



Department of Civil Rights Equal Opportunities Division OUTREACH PROGRAM: “Certified Community Partners”

PROBLEM

Specific populations in the City of Madison community are discriminated against consistently; however, complaints brought forth to the Equal Opportunities Division are not representative of the issues permeating throughout our community. Statistical analysis of our discrimination investigations show the following protections are under-utilized by the City of Madison community: Religion, Non-Religion, Sexual Orientation, Marital Status, Student, Political Beliefs, Physical Appearance, Less Than Honorable Discharge from the Military, Familial Status, Source of Income, National Origin/Ancestry, Social Security, Domestic Partners, Citizenship, Gender Identity, Genetic Identity, Victim of Domestic Abuse/Sexual Assault/Stalking, Credit History, and Homelessness. The inaccurate reflection of the investigations conducted by the Equal Opportunities Division and instances of discrimination occurring within the City of Madison community demonstrates a gap in enforcement the City of Madison has an ethical responsibility to solve.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In order to provide proper service to the community and ensure correct enforcement of the Equal Opportunities Ordinance, the Equal Opportunities Division must determine barriers to reporting discriminatory experiences to the Department of Civil Rights. One barrier the Equal Opportunities Division has identified in the lack of reporting by certain communities in Madison includes the issue of trust.

Individuals who experience discrimination often disclose/report the incidents to people and advocacy agencies they find trustworthy. As a government agency, it is difficult to build trust throughout all identities within the City of Madison community. In an effort to close the gap, the Equal Opportunities Division would like to propose the “Certified Community Partners” program for the purpose of training community partners and advocacy groups (e.g., the trusted sources) surrounding Equal Opportunities Division complaint process and procedure to ensure their clientele have the opportunity to report discrimination to government agencies through their trusted sources.

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Train trusted community members to offer their clientele the opportunity to exercise their rights
- ❖ Build relationships with community organizations
- ❖ Increase awareness surrounding extensive rights protected by the City of Madison

BENEFITS

- ❖ “Closing the gap” between discrimination occurring in the City of Madison and enforcement
- ❖ Breakdown silos with community organizations and build professional relationships with agencies
- ❖ Equal Opportunities Division “Community Partner” 2-year certification for the trained agency
- ❖ Additional support resource for community organizations to provide to their clientele