather than answering a question directly. Westerners get impatient, Principe said, interjecting with "And?" or "So?" as if to say, "Get to the point!"

"It's not just because we like to chat," Principe said, as others in the audience laughed sympathetically.

Donna Fishman, a retired teacher who now chairs the Rhode Island Coalition for Affirmative Action, said multicultural communication is not about being "politically correct" or adopting a particular style. "If you are very open and honest about how you are," Fishman said, "and that the [goal] is not to be treated equal but to be equal, you'll be well received."

For more information, visit www.providenceri.com | (401) 277-7325

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Providence

Anti-discrimination campaign kicks off with workshop

01:00 AM EDT on Friday, July 13, 2007.

PROVIDENCE — The Providence Human Relations Commission has kicked off a new public awareness campaign called Discrimination is Illegal.

The campaign is designed to inform people of their rights and provide information on how to report discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, credit, education and public accommodations. The message, Discrimination is Illegal, can be found on bus shelters, RIPTA buses and in newspapers. It is also being broadcast on radio stations.

In addition to the public awareness campaign, the commission is seeking community input on the its mission. On July 31, the commission is holding a workshop aimed at fostering better relationships among co-workers of different races and ethnicities. On Aug. 28, a workshop will be held to review state and federal housing practices.

For more details, contact the commission at 351-0475 or visit the city's Web site at www.providenceri.com.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2008

SECTION F

BUSINESS

Workplace Discrimination

A panel of experts discussed discrimination on the job during a seminar yesterday sponsored by the Providence Human Relations Commission at the University of Rhode Island's Feinstein campus downtown Providence. Guest speakers included Jim Vincent, of the Rhode Island Affirmative Actions Professionals, Gertrude Jones, of Rhode Island Hospital, and Michelle Duso, of PowerGood.



Melba Depena, executive director of the Providence Human Relations Commission, welcomes attendees to lunch before a panel discussion, "Is there discrimination in the workplace?"

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL ANDREW DICKERMAN

City plans workshops to help prevent foreclosures, protect credit

01:00 AM EDT on Friday, June 27, 2008

PROVIDENCE — The city, in partnership with a number of neighborhood organizations, is sponsoring a series of foreclosure-prevention and credit-counseling workshops tomorrow from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

"The foreclosure crisis is having a devastating impact on our residents and our neighborhoods," Mayor David N. Cicilline said. "This is a coordinated effort to reach out to those who are most in need of assistance before they lose their homes to foreclosure."

The sessions are free and open to the public and will provide homeowners and renters with information on how to avoid foreclosure and protect their credit. The program is sponsored by the Providence Human Relations Commission and the following neighborhood groups that will host the workshops:

- Rhode Island Housing's Help Center, 44 Washington St.
- Housing Network of Rhode Island, 48 Neshua St.
- West Elmwood Housing Development, 392 Cranston St.
- GEN/EN/wood Foundation, 693 Broad St.
- Webster Bank, 40 Westminister St.
- Acom Housing, 807 Broad St.
- Stop Wasting Abandoned Property, 439 Pine St.
- Mount Hope Learning Center & Rhode Island Housing Resource Commission.



EN ESPAÑOL Providence

Año 9 - Edición No. 2 Viernes 10 Agosto de 2007

Comunicación efectiva sin discriminación



Por Cristina Gómez

PROVIDENCIA EN ESPAÑOL

Comunicación intercultural en el trabajo que busca crear conciencia entre los trabajadores en empresas y jobs de diversos sectores. El taller fue organizado por la Comisión de Relaciones Humanas de Providence PHRC, en su agenda en agosto una dependencia de la Alcaldía. La actividad, que se desarrolló en el Festival Providence Campus de la Universidad de Rhode Island, en la presencia de una multitud que se realiza en la ciudad y forma parte de los cinco áreas específicas en la que está enfocada la entidad, como son: Inmigración, Educación, Inmigración Política y Ciudadanía. Los organizadores del evento afirman que se desarrolló libremente en una de ellas áreas programáticas.

"La comunicación es difícil con personas que hablan una cultura que no es la nuestra. Imagina cuando tratamos con personas que no conocen el idioma y no saben leer. El taller fue gratuito y la asistencia masiva, señalando que el taller fue organizado por la Comisión de Relaciones Humanas de Providence PHRC, en su agenda en agosto una dependencia de la Alcaldía. La actividad, que se desarrolló en el Festival Providence Campus de la Universidad de Rhode Island, en la presencia de una multitud que se realiza en la ciudad y forma parte de los cinco áreas específicas en la que está enfocada la entidad, como son: Inmigración, Educación, Inmigración Política y Ciudadanía. Los organizadores del evento afirman que se desarrolló libremente en una de ellas áreas programáticas.

con la gran aceptación que ha tenido durante los últimos meses. "Aseguró Melba De Pala, directora de la Comisión de Relaciones Humanas de Providence PHRC, en su agenda en agosto una dependencia de la Alcaldía. La actividad, que se desarrolló en el Festival Providence Campus de la Universidad de Rhode Island, en la presencia de una multitud que se realiza en la ciudad y forma parte de los cinco áreas específicas en la que está enfocada la entidad, como son: Inmigración, Educación, Inmigración Política y Ciudadanía. Los organizadores del evento afirman que se desarrolló libremente en una de ellas áreas programáticas.

RECEPTIVIDAD La bienvenida fue una de las actividades más importantes del programa que se realizó en la ciudad y forma parte de los cinco áreas específicas en la que está enfocada la entidad, como son: Inmigración, Educación, Inmigración Política y Ciudadanía. Los organizadores del evento afirman que se desarrolló libremente en una de ellas áreas programáticas.





PHRC

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