

Overview of the Winston-Salem Human Relations Commission

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act), as amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing related transactions, based on **race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents of legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18), and handicap (disability)** within the United States.

In 1975, the Winston-Salem Human Relations Commission was established as an advisory board by city ordinance, in the City Charter, by the Board of Aldermen (now the "City Council"), pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 160A-492. The Commission was originally established to study race relations and forms of discrimination.

In 1978, the Board of Aldermen approved salaried staff for the Commission, thereby creating the Human Relations Department.

The Human Relations Department was established to enforce the jurisdictional authority of the Human Relations Commission. Shortly thereafter, the city established a formal cooperative agreement with HUD, for the Human Relations Department staff to enforce fair housing laws in Winston-Salem under the city's ordinance by sharing funding for processing, investigating, and disposing of housing discrimination complaints filed within the city limits of Winston-Salem, including complaints filed against public housing agencies (Winston-Salem Housing Authority or tax credit property).

In 1990, the Board of Aldermen adopted the City of Winston-Salem Fair Housing Ordinance. As such, the ordinance is substantially equivalent to the Federal Fair Housing Act administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The nature and the extent of the Human Relations Commission's policies and programs are determined and set by the commission and shall be implemented within accepted policies and procedures of the city.

In 2010, the City Council approved resolutions designating the Human Relations Department as the administrative body for the Youth Advisory Council and the College Advisory Board. Both the Youth Advisory Council and the College Advisory Board serve as advisory bodies to the City Council.