

British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights
Commissioner

Strategy and organizational evaluation report

Overview

This evaluation report examines the Office's progress in advancing its strategic priorities and mandate since its establishment in 2019.

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If you are unsure about the terminology used in this report, we invite you to visit BCOHRC's Human Rights Glossary at: bchumanrights.ca/glossary

Executive summary

This evaluation was conducted by Three Hive Consulting and aided by British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner's (BCOHRC or the Office) internal evaluation project team. It assesses BCOHRC's progress in advancing its strategic priorities and contributions to systemic human rights protections in British Columbia (B.C.) since its establishment in 2019. This includes its influence on laws, policies, practices and public understanding of human rights. It also assesses how internal factors—such as staffing, operational processes and accessibility—support the Office's ability to fulfill its mandate.

Given the complexities in measuring long-term systemic change, the evaluation focuses on both immediate outputs and longer-term contributions, identifying successes, challenges and areas for growth. Recommendations are included only where evaluators identified a tangible opportunity to enhance impact or address a specific gap. This report highlights key contributions rather than providing a comprehensive record of all activities undertaken by the Office over the past five years.

Evaluation approach

A mixed-methods approach was used to provide a comprehensive and balanced analysis, triangulating multiple data sources to validate findings and minimize bias. The evaluation offers an independent, external perspective on BCOHRC's progress and effectiveness. The evaluation methods included:

- 20 interviews with key informants
- A survey with 37 key informants
- Two interviews with BCOHRC executive leadership
- Five staff focus groups across BCOHRC departments
- A review of key documents provided by BCOHRC

Key informants represented:

- Independent office of the Legislature (IOLA) staff
- Human rights experts and academics
- Government staff
- Indigenous informants
- Non-profits, community interest organizations, other duty bearers and other human rights offices

To ensure culturally appropriate Indigenous engagement, the evaluation employed Keeoukaywin (The Visiting Way), an Indigenous research methodology that emphasizes relationship-building and dialogue.

Several constraints affected the depth and scope of the findings, including challenges among key informants in articulating BCOHRC's impact. Not all informants were familiar with the full range of BCOHRC's work, which may contribute to perceived gaps in the results. Broader challenges also influenced the evaluation, including BCOHRC's status as a relatively young organization, the absence of baseline data and the ongoing development of comprehensive performance measurement systems. In addition, the influence of multiple external factors meant that outcomes could not always be directly attributed to BCOHRC's efforts. The scope of this evaluation does not include a review, audit or assessment of BCOHRC's financial position.¹ Despite these constraints, the evaluation provides valuable insights into BCOHRC's contributions, strengths and areas for further development.

Background: About BCOHRC

The role of Human Rights Commissioner was created to address systemic discrimination and promote human rights protections across the province. Under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*, the Commissioner is an independent statutory officer with a mandate to prevent discrimination by addressing the root causes of inequality, shifting policies, laws, practices and cultural norms to build a more just and equitable society. BCOHRC was created to support the Commissioner.

BCOHRC focuses on systemic-level human rights protection rather than handling individual complaints, which fall under the jurisdiction of the BC Human Rights Tribunal. Its key functions include research and public education, policy and law reform, legal interventions, systemic inquiries and collaboration and engagement.

BCOHRC's work is guided by six strategic priorities:

- Discrimination under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*
- Decolonization
- Hate and the rise of white supremacy
- Poverty as a cause and effect of inequality and injustice
- Human rights protections for those being detained by the state
- Creating a strong and sustainable organization

Findings

BCOHRC has made progress in achieving its strategic priorities

BCOHRC has made meaningful advancements across its six strategic priorities, with stronger progress in some areas than others.

Strategic priority 1: Discrimination under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*

BCOHRC has made notable progress in addressing discrimination under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code* by strengthening legal protections, expanding public awareness and improving coordination

¹ BCOHRC completes financial assessments on an ongoing basis and is held accountable for spending and fiscal responsibility by the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Governance Services.
<https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/committees/40thparliament-4thsession-fgs>.

within the human rights system. Key achievements include advocating for legislative changes, launching the “Recommendations Database” and engaging in legal interventions like *Gibraltar Mines Ltd. v. Harvey* to reinforce workplace protections. Public education efforts, including multilingual workshops and the “Let’s #RewriteTheRules” campaign, have expanded awareness, reaching over four million people. The Office has also advanced systemic research and public inquiries into discrimination trends while collaborating with the BC Human Rights Tribunal and the BC Human Rights Clinic to improve access to human rights protections. While 83% of key informants recognized BCOHRC’s positive contributions in this area, some noted gaps in engagement with certain communities despite BCOHRC having implemented diverse outreach strategies.

Strategic priority 2: Decolonization

BCOHRC has advanced efforts to support Indigenous self-determination and dismantle structures of colonialism through education, law reform, legal interventions and engagement with Indigenous communities. The Office supported the successful advocacy for the inclusion of Indigenous identity as a protected ground under B.C.’s *Human Rights Code*, strengthening legal protections for Indigenous peoples. It has also supported Indigenous representation within the human rights system, including participating in the Expanding Our Vision Implementation Committee at the BC Human Rights Tribunal, which is focused on Indigenous inclusion. Legal interventions, such as in *Gitxaala Nation v. Chief Gold Commissioner of B.C.* and *Ehattesaht First Nation v. His Majesty the King in Right of B.C. et al.*, have assisted in the legal application of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act). Engagement efforts have included one-on-one council meetings, agreements with key Indigenous organizations and research and policy initiatives like “Disaggregated Demographic Data Collection in British Columbia: The Grandmother Perspective” (the “Grandmother Perspective” report), which helped shape the *Anti-Racism Data Act*. However, only 54% of key informants affirmed BCOHRC’s positive contributions in this area, with some uncertainty about the visibility and implementation of the Office’s work. Feedback emphasized the need for continued engagement and deeper relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Strategic priority 3: Hate and the rise of white supremacy

BCOHRC has taken a multi-pronged approach to addressing hate and dismantling white supremacy by advancing research, countering misinformation, strengthening legal responses and fostering public awareness. Key initiatives include the “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic,” which resulted in 12 key recommendations that have informed advocacy and policy responses. Participation in public campaigns such as “Never Accept Hate” reached 20% of people living in B.C. and encouraged discussions on hate and discrimination, while legal interventions, including *British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) on behalf of Chilliwack Teachers’ Association v. Neufeld*, sought to strengthen protections against hate speech. BCOHRC has also engaged communities through dialogue events, public murals and immersive exhibits, amplifying lived experiences and promoting cross-community empathy. Evaluation findings indicate that 75% of key informants recognized BCOHRC’s positive contributions in this area, though some emphasized the need for continued collaboration with affected communities and stronger integration between anti-hate efforts and decolonization initiatives.

Strategic priority 4: Poverty as a cause and effect of inequality and injustice

BCOHRC has worked to reduce discrimination on the basis of poverty by raising awareness, embedding human rights approaches into government strategies and monitoring policies that impact people experiencing poverty. Key efforts include advocating for “social condition” to be recognized as a protected ground under B.C.’s *Human Rights Code*, launching the “Employment Equity Toolkit” to support workers and providing guidance on tenant rights. The Office has also advocated for law and policy reform to ensure a human rights-based approach to homelessness, encampments and poverty-related discrimination. Additionally, BCOHRC has contributed targeted recommendations on income supports, food security and harm reduction services. Despite these contributions, only 59% of key informants recognized positive contributions in this area, with 22% unsure, suggesting BCOHRC’s work on poverty may be less visible than other priorities. Some key informants highlighted the need for deeper engagement with those directly affected by poverty and emphasized that anti-poverty efforts should be integrated with broader systemic reforms, including decolonization and anti-racism.

Strategic priority 5: Human rights protections for those being detained by the state

BCOHRC has worked to ensure detention laws and practices in B.C. align with human rights standards by advocating for reforms in policing, involuntary detention and correctional practices. The Office provided recommendations on the *Mental Health Amendment Act* (Bill 22) to strengthen safeguards relating to involuntary mental health detention, opposed stabilization care for youth and was part of the advocacy efforts that contributed to B.C. ending its agreement with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) on migrant detention. BCOHRC made recommendations to the Legislature’s committee examining police reform and produced a report called “Equity is Safer” containing extensive analysis of police data. BCOHRC believes this to be the largest research project on police data ever undertaken in Canada—and the largest particularly focused on identifying and addressing systemic racism in policing practices. Additionally, BCOHRC has launched inquiries into police use of force and detention under the *Adult Guardianship Act* while advocating for improved conditions in correctional facilities. Despite these efforts, this priority had the lowest level of recognition among key informants, with only 43% acknowledging BCOHRC’s positive contributions and 41% uncertain. Some key informants highlighted the need for stronger engagement with communities disproportionately affected by detention and policing as well as greater transparency in systemic inquiries.

Strategic priority 6: Creating a strong and sustainable organization

BCOHRC has strengthened its internal capacity to support long-term human rights advocacy by building a diverse workforce, improving operational systems and enhancing its credibility as a human rights leader. The Office has implemented an equity-focused recruitment strategy, expanded staff mental health supports and launched initiatives such as an internal intranet to improve accessibility and efficiency. While 92% of employees reported alignment with BCOHRC’s mission, staff interviews highlighted challenges in balancing daily workloads with strategic priorities and minimizing departmental silos. Despite these challenges, BCOHRC has taken steps

to address operational gaps through the establishment of a Corporate Services department and the implementation of a variety of project management tools to improve workflow efficiency.

External factors influenced the achievement of strategic priorities

BCOHRC's progress has been shaped by external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political shifts and systemic barriers within government structures. Despite these challenges, the Office has advanced public awareness, community engagement, research and evidence-based inquiries to drive systemic change. Staff interviews highlighted the need for clearer, more specific targets and further development of performance measurement frameworks to track long-term impact effectively. As a young organization, BCOHRC continues to refine its evaluation tools to better assess progress on human rights outcomes.

BCOHRC has made progress in fulfilling its mandate

BCOHRC has contributed to shaping human rights policy and institutional practices in B.C., with 92% of key informants recognizing its progress and 95% rating its contributions positively. Part of fulfilling its mandate involves making progress toward its strategic priorities and, as described above, BCOHRC has advanced key areas through legal interventions, public education and advocacy. The Office has effectively used its legal powers, inquiries and interventions to address systemic discrimination. However, public awareness of BCOHRC's role remains a challenge. Annual BCOHRC polling data indicates that around half of respondents correctly identify the Office's mandate and function. While key informants acknowledged BCOHRC's impact in influencing laws and policies, findings suggest that more targeted efforts to communicate its role and increase public understanding of its work could further enhance its reach and credibility.

BCOHRC's initiatives have contributed to influencing laws, policies, practices and the culture of human rights in B.C.

BCOHRC undertakes a broad range of interconnected initiatives aimed at influencing laws, policies, practices and the culture of human rights in B.C. This evaluation categorizes BCOHRC's initiatives into eight key areas as outlined below. The examples provided were also shared with key informants during the evaluation process.

Key area 1: Awareness

BCOHRC's awareness campaigns, such as "Let's #RewriteTheRules" and "Am I Racist?" have raised public awareness and sparked public dialogue on systemic discrimination and equity, particularly related to disability rights and structural inequities. Guided by individuals with lived experience, these campaigns aimed to challenge discriminatory norms and encourage social change. Evaluation findings indicate that most key informants—including government staff, IOLA staff, expert, academic and Indigenous respondents—viewed these campaigns as effective in increasing awareness of human rights issues. However, some informants expressed uncertainty regarding their direct influence on policy or structural outcomes, underscoring the challenge of attributing legislative or systemic change to public education initiatives alone. Nonetheless, the campaigns have played a meaningful role in broadening discourse on human rights across B.C.

Key area 2: Community engagement

BCOHRC engages communities through relationship-building, webinars, public presentations and outreach efforts to ensure human rights initiatives are shaped by lived experiences. For example, the “From Hate to Hope” community dialogue events provided a platform for dialogue on hate, discrimination and strategies to combat white supremacy, while public presentations on employment equity and special programs reinforced BCOHRC’s community leadership. From 2019 to 2024, the Commissioner delivered remarks at 108 speaking engagements, reaching an audience of over 14,420 people. These engagements are a key part of building the Commissioner’s credibility and strengthening connections with the community. Between October 2023 and March 2024, the Office recorded over 11,300 resource downloads and 140,053 website visits, demonstrating public interest. While engagement efforts have helped spark public dialogue and inform policy discussions, evaluation findings suggest their influence on legal or systemic changes is less widely recognized and some key informants were unsure of its long-term impact.

Key area 3: Educational resources

BCOHRC has developed a wide range of educational materials to increase public understanding of human rights and support the application of human rights principles in diverse contexts. For example, the “Introducing Human Rights” video series and the “*Human Rights Code*” workshops provide foundational knowledge on legal protections related to employment, housing and services. For example, from 2023 to 2024, the workshops attracted 908 registrants and 898 attendees, with 73% reporting that the content was well-balanced and valuable. BCOHRC’s educational materials also include webinars, public-facing reports and experiential learning activities such as role-playing exercises. Educational resources, such as the plain-language executive summary of “From Hate to Hope: Report of the Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic,” which is offered in 13 languages, highlight BCOHRC’s commitment to accessible, inclusive education. Over the past five years, there have been more than 5,717 media stories about BCOHRC’s work, including 777 mentions of the Commissioner in the 2021/2022 year alone, serving as an important avenue for promoting public awareness of BCOHRC’s work and broader human rights issues.

Key area 4: Inquiries

The Commissioner’s independent inquiries serve as a central mechanism for investigating systemic human rights issues and fostering accountability. Between 2021 and 2024, the Commissioner launched major inquiries into hate during the pandemic, police use of force, detentions under the *Adult Guardianship Act* and police use of media exclusion zones. The “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic” included public hearings with over 100 participants and resulted in 12 key recommendations. BCOHRC sought feedback about the implementation of all the Commissioner’s recommendations, including inquiry recommendations, and reported these results publicly. Key informant survey data showed broad acknowledgement of the positive impacts of BCOHRC inquiries, with all government and IOLA staff key informants and 80% of expert and academic key informants reporting moderately or significantly positive impacts. However, perspectives among “other priority key informants” were mixed. The one Indigenous informant familiar with the inquiries noted a “somewhat” positive impact. Challenges were noted in assessing long-term outcomes and aligning recommendations

more closely with the operations of government ministries. Overall, inquiries have helped bring systemic inequities to light and sparked critical public and policy dialogue.

Key area 5: Legal interventions

BCOHRC has strategically intervened in legal cases to strengthen human rights protections in B.C., with all eight intervention requests granted between 2021 and 2024. Notable cases include *Gibraltar Mines Ltd. v. Harvey*, which set a precedent for workplace accommodations based on caregiving responsibilities, and *Gitxaala Nation v. Chief Gold Commissioner of B.C. et al.* and *Ehattesaht First Nation v. His Majesty the King in Right of B.C. et al.*, where BCOHRC advocated for the legal enforceability of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act). While 60% of key informant survey respondents were aware of these interventions, many were unsure about their broader impact, highlighting an opportunity to improve transparency in case selection and increase public understanding of its significance. Overall, these efforts illustrate BCOHRC's role in shaping precedent and advancing systemic equity through the legal system.

Key area 6: Recommendations

By November 2024, the Commissioner had issued over 165 formal recommendations through her own reports and initiatives, addressing systemic inequities related to protected grounds such as Indigenous identity, race and age. In 2023, the Office launched a searchable “Recommendations Database,” which compiles nearly 1,700 recommendations from over 70 external reports and sources, enhancing accessibility and supporting policy development across the province. Examples of impact include informing the *Anti-Racism Data Act* and the creation of a racist incident helpline. Two-thirds of expert, academic and “other priority” key informants rated BCOHRC's recommendations as moderately or significantly impactful, though 20% remained uncertain about implementation outcomes. The Office has initiated a recommendations verification process to assess uptake more widely. To increase effectiveness, key informants recommended aligning recommendations more closely with the operations of government ministries and increasing outreach to decision-makers and the public.

Key area 7: Research projects

BCOHRC's research has contributed to legal, policy and cultural shifts by uncovering systemic discrimination and informing equity-focused decision-making. The “Grandmother Perspective” report shaped the *Anti-Racism Data Act* and established best practices for community-driven data governance. As part of BCOHRC's “Baseline Project,” the “Community Briefs” captured local human rights experiences in four B.C. communities, engaging over 250 participants. Collectively, between August and November 2024, the briefs received over 1,000 views online. BCOHRC's reports are cited in legal documents and media, signalling a growing influence. While key informants broadly recognized its value, gaps in awareness, particularly among Indigenous key informants, highlight the need for broader dissemination and public education to ensure research findings translate into action.

Key area 8: Special programs

BCOHRC has approved 152 active special programs across a variety of sectors to advance substantive equality through targeted hiring and service initiatives. After the transfer of approval

responsibilities from the BC Human Rights Tribunal to the Commissioner in 2023, BCOHRC reduced processing times by half, increasing responsiveness. Programs have been adopted by universities, health authorities, local governments and non-profits. Despite these advancements, two-thirds of key informant survey respondents were unsure of the impact of special programs and administrative burdens were noted by staff due to legislative requirements for formal approval and monitoring. These findings suggest strong uptake but limited visibility and highlight opportunities to streamline internal processes and enhance external communications about outcomes.

BCOHRC has established relationships to fulfill the strategic priorities and advance its mandate

BCOHRC has built strong, respectful relationships with government agencies, human rights bodies and community partners to advance its mandate. 84% of key informants reported strong working relationships and the Office's communication was rated as accessible (91%) and culturally appropriate (88%). Documents like "Accessibility at BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner" and "Engagement Plan Template" support inclusive and trauma-informed engagement, though some key informants expressed uncertainty about Indigenous engagement and recommended clearer role definitions and feedback mechanisms. BCOHRC's staff and the Commissioner were praised for their professionalism and accountability, including proactive responses to missteps. Expanding relationship-building efforts to include a broader range of government ministries, alongside strengthening transparency and decentralizing relationship-building beyond the Commissioner, could further enhance trust and impact.

BCOHRC's staffing structure, including its departmental organization, has supported the achievement of its strategic priorities

BCOHRC's staffing structure and departmental organization support the delivery of its strategic priorities by enabling specialized expertise and fostering collaboration. BCOHRC's departments—Education & Engagement, Research & Policy, Legal, Communications & Operations and Corporate Services—support strategic priorities through specialized functions that collectively advance the Office's mandate. Work-life balance (86%) and workload management (59%) ratings improved in the 2024 BC Public Service Workplace Environment Survey (WES) compared to 2022, coinciding with internal initiatives such as the 2023 "Flexible Work Policy" and the 2024 establishment of a Corporate Services department. However, in interviews, staff noted that turnover, administrative burdens and department silos can limit efficiency and collaboration. In the 2024 BC Public Service WES, only 37% of BCOHRC staff felt supported during organizational change, down from 71% in 2022. To strengthen internal capacity, staff emphasized the need for clearer roles, stronger interdepartmental communication and streamlined administrative support to ensure sustained progress on strategic initiatives.

The accessibility of BCOHRC’s programming and resources have supported the achievement of its strategic priorities

BCOHRC’s commitment to accessibility is a key enabler of its strategic priorities, helping to ensure that its programs, resources and awareness efforts reach diverse communities across B.C. Through initiatives such as the “Accessibility at BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner” action plan and co-leadership of the Joint Accessibility Committee, BCOHRC has demonstrated leadership in identifying and removing barriers related to physical access, digital inclusion and communication. Internally, the Office has created an Accessibility Working Group, updated its website to meet accessibility standards, trained staff on inclusive communication and integrated accessibility into educational and digital materials. In the key informant survey, 81% of respondents rated BCOHRC’s resources as accessible. However, one Indigenous key informant noted challenges and the 2024 Information Management and Information Technology (IM/IT) Assessment Report identified areas for improvement including digital infrastructure and targeted outreach. The Office’s transition to in-house Corporate Services in 2024 offers more tailored accessibility supports by improving coordination, streamlining internal processes and enhancing the use of technology systems. Collaboration with other oversight offices remains an opportunity for system-wide improvement.

BCOHRC’s internal processes have supported the achievement of its strategic priorities

BCOHRC’s internal processes help advance its strategic priorities by promoting structure and consistency across departments. Strategic tools such as departmental plans, project templates, policy and practices frameworks and communications reporting support coordinated action. The internal-facing tools like the “Project Management Framework” support efficiency, transparency and long-term impact. The “Project Management Framework” is appreciated and viewed by staff as a mechanism for promoting consistency and accountability across projects, but it can also be used inconsistently. Despite these challenges, the “Framework” is seen as a tool for improving strategic alignment and enhancing organizational capacity.

While staff reported strong alignment with the Office’s six strategic priorities, they noted that limited staff capacity and high administrative demands can affect implementation. Some performance measurement systems remain in the early stages of development, with key performance indicators (KPIs) not yet consistently applied across all departments. Opportunities exist to refine the strategic priorities, align resources (financial and staff) to the strategic priorities, expand outcome tracking and strengthen internal processes to support long-term learning and accountability.

Conclusion

Since its establishment, BCOHRC has made meaningful progress in addressing systemic inequality, discrimination and injustice in B.C. The evaluation finds the Office has influenced laws, policies and public discourse through legal interventions, inquiries, awareness and education. While some strategic priorities, such as discrimination under the B.C. *Human Rights Code*, have gained strong recognition, others, like poverty and detention-related priorities, remain less visible

to key informants. Internally, BCOHRC has strengthened its capacity through initiatives like the creation of a Corporate Services department and operational improvements. However, challenges such as staff turnover, administrative burden and early-stage performance measurement remain. Despite these limitations, the Office has built a strong foundation and is well-positioned to deepen its impact through expanded outreach and continued evaluation.

Recommendations

This evaluation identifies seven key recommendations to support BCOHRC in advancing its strategic priorities, strengthening its impact and enhancing its contributions to systemic human rights protections in B.C. The first five recommendations are based on evaluation findings across data sources while the final two are grounded in evaluator reflections and are intended to guide future evaluations of BCOHRC only.

1. Continue efforts to strengthen visibility and demonstrate impact

While the Office has established broad public awareness, there are opportunities to enhance understanding of its mandate and contributions—particularly in less visible areas like detention advocacy and recommendations made by the Commissioner to government and other duty bearers. Actions include using plain-language materials to clarify its role, strategically amplifying key initiatives and continuing to enhance public reporting and the sharing of evaluation findings across multiple channels.

2. Enhance measurable outcomes

While KPIs exist, BCOHRC can strengthen alignment between strategic priorities and measurable results by establishing clear performance targets, expanding KPIs across departments and improving internal accountability. A centralized data repository to capture outcomes and lessons learned will also support continuous improvement.

3. Increase public education and awareness efforts

While BCOHRC has taken meaningful steps to improve the visibility of its work, evaluation findings indicate further opportunities to expand public education and raise awareness, particularly among underrepresented communities. Actions include strengthening clarity and reach through the continued use and expansion of strategic communications to ensure that diverse audiences understand BCOHRC's mandate, initiatives and available resources.

4. Continue to strengthen relationship-building

While relationships with governments, advocacy groups and Indigenous communities are a strength, evaluation findings indicate opportunities to improve transparency and expand outreach. Increasing the frequency of updates on collaborations and engaging with a wide range of equity-deserving groups and government agencies will help strengthen trust, accountability and inclusivity while also supporting the uptake and implementation of recommendations made by BCOHRC.

5. Improve internal coordination, knowledge retention and administrative efficiency

While departmental specialization supports expertise, improving interdepartmental collaboration and clarifying roles can reduce silos and inefficiencies. Actions include having regular cross-team meetings, strengthening a centralized knowledge-sharing repository and assessing administrative support needs to ensure staff capacity is focused on high-impact initiatives.

6. Strengthen Indigenous engagement in future evaluations

This evaluation used Keeoukaywin (The Visiting Way) to guide engagement. However, time and relational constraints limited the depth and breadth of participation. Even with earlier planning, fully embodying Keeoukaywin requires sustained relationship-building that extends beyond typical evaluation timelines. Future evaluations should begin Indigenous engagement as early as possible and allocate sufficient time to build trust, deepen relationships and follow community-guided approaches.

7. Broaden participation in future evaluations to strengthen performance measurement

Low response rates and limited familiarity with the full scope of BCOHRC's work highlight the need to expand the reach and relevance of future evaluations. Evaluations are a key tool for accountability and learning, enabling BCOHRC to assess the effectiveness of its initiatives, demonstrate progress toward its strategic priorities and strengthen its ability to fulfill its mandate by identifying opportunities for improvement. Actions include building interest in evaluation by integrating low-barrier feedback opportunities into regular communications and activities, demonstrating how input is used and recognizing the value of participants' time and knowledge. Future evaluations should prioritize outreach beyond existing relationships, engage through trusted intermediaries and consider appropriate incentives to encourage participation. These steps will support more inclusive learning and stronger tracking of outcomes over time.

In appreciation

Three Hive Consulting Inc. is based in Treaty 6 territory, the traditional lands of First Nations and Métis, in the city now called Edmonton and traditionally known by the nêhiyawak as amiskwaciwâskahikan. We strive to answer the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

This work could not have been completed without the time, knowledge and generosity of many individuals and communities.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who voluntarily shared their time, insights and expertise by participating in interviews, visits and surveys. Your contributions have been invaluable to the development of this report and the work it aims to inform.

We would like to acknowledge the staff at British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner for their support in shaping the evaluation, facilitating data collection activities and participating in interviews and focus groups. Your efforts have been key to supporting the findings and recommendations outlined in this report.

About this evaluation report

This evaluation was conducted by Three Hive Consulting, an Indigenous-owned firm specializing in evaluation and learning, aided by British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner's (BCOHRC or the Office) internal evaluation project team, which included representatives from all departments and was led by the Deputy Commissioner and coordinated by the Operations team.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of BCOHRC, assessing its progress in achieving its strategic priorities and its contribution to systemic changes in human rights protections across British Columbia (B.C.) since its establishment in 2019. It examines the extent to which BCOHRC's efforts have influenced laws, policies, practices and broader human rights culture in the province. Additionally, the evaluation considers how BCOHRC's staffing, internal processes and accessibility of resources have affected its ability to achieve its strategic priorities and fulfill its mandate. A full description of the evaluation purpose and use can be found in [Appendix A](#).

As evaluating long-term systemic change is inherently complex, this report focuses on both immediate outputs and longer-term contributions while recognizing external factors that shape human rights advancements. A full description of the assumptions and external factors shaping this evaluation can be found in [Appendix B](#). The findings offer a review of BCOHRC's successes, challenges and areas for growth. Recommendations are included selectively, only where evaluators identified an opportunity to enhance impact or address a gap, rather than uniformly across all priorities. Findings are presented as examples of key contributions and do not capture all work completed by BCOHRC over the past five years.

The evaluation draws from a mixed-methods approach, including 20 interviews and a survey, which received 37 responses, with key informants including:

- Independent office of the Legislature (IOLA) staff
- Human rights experts and academics
- Government staff
- Indigenous informants
- Other priority key informants, including non-profit/community interest organizations, other duty bearers and other human rights offices

To engage Indigenous key informants and governments, the evaluation employed Keeoukaywin (The Visiting Way²), an Indigenous research methodology introduced by Indigenous scholar Cindy Gaudet, to connect with Indigenous communities.

² Gaudet, J.C. (2019). Keeoukaywin: The visiting way-fostering an Indigenous research methodology. *Aboriginal Policy Studies*, 7(2), 47–64

The evaluation also included two interviews with BCOHRC executive leadership, five focus groups with staff from various departments within BCOHRC and a review of relevant documents shared by BCOHRC. To ensure a comprehensive and balanced analysis, findings are triangulated using multiple data sources. The evaluation is designed to provide qualitative insights supported by quantitative evidence. Ultimately, this evaluation provides an external perspective from Three Hive Consulting on BCOHRC's progress and effectiveness to date.

Limitations of the evaluation

This evaluation faced several limitations that affected the depth and scope of the findings.

A key challenge was the limited discussion of impact among key informant interviewees, many of whom found it difficult to articulate BCOHRC's influence due to low awareness of the Office's full range of activities. Additionally, document reviews were restricted to formal activities, potentially overlooking informal efforts and advocacy work. Interviews, focus groups and surveys were also subject to self-selection bias, as participation may have been higher among those with strong opinions or prior engagement with BCOHRC. In addition, some informants such as academic partners, who represent a small proportion of collaborators, may have had limited awareness of certain priorities like decolonization, which may have contributed to perceived gaps in the survey results.

The short existence of the Office and the long-term nature of many human rights outcomes also make it challenging to assess measurable change at this stage. As such, observed shifts in human rights complaints or conditions on the ground, whether positive or negative, cannot yet be directly attributed to the work of the Office. The complexity of isolating causal links between BCOHRC's work and broader changes in B.C., given the influence of multiple external factors, further limits attribution. To mitigate these challenges, the evaluation used triangulation, combining multiple data sources to ensure a balanced perspective. The evaluation also mitigated issues with data collection methods that did not yield sufficient information. For example, a survey was introduced to address low interview participation, broadening the range of insights captured.

Broader strategic limitations also shaped the evaluation:

- BCOHRC is a young organization and its data maturity is still developing, making it difficult to measure long-term impact within a few years.
- No direct comparison exists to the previous human rights commission, which was dissolved over 20 years ago, limiting historical benchmarking.
- A structured performance measurement system with clear key performance indicators (KPIs) is still emerging, creating challenges in tracking progress and evaluating effectiveness.

It is important to also note that the scope of this evaluation does not include a financial review, audit or assessment of BCOHRC's financial position.³

Despite these limitations, the evaluation provides valuable insights into BCOHRC's contributions, strengths and areas for growth, laying a foundation for future assessments. Further details regarding the methods and limitations of this evaluation can be found in [Appendix C](#).

³ BCOHRC completes financial assessments on an ongoing basis and is held accountable for spending and fiscal responsibility by the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Governance Services.
<https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/committees/40thparliament-4thsession-fgs>.

Background: About BCOHRC

The Office was established in 2019 with the appointment of the Human Rights Commissioner as an independent officer of the Legislature, marking a significant milestone. Before the Commissioner's appointment, British Columbia did not have a human rights commissioner for 17 years. Under the *Human Rights Code*, the Commissioner is an independent statutory officer with a mandate to promote and protect human rights in the province. BCOHRC was created to support the Commissioner.

The mandate of BCOHRC is “to address the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice in British Columbia by shifting laws, policies, practices and cultures.” The Office envisions a province where human rights are universally upheld and which is free from discrimination and injustice. Its work is rooted in examining the systems and structures that create and sustain inequality, recognizing that human rights violations often stem from deeply embedded policies, practices and cultural norms. Its approach is proactive, seeking to prevent discrimination before it occurs, rather than responding to individual complaints.

Core functions of BCOHRC

BCOHRC's work focuses on systemic human rights protection and advancing equity in B.C. The Office operates with the following key functions:

- **Research and public education:** Conducting research, developing educational resources and engaging the public to raise awareness of human rights issues, discrimination and inequality in B.C.
- **Policy and law reform:** Providing recommendations to governments, institutions and the public to improve laws, policies and practices that impact human rights.
- **Legal interventions and systemic inquiries:** Using its statutory powers to conduct independent inquiries into systemic human rights issues and intervening in cases before the BC Human Rights Tribunal and courts to advocate for human rights protections.
- **Collaboration and engagement:** Working with communities, organizations and governments to ensure that human rights protections the Office advocates for are accessible, meaningful and rooted in the experiences of those most affected by discrimination.

BCOHRC does not handle individual human rights complaints. That role belongs to the BC Human Rights Tribunal, which is responsible for receiving, mediating and deciding human rights cases in B.C. through a legal process. Instead, BCOHRC works at a systemic level to prevent discrimination and advance human rights protections for all people living in British Columbia. A summary of the relevance of BCOHRC can be found in [Appendix D](#).

Strategic priorities

In December 2020, BCOHRC published its strategic plan, “Reimagining Human Rights in B.C.: Strategic Plan 2020/21–2024/25,”⁴ which outlines six priorities (five programmatic and one operational) to guide its work. The priorities listed below are reproduced verbatim from BCOHRC’s current strategic plan to ensure alignment with the original intent as they provide the foundation for this evaluation.

1. Discrimination under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*⁵

Goal: Improve access to protections of the human rights system.

Objectives:

- Strengthen protections for marginalized groups by improving B.C.’s *Human Rights Code*.
- Raise awareness of human rights and responsibilities.
- Monitor and respond to emerging issues of discrimination.
- Develop a “No Wrong Door” approach to working with the BC Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal) and the BC Human Rights Clinic (Clinic).

2. Decolonization

Goal: Support the self-determination of Nations and work to dismantle structures of colonialism.

Objectives:

- Increase the accessibility and relevance of the human rights system for Indigenous people(s) through education, law reform and support of the Tribunal and Clinic’s Indigenous-focused initiatives.
- Support implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act).
- Raise awareness of Indigenous experiences of discrimination and the rights of Indigenous peoples.

3. Hate and the rise of white supremacy

Goal: Reduce hate and work to dismantle white supremacy in our society.

Objectives: Build empathy, curiosity and social change across difference by contributing to:

- Improving research and data on the root causes of manifestations of hate.
- Reducing misinformation that feeds stereotyping, fear and violence.
- Improving effectiveness of legal responses to hate.

⁴ *Reimagining Human Rights in B.C.* (Vancouver, BC: British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, December 2020), https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHRC_Dec2020_Strategic-Plan_FINAL.pdf.

⁵ For the purpose of this evaluation, we have numbered the strategic priorities to improve the report’s readability. The numbering does not indicate the level of importance or order.

4. Poverty as a cause and effect of inequality and injustice

Goal: Reduce discrimination on the basis of poverty.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness of poverty and classism as human rights issues.
- Embed human rights approaches and law in government strategies related to poverty.
- Monitor and respond to legislation and policy related to impacts on people in poverty.

5. Human rights protections for those detained by the state

Goal: Ensure laws and practices around detention are applied sparingly, proportionately and equitably.

Objectives:

- Reduce overuse and discriminatory application of involuntary mental health detention.
- Work toward implementation of domestic and international law standards within all forms of detention.
- Reduce discrimination in policing practices.

6. Creating a strong and sustainable organization

Goal: Build, grow and sustain an organization capable of generating progressive impact on human rights in B.C.

Objectives:

- Build and sustain a dynamic, healthy, diverse and inclusive team.
- Establish effective operational systems and processes in alignment with the organization's goals, guiding principles and a human rights-based approach.
- Create a unique visual identity that is recognizable and establishes the Commissioner as a credible voice advancing human rights in B.C.

The strategic plan outlines a vision for an Office committed to building relationships with impacted rights holders, educating the public on human rights issues, addressing systemic discrimination, preventing human rights violations and ensuring the Office reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

Commitment to accountability and evaluation

As outlined in its strategic plan, BCOHRC is committed to evaluating its impact through ongoing assessments of its work and this overarching five-year evaluation. This evaluation also supports the Commissioner's accountability to the Legislature and the public, ensuring transparency in BCOHRC's activities, financial management and performance. Evaluation findings will inform future strategic planning and decision-making to enhance BCOHRC's effectiveness in advancing human rights across B.C.

Findings

BCOHRC has made progress in achieving its strategic priorities

BCOHRC has made meaningful progress in advancing its six strategic priorities, with stronger achievements in some priorities than others. The assessment below includes key activities and outcomes by the Office as captured in the evaluation findings—it is not a comprehensive summary of all activities, products and outcomes achieved by the Office.

Strategic priority 1: Discrimination under B.C.'s Human Rights Code

BCOHRC has made strong progress in improving access to human rights protections, strengthening legal frameworks and increasing public awareness of human rights and responsibilities. Through legal interventions, systemic advocacy and public education initiatives, the Office has worked to strengthen protections for marginalized groups, address emerging discrimination issues and enhance coordination within B.C.'s human rights system.

Key achievements aligned with strategic goals and objectives

- **Strengthening legal protections:**
 - In collaboration with partners, successfully advocated for changes to B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*, including the addition of Indigenous identity as a protected ground to improve protections for marginalized communities.
 - Launched the "Recommendations Database" which catalogues nearly 1,700 human rights recommendations from over 70 external reports and resources, making it easier for policymakers and the public to understand and apply human rights guidance. While formal data on the database's uptake was not available for this evaluation, some key informants, particularly government and IOLA staff respondents, indicated awareness of the tool.
 - Has undertaken a recommendations verification process to assess the implementation and influence of the Commissioner's recommendations over time.
 - Has engaged in legal interventions including *Gibraltar Mines Ltd. v. Harvey*, which ruled that employees are entitled to workplace accommodations when employment conditions negatively impact essential parental responsibilities, strengthening legal protections against discrimination in the workplace.
 - Helped shape the *Anti-Racism Data Act* by, for example, guiding its approach to community-driven data governance.
- **Raising awareness and improving access to the human rights system:**
 - Developed multilingual human rights workshops, ensuring education is accessible to diverse communities.
 - Was featured in the media; during this time, there have been more than 5,717 media stories about BCOHRC's work, including 777 mentions of the Commissioner

in the 2021–2022 year alone, serving as an important avenue for promoting public awareness of BCOHRC’s work and broader human rights issues.

- Led public awareness campaigns such as “Let’s #RewriteTheRules,” which reached over four million people in 12 languages, expanding public understanding of systemic discrimination against people with disabilities.
- Created educational tools, including the “I Love My Human Rights” series (six videos which received over 27,563 views), the “Human Rights 101” video (viewed over 5,100 times) and community workshops (engaging over 500 people annually), helping the public and employers better understand their rights and responsibilities.
- **Monitoring and responding to emerging discrimination issues:**
 - Conducted research and issued recommendations on emerging areas of discrimination, including policing, housing and employment barriers.
 - Launched public inquiries to investigate systemic discrimination trends, such as an inquiry into the disproportionate impact of police use of force.
- **Improving coordination within the human rights system:**
 - Collaborated with the BC Human Rights Tribunal and BC Human Rights Clinic to develop a “No Wrong Door” approach, including the launch of bchumanrightssystem.ca, to improve how the public navigates the human rights system.

Validation and opportunities for growth

Evaluation survey results indicate that 83% of key informants believe BCOHRC has made meaningful positive contributions in addressing discrimination. Some key informants highlighted gaps in visibility and engagement with specific communities on this priority, including Indigenous, rural, Black, immigrant and newcomer voices, suggesting a possible need for more targeted outreach among these communities.

BCOHRC has already developed diverse engagement tools—including videos, print materials and murals—while also organizing community workshops and events that have reached a broad audience. Feedback from workshop participants shows that they found the sessions highly engaging, citing the interactive formats as effective at reinforcing learning. Common takeaways included a clearer understanding of key legal concepts and numerous attendees expressed that they learned more about specific topics such as mental health rights, housing-related discrimination and how the Code applies to real-world employer and landlord responsibilities. Despite these efforts, key informants suggest the need for further targeted outreach.

Strategic priority 2: Decolonization

BCOHRC has taken steps to support Indigenous self-determination and work towards dismantling structures of colonialism. Through education, law reform, strategic legal interventions and engagement with Indigenous communities, the Office has sought to increase the accessibility and relevance of the human rights system for Indigenous peoples, support the implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) and raise awareness of Indigenous experiences of discrimination.

Key achievements aligned with strategic goals and objectives

- **Strengthening Indigenous protections in the human rights system:**
 - In collaboration with partners, successfully advocated for the inclusion of Indigenous identity as a protected ground under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*, strengthening legal protections for Indigenous people facing discrimination.
 - Supported Indigenous representation within the human rights system, including participating in the Expanding Our Vision Implementation Committee at the BC Human Rights Tribunal, which is focused on Indigenous inclusion.
- **Supporting the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the *Declaration Act*:**
 - Engaged in strategic legal interventions, including obtaining intervenor status in *Gitxaala Nation v. Chief Gold Commissioner of B.C.* and *Ehattesaht First Nation v. His Majesty the King in Right of B.C. et al.*, cases addressing the legal interpretation of the Declaration Act. The Commissioner prioritized respectful engagement with Indigenous Nations and ensured representation grounded in Indigenous legal knowledge. The court acknowledged the Commissioner's submission as a substantive addition to the case.
 - Advocated for stronger protections in child welfare through legal submissions in *Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS) v. R.R.*, a case addressing the Human Rights Tribunal's jurisdiction relating to discrimination in the child protection system.
- **Deepening engagement with Indigenous communities and organizations:**
 - Conducted one-on-one council meetings with over 35 Indigenous communities, fostering relationships and ensuring Indigenous perspectives inform BCOHRC's work.
 - Signed agreements with key Indigenous organizations, including the First Nations Leadership Council and the First Nations Education Steering Committee, establishing collaborative approaches to human rights advocacy.
 - Hosted the Elders Gathering as part of the "Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic," providing Indigenous leaders with a platform to shape recommendations on systemic racism and hate.
- **Raising awareness of Indigenous experiences of discrimination and Indigenous rights:**
 - Published the "Grandmother Perspective" report, which offered a community-informed framework for disaggregated data collection and governance, influencing broader conversations about equity and data sovereignty.
 - Conducted speaking engagements to highlight systemic discrimination faced by Indigenous communities.

Validation and opportunities for growth

In the interviews, BCOHRC staff recognized the intentional and meaningful efforts the Office has made toward decolonization, acknowledging that the work is ongoing. One staff member noted that having more Indigenous and northern B.C.-based staff would strengthen BCOHRC's capacity to engage meaningfully with Indigenous communities and better align its work with decolonizing principles. In November 2024, at least three out of 40 BCOHRC staff members self-identified as

Indigenous. BCOHRC's hiring practices emphasize the inclusion of individuals with lived experience, including those who bring Indigenous ways of knowing and being to the organization.

Progress in this area is less recognized by key informants, with only 54% of key informant survey respondents affirming BCOHRC's positive contributions to decolonization and 24% stating uncertainty. In the interviews, some key informants expressed concerns that while there are efforts to promote decolonization, systemic constraints can hinder practical implementation. While expert, academic, government staff and IOLA staff respondents acknowledged the Office's positive contributions, mixed feedback was provided from the two Indigenous informants. Feedback from one Indigenous key informant revealed that their understanding of the Office's engagement strategy is that it prioritizes elected band councils over hereditary leadership systems, which they suggest risks marginalizing traditional governance structures.

It is unclear to what extent the Indigenous key informants were aware of BCOHRC's efforts toward decolonization. However, their main suggestion was for the Office to continue relationships with Indigenous leadership, establish culturally appropriate communication channels and ensure its work is shaped by those most affected by systemic inequities. One Indigenous key informant also emphasized the need for ongoing education and stronger engagement to ensure BCOHRC's work is relevant and responsive to Indigenous communities.

"I think more education is required for [BCOHRC as it relates to] Indigenous communities and Indigenous organizations... probably more education, more awareness, and that ongoing contact should be something that's on their strategic plan moving forward."

—Indigenous key informant

Strategic priority 3: Hate and the rise of white supremacy

BCOHRC has taken a multi-faceted approach to reducing hate and dismantling white supremacy by improving research and data, addressing misinformation, strengthening legal responses to hate and fostering public awareness and social change. Through public education, legal interventions, inquiries and direct community engagement, BCOHRC has contributed to shaping policy discussions and increasing public understanding of systemic hate and discrimination.

Key achievements aligned with strategic goals and objectives

- **Improving research and data on the root causes and manifestations of hate:**
 - Conducted the "Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic", which:
 - Collected survey data from 2,500 people on their experiences of hate.
 - Held public hearings with 100 participants from over 60 organizations.
 - Produced 12 key recommendations, shaping advocacy and policy responses to hate.
 - Published the "Hate Speech Q and A," which was viewed over 39,000 times, and a webinar providing accessible education on hate speech laws and protections.

- **Reducing misinformation that fuels stereotyping, fear and violence:**
 - Participated in public campaigns to counter hate and racism, including:
 - The “Never Accept Hate” campaign, as part of the NAH collective, which reached 20% of people living in B.C. and resulted in 44% of viewers engaging in discussions about hate.
 - A provincial anti-racism campaign delivered in 24 communities and nine languages, broadening public education on discrimination.
 - Developed legal education resources to help the public recognize and address hate speech.
- **Improving the effectiveness of legal responses to hate:**
 - Engaged in strategic legal advocacy, including:
 - Intervening in *British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) on behalf of Chilliwack Teachers’ Association v Neufeld*, a case concerning alleged hate and discriminatory speech.
 - Making submissions to the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights on Islamophobia.
 - Put forward recommendations in the “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic” aimed to improve the effectiveness of legal responses to hate.
- **Building social change and cross-community empathy:**
 - Hosted community-driven efforts to engage the public in meaningful dialogue and reflection, including:
 - Dialogue events in multiple communities, empowering local leaders to identify actions against hate.
 - Public murals created with youth and artists in Keremeos, Nanaimo, Fort St. John and Vancouver, using public art to promote unity and social cohesion.
 - An immersive exhibit showcasing personal stories of hate and resilience, amplifying lived experiences and fostering empathy.
 - Issued public statements condemning hate-related incidents, including hate marches targeting LGBTQ2SAI+ communities and the rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Validation and opportunities for growth

Evaluation results show that 75% of key informants who took the survey recognized BCOHRC’s positive contributions to this priority. Feedback from key informants highlights that hate and white supremacy remain deeply systemic issues requiring long-term, sustained efforts. One key informant in the “other priority key informants” category emphasized the need for stronger integration between anti-hate initiatives and decolonization efforts as well as deeper collaboration with communities negatively impacted by hate and the rise of white supremacy. The informant emphasized that listening to and empowering those most impacted by hate is essential for meaningful progress. BCOHRC has already taken steps in this direction through initiatives such as the “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic,” which collected survey data from affected communities, and participating in province-wide public campaigns like “Never Accept Hate.” Government staff and “other priority” key informants suggested that further deepening

community partnerships and embedding anti-hate initiatives within broader systemic reforms will be critical to sustaining impact.

Strategic priority 4: Poverty as a cause and effect of inequality and injustice

BCOHRC has worked to reduce discrimination on the basis of poverty by raising awareness, embedding human rights approaches into government strategies and monitoring policies that impact people experiencing poverty. The Office has used advocacy, legal interventions, public education and engagement with policymakers and communities to address the intersection of poverty and human rights and foster greater social equity.

Key achievements aligned with strategic goals and objectives

- **Raising awareness of poverty and classism as human rights issues:**
 - Advocated for “social condition” to be recognized as a protected ground under B.C.’s *Human Rights Code*, aiming to strengthen legal protections for low-income individuals. Recognizing “social condition” as a protected ground would legally protect people from being treated unfairly solely because of their socio-economic background and allow them to seek legal recourse when experiencing discriminatory practices.
 - Developed plain-language tenant rights materials to help renters understand their rights under the *Human Rights Code* and an educational video for renters.
 - Launched the “Employment Equity Toolkit,” providing guidance for employers on reducing systemic barriers for workers and an educational video for employees.
- **Embedding human rights approaches in government strategies related to poverty:**
 - Held over 50 meetings in 2023/24 with municipalities, advocates and the provincial government to advocate for law and policy reform to ensure a human rights-based approach to encampment rights, homelessness policy and poverty-related discrimination.
 - Provided publicly available guidance to local governments on human rights obligations and best practices in responding to encampments, advocating for approaches that prioritize dignity and security.
 - Recommended stronger rental supplements and policies to prevent the loss of affordable housing within the provincial homelessness strategy.
- **Monitoring and responding to legislation and policy related to poverty:**
 - Monitored and analyzed Together BC’s annual report, assessing government actions on poverty reduction.
 - Provided targeted recommendations on income supports, food security and harm reduction services to mitigate the human rights impacts of poverty, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Worked with coalitions to advocate for paid sick leave, which contributed to securing 10 days of paid sick leave for workers across B.C.

Validation and opportunities for growth

Only 59% of key informants in the evaluation survey recognized progress in this area while 22% were unsure, suggesting that BCOHRC’s work on poverty-related advocacy may not be as visible

as other priorities. Some government staff and “other priority” key informants felt that poverty-related efforts could be better integrated with broader systemic reforms and emphasized the importance of stronger engagement with people directly affected by poverty.

One key informant in the “other priority key informants” category emphasized the systemic nature of poverty, describing it as a “policy choice,” reinforcing the need for the Office to deepen its collaboration with those directly impacted to drive change. Another “other priority key informant” stressed that anti-poverty advocacy should not be overshadowed by other equity issues, such as decolonization and anti-racism, and that these efforts must work together. While awareness of BCOHRC’s work in this area may be lower compared to other strategic priorities, the Office has undertaken significant advocacy and policy initiatives including developing materials for those most impacted by poverty, engaging in policy discussions, providing recommendations and responding to key legislation.

Strategic priority 5: Human rights protections for those being detained by the state

BCOHRC has worked to ensure that detention laws and practices in B.C. align with principles of fairness, proportionality and human rights standards. Through advocacy, legal interventions and systemic inquiries, the Office has sought to reduce the overuse of detention, address discriminatory policing practices and align detention policies with domestic and international human rights standards.

Key achievements aligned with strategic goals and objectives

- **Reducing the overuse and discriminatory application of involuntary detention in health facilities:**
 - Provided recommendations on the *Mental Health Amendment Act* (Bill 22), advocating for stronger safeguards relating to involuntary mental health detention and addressing concerns around its discriminatory impacts. Opposed the involuntary stabilization care proposal for youth, citing concerns about detention without access to voluntary care options.
 - Launched an inquiry into involuntary detentions under the *Adult Guardianship Act*, assessing compliance with human rights laws and best practices.
- **Advancing human rights standards in detention practices:**
 - Advocated for the end of migrant detention in provincial jails, contributing to B.C. becoming the first province to terminate its agreement with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).
 - Conducted research and advocacy to improve conditions in correctional facilities, highlighting issues related to access to healthcare, solitary confinement and systemic discrimination in incarceration.
- **Reducing discrimination in policing practices:**
 - Led advocacy efforts around racial profiling and police accountability, including the 29 recommendations made from the “Equity is Safer: Human Rights Considerations for Policing Reform in British Columbia” report to reduce systemic discrimination in policing. The report contained extensive analysis of police data, and BCOHRC believes this to be the largest research project on police data ever

undertaken in Canada—and the largest focused on identifying and addressing systemic racism in policing practices.

- Audited a settlement agreement (on an interim basis; final report pending) involving the wrongful arrest and detention of Indigenous individuals, reinforcing the need for systemic reforms in police practices.
- Initiated an inquiry into police use of force, focusing on racialized individuals and those with mental health or substance use issues.

Validation and opportunities for growth

The strategic priority “human rights protections for those being detained by the state” had the lowest level of recognition among key informants who took the evaluation survey, with only 43% agreeing that BCOHRC has made a positive impact and 41% reporting uncertainty, indicating a possible lack of visibility in this area. Expert, academic and “other priority” key informants emphasized the need for stronger engagement with communities disproportionately impacted by detention and policing practices. They also highlighted the importance of increasing transparency in systemic inquiries by ensuring that findings and recommendations are effectively communicated to the public. Additionally, informants recommended strengthening partnerships with advocacy groups, legal experts and frontline organizations to enhance the reach and impact of BCOHRC’s work on detention-related human rights issues. BCOHRC is already guided by the principle “nothing about us without us” and implements various documents and frameworks, such as the “Engagement Plan Template,”⁶ to actively engage marginalized communities and ensure their voices shape human rights initiatives.

⁶ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) Template, Internal Engagement Plan Template, Date first effective: Unknown, Education and Engagement.

Recommendation 1: Continue efforts to strengthen visibility and demonstrate impact

While BCOHRC has established broad public awareness, evaluation findings suggest opportunities to deepen understanding of its work and impact among key groups, particularly in areas such as detention advocacy and recommendations made by the Commissioner to government and other duty bearers. Clarifying the Office's role and strategically amplifying key initiatives will improve recognition among key groups.

Key actions:

- **Clarify the Office's role and contributions:** Use plain-language materials to explain BCOHRC's non-partisan mandate, legal powers and systemic advocacy.
- **Highlight and promote key initiatives:** Strategically identify priority projects to emphasize at appropriate times to improve visibility and engagement.
- **Enhance public reporting:** Continue to communicate activities and outcomes in accessible formats across multiple channels to reinforce BCOHRC's influence and improve public understanding of its contributions, including the public reporting of evaluation findings.

Strategic priority 6: Creating a strong and sustainable organization

BCOHRC has made progress in building a resilient, inclusive and effective organization that can sustain long-term human rights advocacy in B.C. Over the past five years, the Office has grown from a single staff member to a team of over 40 individuals. During this growth, it has built equitable hiring practices and focused on enhancing staff well-being, improving internal systems and strengthening its credibility as a trusted authority on human rights.

Key achievements aligned with strategic goals and objectives

- **Building and sustaining a diverse, inclusive and thriving team:**
 - Implemented an equity-focused recruitment strategy, hiring 41 staff through inclusive hiring practices, ensuring a diverse and representative workforce.
 - Conducted the internal BCOHRC Workplace Environment Surveys (WES), with 75% of staff in 2023 reporting they were thriving at work, a 23% increase from 2021.
 - Expanded mental health supports, including a specialized counselling policy that acknowledges the emotional impact of BCOHRC's mandate and the nature of its work. The policy is designed to support staff who may be affected by the subject matter they engage with, recognizing the potential toll of systemic human rights work including—but not limited to—the toll on those with lived experience.
- **Strengthening internal systems and operational effectiveness:**
 - Established a Corporate Services department, enhancing financial management, information technology (IT) infrastructure and human resource (HR) functions to ensure long-term sustainability.

- Implemented an internal intranet, project management framework and onboarding/training resources to improve operational efficiency.
- **Enhancing BCOHRC's identity and credibility as a human rights leader:**
 - Released the "Accessibility at BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner" report, outlining an approach and priority plan to ensure BCOHRC's services, information and spaces are accessible to all people living in B.C.
 - Won the 2024 BC Public Service Top Work Unit Award, recognizing exceptional teamwork, leadership and operational excellence.

Validation and opportunities for growth

BCOHRC has established itself as a strong and sustainable organization, with 92% of employees in the 2024 BC Public Service Workplace Environment Survey reporting alignment with its mission. However, in the interviews, some staff noted challenges in aligning daily work with strategic priorities and identified areas for operational efficiency improvements, including providing more clarity in roles, minimizing siloed practices and ensuring more open communication between departments. Some staff highlighted the need to streamline internal processes to reduce administrative workloads, especially as BCOHRC's reach and responsibilities continue to grow. While this remains an area for improvement, BCOHRC has already taken steps to enhance operational efficiency by establishing a Corporate Services department and implementing an internal intranet, a project management framework and onboarding and training resources.

External factors influenced the achievement of strategic priorities

External factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, political shifts and systemic barriers in government structures, have also influenced the advancement of these priorities. Despite these challenges, BCOHRC has made strides in raising public awareness, fostering community engagement and conducting research and evidence-based inquiries that drive systemic change. Opportunities for growth identified by key informants include increasing public visibility, strengthening relationships with individuals affected by the strategic priorities and Indigenous communities and tailoring advocacy to better support vulnerable populations.

Given the systemic nature of these priorities, achieving measurable success within the short timeframe of the strategic plan is challenging. In the evaluation interviews and focus groups, staff acknowledged the need for clearer, more attainable targets such as KPIs to effectively assess progress. As a relatively young organization, BCOHRC is still in the process of refining its measurement frameworks, with many KPIs and evaluation mechanisms identified but in the early stages of development. Some staff suggested that greater specificity within the strategic priorities, viewed by some as very broad, would enhance the Office's ability to track long-term outcomes and demonstrate impact more effectively. Given the systemic nature of BCOHRC's work, measuring progress toward long-term human rights outcomes remains complex, further underscoring the need for robust, evolving evaluation tools.

Recommendation 2: Enhancing measurable outcomes

While BCOHRC has established KPIs to track progress, evaluation findings indicate opportunities to expand these across all departments and refine strategic priorities with more measurable goals to improve accountability and impact assessment.

Key actions:

- **Establish clear performance targets:** Develop specific, attainable KPIs to assess progress across all strategic priorities, ensuring alignment with BCOHRC's long-term goals.
- **Strengthen impact tracking:** Implement structured monitoring processes to ensure alignment between strategic initiatives and measurable outcomes.
- **Improve internal accountability:** Provide staff with clear benchmarks for success to enhance transparency and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals.
- **Strengthen a centralized data repository:** Expand a centralized repository to ensure primary data is well-documented and to facilitate access, analysis and alignment with evaluation indicators and metrics. Strengthening the repository will streamline evaluation efforts and improve data-driven decision-making. This repository should include "lessons learned" from each project to identify trends and operationalize an action plan for continuous improvement.

BCOHRC has made progress in fulfilling its mandate

Since its inception, BCOHRC has made notable progress in addressing the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice in B.C. Evaluation findings indicate strong recognition of its impact, with 92% of key informants acknowledging progress on its mandate and 95% rating its contributions to human rights promotion positively. Government and IOLA staff key informants consistently affirmed BCOHRC's influence in shaping policies, increasing public awareness and informing institutional practices to strengthen human rights protections across the province.

Advancing laws, policies and systemic change

BCOHRC has contributed to legislative advancements such as the *Anti-Racism Data Act*, reflecting its role in embedding human rights principles in law and policy. The Office's legal interventions and inquiries were noted by staff in the interviews and focus groups to have been instrumental in challenging systemic discrimination. BCOHRC's effective use of legal powers, including its authority to conduct investigations and inquiries, were highlighted by staff as integral to fulfilling its mandate. Supported by internal data analysis and strategic planning, these powers enable the Office to address human rights issues. Staff emphasized that aligning these legal powers with strategic priorities enhances both the credibility and impact of BCOHRC's efforts.

Public engagement and awareness

BCOHRC's public engagement efforts have expanded awareness of systemic discrimination, with 78% of key informants affirming its positive impact on community engagement. Initiatives such as "Let's #RewriteTheRules," which reached over four million people in 12 languages, have helped to amplify human rights discourse.

Despite the broader distribution of some of the Office's work, BCOHRC annual public polling data suggests a limited understanding of BCOHRC's mandate, with only 52% of respondents recognizing it as a watchdog, 50% identifying its non-partisan role and 47% acknowledging its independence from government in 2024. These findings may indicate a need for expanded public education efforts to clarify BCOHRC's role and responsibilities.

Conclusion

BCOHRC has played a meaningful role in shaping equity-driven discourse, influencing policy and fostering systemic change in B.C. As an emerging organization, it has the opportunity to deepen community engagement and increase public visibility. Strengthening these areas will enhance BCOHRC's ability to fulfill its mandate and drive long-term change across B.C.

Recommendation 3: Increase public education and awareness efforts

While BCOHRC has taken meaningful steps to improve the visibility of its work, evaluation findings indicate further opportunities to expand public education and improve awareness, particularly among underrepresented communities. Continuing to increase clarity and reach through strategic communications will help ensure that diverse audiences understand BCOHRC's mandate, initiatives and available resources.

Key actions:

- **Expand public education and outreach:** Continue to utilize and expand on targeted campaigns, plain-language materials, digital story-telling and community-specific communication strategies. Strengthen awareness efforts through more intentional outreach and by leveraging educational partnerships, both existing and new, to extend BCOHRC's reach and impact.
- **Enhance visibility of key initiatives:** Continue to use and expand the use of accessible formats and platforms to promote BCOHRC's work more broadly, ensuring public audiences are aware of its role and systemic impact.

BCOHRC's initiatives have contributed to influencing laws, policies, practices and the culture of human rights in B.C.

BCOHRC undertakes a diverse range of initiatives to influence laws, policies, practices and the culture of human rights in B.C. These efforts, while distinct, are interconnected and reinforce one another to drive systemic change.

This evaluation categorizes BCOHRC's initiatives into eight key areas, as outlined below. The examples provided were also shared with key informants during the evaluation process.

Key informant awareness of BCOHRC initiatives

Key informant survey results show varying awareness of BCOHRC's initiatives, with research projects the most recognized and special programs the least. Expert, academic and "other priority" key informants reported greater overall awareness compared to government staff, IOLA staff and Indigenous key informants. The Office's initiatives that had the greatest and least degree of awareness across each group of informants are presented in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1. Key informant survey results: Office initiatives and projects with the highest and lowest awareness by informant group.

Informant group	Most aware	% aware	Least aware	% aware
Experts and academics (n=9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research projects educational resources 	90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> special programs 	40%
"Other priority key informants" (n=16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research projects inquiries educational resources recommendations 	86%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> special programs 	38%
Government and IOLA staff (n=4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research projects inquiries recommendations 	75%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> educational resources 	25%
Indigenous informants (n=2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inquiries educational resources recommendations community engagement awareness interventions special programs 	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research projects 	0%

Examples

Key area 1: Awareness – “Let’s #RewriteTheRules” and “Am I Racist?” campaigns

BCOHRC raises public awareness and promotes human rights through awareness campaigns that challenge discriminatory norms and encourage social change. While the Office is one of many actors engaged in human rights awareness, evaluation findings indicate that its campaigns have played a role in challenging discriminatory norms and increasing the visibility of systemic inequities.

BCOHRC’s “Let’s #RewriteTheRules” and “Am I Racist?” campaigns were identified through the document review as initiatives that engaged the public in conversations about discrimination, equity and human rights. Guided by individuals with lived experience, these campaigns focused on issues such as disability rights and systemic racism, offering opportunities for public reflection on bias and encouraging broader discussions about structural change.

Findings from key informant interviews, surveys and administrative data indicate that BCOHRC’s awareness efforts have been recognized for making their intended impact: increasing awareness of human rights issues. Most government staff, IOLA staff, expert, academic and Indigenous key informants viewed these campaigns as effective in promoting social awareness and dialogue. However, some key informants were uncertain or found the impact less pronounced, highlighting that the extent of influence on policy, legal or structural changes remains difficult to measure.

While there is no direct evidence linking these campaigns to specific legislative or policy changes between BCOHRC’s inception and November 2024, the evaluation results suggest these initiatives have contributed to public education and increased discourse on human rights issues in B.C.

Key area 2: Community engagement – “From Hate to Hope” dialogues

Guided by the principle of “nothing about us without us,” BCOHRC actively engages communities, particularly those most marginalized, to ensure their voices shape human rights initiatives. Through public presentations, digital engagement and interactive events, the Office has worked to elevate community perspectives and encourage greater participation in human rights advocacy.

Understanding how BCOHRC addresses misinformation and disinformation is also key to evaluating its impact on laws, policies, practices and the culture of human rights in B.C., as these issues shape public perceptions and influence broader policy and cultural discourse.

Misinformation can perpetuate systemic discrimination and undermine trust in human rights systems, while disinformation campaigns can erode public understanding and hinder equity-driven reforms. Given these challenges, BCOHRC’s role in fostering evidence-based discussions and countering false narratives is essential to ensuring informed public discourse and meaningful policy change. Further details regarding how the Office addresses misinformation and disinformation can be found in [Appendix F](#).

To raise awareness and spark discussions about systemic discrimination, BCOHRC has led dialogues, spoken publicly, engaged media and hosted events and outreach initiatives that engage the public on key human rights issues. Examples include:

- From 2019 to 2024, the Commissioner had over 108 speaking engagements, reaching an audience of over 14,420 people to raise awareness and foster dialogue on human rights issues.
- BCOHRC gave public presentations on employment equity and special programs, reinforcing BCOHRC's role as a leader in human rights advocacy.
- BCOHRC hosted "From Hate to Hope" dialogue sessions, which created space for community dialogue on hate, discrimination and strategies for combating white supremacy.
- Website engagement trends demonstrate public interest, with 11,300 resource downloads between October 2023 and March 2024, an increase from 10,100 downloads in the previous period. Over the same timeframe, website visits reached a total of 140,053, peaking at 18,039 in May 2024.

While community engagement and education efforts often overlap, BCOHRC recognizes the importance of distinguishing between the two—community engagement focuses on reciprocal dialogue and relationship-building, while education centers on sharing information to empower and inform the public. BCOHRC has dedicated engagement staff working regionally to support community connections. Additionally, the Office utilizes Borealis, an organization-wide system for tracking community engagement and reinforcing a structured approach to engagement efforts.

Findings from key informant interviews and surveys suggest that BCOHRC's community engagement initiatives have supported public education and policy discussions. However, they couldn't speak to its direct influence on legal or systemic changes. While such efforts are not typically expected to drive direct legal change, there is evidence of their indirect impact, with resources being well-received, widely used and contributing to broader engagement beyond the Office.

Key area 3: Educational resources – "Introducing Human Rights" video series

BCOHRC develops accessible tools and materials to educate the public, organizations and governments about human rights, fostering awareness and empowerment. Through accessible tools, workshops, media, the Commissioner's speaking engagements, reports and multimedia materials, BCOHRC has contributed to a greater understanding of human rights protections and promoted cultural shifts that advance equity and justice.

BCOHRC's educational initiatives are designed to provide practical knowledge that informs decision-making across sectors. Key resources, such as the "Introducing Human Rights" video series and "Employment Equity Toolkit," help individuals, organizations and businesses navigate human rights issues. Educational materials on homeless encampments and systemic discrimination offer foundational knowledge.

One key initiative identified through the document review was the “*Human Rights Code*” workshops, which provide foundational training on legal protections under the *Human Rights Code*, with a focus on employment, housing and services. Between 2023 and 2024, three workshop sessions drew 908 registrants and 898 attendees, with 73% of attendees reporting that the information was well-balanced and valuable. The workshops incorporate interactive elements such as case studies and polls. Participant feedback highlighted a demand for deeper engagement and expanded interactive learning opportunities.

Beyond written reports and guidance materials, BCOHRC has expanded its educational offerings to include webinars, public-facing reports and experiential learning activities. These formats provide alternative pathways for engagement, such as role-playing exercises that help community and employee groups understand systemic discrimination. BCOHRC’s efforts to diversify its educational materials have been recognized, with one key informant noting:

“Obviously, the work they produce is very heavy, so it’s document based. But I noticed that in addition to putting things out in that medium, they’ll often have companion videos and try to think about multiple formats.”

—“Other priority key informant”

The document review suggests that BCOHRC’s educational efforts have effectively supported public engagement related to human rights issues and encouraged organizations to adopt equity-focused practices. High engagement levels with online resources, as previously highlighted through resource downloads, website visits and growing social media engagement, indicate public interest. Additionally, the “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic” findings were made available in plain-language executive summaries in 13 languages accompanied by a colouring book, demonstrating a commitment to accessibility in human rights education.

Key area 4: Inquiries – “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic,” “Inquiry into Detentions Under the Adult Guardianship Act,” “Inquiry into Police Use of Force” and “Inquiry into Media Exclusion Zones”

The Commissioner conducts independent inquiries into systemic human rights issues, engaging affected communities, organizations and government agencies to produce evidence-based recommendations for legal and policy change. The Commissioner’s inquiries serve as a critical mechanism for investigating systemic human rights issues and elevating public discourse on discrimination, policing practices, press freedom and other pressing concerns. Although inquiries are not judicial processes, they provide a structured approach to identifying systemic inequities, holding institutions accountable and informing reforms that advance equity in B.C.

Key initiatives identified in the evaluation include:

- **“Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic” (2021–2023):** This inquiry examined the rise in hate incidents during the pandemic, culminating in a comprehensive public report and research papers. The findings informed public discourse on hate and discrimination

and were accompanied by public engagement activities aimed at supporting community-led responses. A full case study of this inquiry is provided in [Appendix G](#).

- **“Inquiry into Detentions Under the *Adult Guardianship Act*” (2023–2025):** This inquiry assessed whether involuntary detention practices under the *Adult Guardianship Act* align with human rights laws and standards.
- **“Inquiry into Police Use of Force” (launched January 2024):** This inquiry builds on findings from BCOHRC’s “Equity is Safer” report, which also utilized the Commissioner’s inquiry powers. The inquiry is investigating patterns of discrimination in policing and seeks to quantify any disproportionate use of force against racialized individuals and people with mental health and substance use issues.
- **“Inquiry into Media Exclusion Zones” (launched December 2023):** This inquiry examines alleged restrictions on media access during a Downtown Eastside decampment, evaluating concerns about press freedom and human rights.

Through these initiatives, the Commissioner’s inquiries have helped to shine a light on systemic human rights violations, elevating public awareness and stimulating policy discussions. They provide a measure of accountability to duty bearers by ensuring that systemic concerns are formally documented and accompanied by recommendations for change.

Key informant survey results suggest that the Commissioner’s inquiry processes are generally viewed positively, with all government and IOLA staff informants, along with 80% of expert and academic respondents, reporting moderately or significantly positive impacts. However, perspectives among “other priority key informants” were mixed. The one Indigenous informant familiar with the inquiries noted a “somewhat” positive impact. Challenges identified by key informants include:

- **Assessing long-term systemic change:** Inquiries produce concrete recommendations. However, key informants were uncertain about the progress made in implementing the recommendations. The Office has tracked long-term changes through its recommendation monitoring efforts and is publishing the results of this monitoring in the spring of 2025. This report details how many recommendations have been fully implemented, partially implemented, in progress or not yet started.
- **Procedural delays and feasibility of recommendations:** Some key informants suggested that aligning recommendations more closely with government frameworks could improve the feasibility and likelihood of implementation. They added that the effectiveness of recommendations could be strengthened by aligning them more precisely with the operational realities and mandates of individual government ministries—for example by specifying roles—thereby improving coordination and implementation.

Despite these challenges, inquiries have played a role in influencing laws, policies and practices by documenting systemic issues, engaging affected communities and prompting discussions on reform. They provide an avenue for BCOHRC to hold institutions accountable while fostering greater dialogue on human rights issues across B.C.

Key area 5: Interventions – *Gibraltar Mines Ltd. v. Harvey*

The Commissioner intervenes in legal cases before courts and the BC Human Rights Tribunal to advocate for legal interpretations and policy shifts that strengthen human rights protections. These interventions contribute to shaping human rights laws and reinforcing protections for marginalized communities. While not all interventions have resulted in cited legal precedents, the Commissioner's submissions have been acknowledged and considered by decision-makers and contribute meaningfully to legal discourse.

Key interventions identified in the evaluation include:

- ***Gibraltar Mines Ltd. v. Harvey (2021–2023)***: The Commissioner successfully argued in favour of workplace accommodations for employees when employment conditions negatively impact their parental duties. This case set an important precedent for how employment law intersects with caregiving responsibilities.
- ***British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) on behalf of Chilliwack Teachers' Association v. Neufeld (2021–2025)***: The Commissioner intervened to emphasize that hate speech protections under the *Human Rights Code* should extend to online spaces and highlighted the disproportionate harms faced by transgender and non-binary people. The Tribunal and Supreme Court both acknowledged the Commissioner's participation and adopted portions of the legal reasoning advanced in the submissions, particularly affirming the Code's applicability to online publications.
- ***Gitxaala Nation v. Chief Gold Commissioner of B.C. et al. and Ehattesaht First Nation v. His Majesty the King in Right of B.C. et al. (2023–2025)***: The Commissioner advocated for the legal enforceability of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act), arguing that it should be treated as quasi-constitutional human rights legislation. Taking a decolonizing approach, the Commissioner engaged an Indigenous lawyer and engaged with the Nations involved before proceeding with the intervention. The court engaged in a detailed analysis of the Commissioner's submissions, recognizing them as legally distinct and significant.
- ***Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS) v. R.R. (2023–2024)***: The Commissioner intervened to clarify the jurisdiction of the BC Human Rights Tribunal in child welfare cases, arguing that limiting jurisdiction could negatively affect vulnerable individuals involved with child welfare services.

The Commissioner has strategically selected cases with the potential for broad systemic impact. Between 2021 and 2024, the Commissioner intervened in eight cases before courts and tribunals, with all intervention requests granted to date. In the focus groups and interviews, BCOHRC staff emphasized that these interventions support legal protections and policy reform, demonstrating the Office's ability to influence systemic change.

Feedback from key informant interviews and surveys underscores that the Commissioner's interventions extend beyond immediate legal outcomes. By addressing critical issues such as workplace discrimination, online hate speech and Indigenous sovereignty, the Commissioner plays a proactive role in shaping human rights discourse. However, overall awareness of the Commissioner's interventions was limited. Survey data reveals that 60% of respondents were

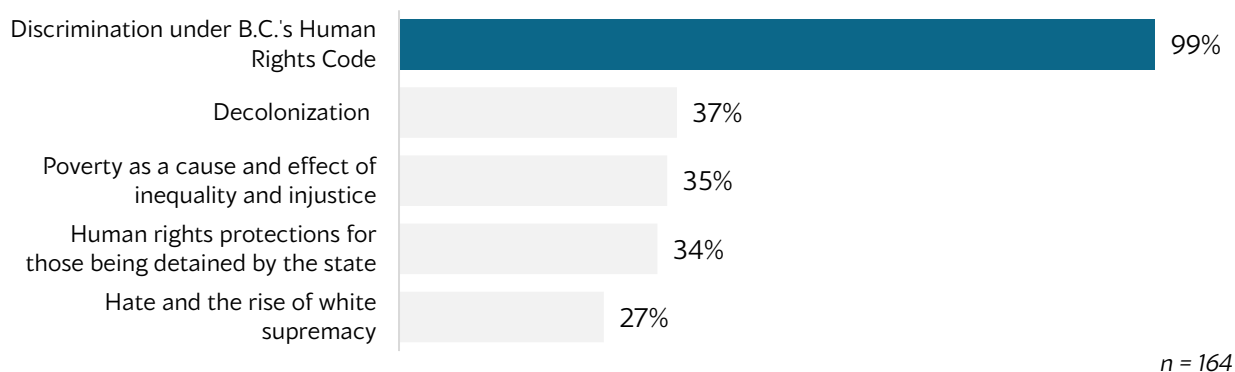
aware of these efforts. Still, two-thirds remained uncertain about their broader impact. One key informant specifically called for greater transparency in the case selection process.

Key area 6: Recommendations – The “Employment Equity Toolkit” and COVID-19 guidance on human rights-based approaches to masking and proof of vaccination policies

The Commissioner provides research-based recommendations to governments, public agencies, businesses and other organizations to drive systemic human rights advancements. These recommendations are designed to inform policy, strengthen legislative frameworks and improve institutional practices to address discrimination and inequality. While BCOHRC does not have enforcement authority, its recommendations serve as a key tool for advancing human rights in B.C. by shaping discourse, influencing decision-making and guiding systemic reforms.

By August 2024, BCOHRC issued over 165 recommendations, primarily targeting systemic inequities related to Indigenous identity, age, race, ethnicity and ancestry. While recommendations may address multiple strategic priorities, a central focus has been addressing discrimination under B.C.’s *Human Rights Code*, which is reflected in 99% of all issued guidance. To improve accessibility and uptake of human rights recommendations from other sources, BCOHRC launched the “Recommendations Database” in September 2023, compiling nearly 1,700 recommendations from more than 70 external reports and sources to provide policymakers, community organizations and individuals with practical, evidence-based strategies for advancing human rights. The Office has tracked long-term changes through its recommendation monitoring efforts and is publishing the results of this monitoring in the spring of 2025.

Figure 1. BCOHRC recommendations by strategic priority



*Note: Percentages exceed 100% as recommendations can focus on multiple strategic priorities

Key examples of influential recommendations include:

- A recommendation leading to the establishment of a racist incident helpline and updates to the *Anti-Racism Data Act* demonstrates direct policy impact, even though the Commissioner’s recommendation was for an anti-hate hotline that would include reporting beyond racism.

- Recommendations related to the right to housing and the inclusion of social condition in the *Human Rights Code*, which, while not yet enacted, continue to shape provincial policy discussions.
- The “Employment Equity Toolkit,” “A Human Rights Approach to Mask-Wearing During the COVID-19 Pandemic” and “A Human Rights Approach to Proof of Vaccination During the COVID-19 Pandemic” have provided organizations with concrete tools to implement human rights protections in the workplace and public health settings.

In the interviews, staff shared how government responsiveness, capacity and alignment with broader priorities influence whether recommendations are fully implemented, partially adopted or remain unaddressed. Systemic barriers, including political transitions, budget constraints and competing policy demands, also impact uptake. To better understand implementation rates, BCOHRC is conducting a recommendations verification process that seeks to assess how many of the Commissioner’s recommendations to government and other duty bearers have been actioned or are currently underway. This process involves reviewing public records, consulting stakeholder organizations and tracking follow-up actions related to BCOHRC’s recommendations. The findings will help the Office assess the uptake and influence of its guidance, strengthen accountability and inform future strategies for driving systemic change. The recommendations verification process will occur periodically moving forward as new recommendations are made by the Commissioner.

Findings from the key informant survey indicate:

- Two-thirds of expert, academic and “other priority” key informants viewed BCOHRC’s recommendations as having a moderately or significantly positive impact on promoting human rights in B.C.
- Half of all government and IOLA staff informants and one Indigenous informant reported a somewhat positive impact.
- Approximately 20% of informants expressed uncertainty about the implementation and impact of recommendations.

To enhance impact, key informants suggested strengthening engagement with policymakers, increasing the visibility of recommendations and aligning proposals more closely with existing government frameworks to improve feasibility and implementation. Expanding public education on how recommendations contribute to systemic change could also enhance understanding and support among partners.

Key area 7: Research projects – “Disaggregated Demographic Data Collection in British Columbia: The Grandmother Perspective” and “Community Briefs”

BCOHRC conducts research to uncover systemic discrimination and inequities, using evidence to inform public policy and advocacy efforts. Through rigorous methodologies and community-driven approaches, these projects have contributed to awareness-building, legislative

advancements and organizational practices that promote equity⁷. The Office’s research also serves as a catalyst for broader institutional shifts, with government agencies, legal bodies and community organizations using its findings to inform decision-making.

BCOHRC’s research is designed to uncover and address structural inequalities, producing knowledge that shapes legislation, policy frameworks and public discourse. Notable research projects include:

- **The “Grandmother Perspective” report**, which provided a community-informed approach to data governance and directly influenced the B.C. *Anti-Racism Data Act* and *Anti-Racism Act*. This report also guided organizations in responsible demographic data collection. A full case study can be found in [Appendix G](#).
- **“Community Briefs,”** which engaged over 250 participants across four communities (Chetwynd, Chilliwack, Cranbrook and Terrace) to document human rights experiences at the local level. Between August 2024 and November 2024, the community briefs from this project received over 1,000 views.
- **“Equity is Safer,”** which contributed to policy discussions on policing reform and systemic discrimination.

BCOHRC’s research also fosters long-term impact at the community level. For example, a community organization in Cranbrook that contributed to the “Human Rights in Cranbrook” brief later created a part-time Human Rights Coordinator role, reflecting how research partnerships can lead to sustained engagement and local human rights infrastructure.

Key informants recognized BCOHRC’s influence, noting that its research has had an effect beyond government.

“Their work on systemic racism and demographic data collection has had a ripple effect. It’s not just government but also other organizations looking at how they can adopt similar approaches.” —IOLA key informant

Similarly, the media and legal citations of BCOHRC reports suggest that its research is gaining traction within policy, advocacy and public discourse. One government staff key informant highlighted:

“I’ve seen their reports cited in government briefs and even in media. That says a lot about how influential their work has become.”

—Government staff key informant

⁷ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC), Information for the Strategic Evaluation Report: Research Team, Date first effective: Unknown, Research.

While BCOHRC's research has influenced policy conversations and institutional approaches, key informants suggested opportunities to expand its reach:

- **Building awareness within Indigenous communities:** Neither of the two Indigenous key informants in the survey were familiar with BCOHRC's research. Alternatively, research projects held the highest level of awareness among all other key informant groups.
- **Bridging the gap between research and action:** Key informant interviews suggested that while BCOHRC's research is methodologically sound, ensuring accessibility for diverse audiences and providing public education around research findings could broaden its impact.

Key area 8: Special programs – Adoption of equity-driven hiring practices across sectors

BCOHRC approves special programs that promote substantive equality by addressing historical and systemic discrimination, pursuant to s.42(3) of the Code. These programs allow for targeted initiatives that might otherwise contravene the B.C. *Human Rights Code*, such as preferential hiring practices for underrepresented groups.

BCOHRC has approved 152 active special programs, with 10 additional applications in progress as of September 2024, demonstrating sustained demand. After the transfer of approval responsibilities from the BC Human Rights Tribunal to the Commissioner in 2023, BCOHRC reduced processing times by half, increasing responsiveness. Staff and key informants noted that this shift has enhanced responsiveness while maintaining accountability through mid-term and final reporting requirements.

BCOHRC's special programs have been widely adopted across sectors. Participants have included:

- **Educational institutions:** The University of British Columbia, Capilano University and Vancouver Island University have implemented Indigenous hiring and student access programs.
- **Public health authorities:** Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health have introduced programs to improve workforce diversity.
- **Local institutions:** The Burnaby Public Library and the Capital Regional District have incorporated preferential hiring to promote workforce representation.
- **Non-profit organizations:** Salal Sexual Violence Support Centre (previously WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre) has prioritized hiring transgender and non-binary individuals to enhance service accessibility.
- **School districts:** Various districts have introduced equity-driven hiring practices to diversify educational leadership and teaching staff.

BCOHRC's special programs framework promotes accountability as participating organizations are required to report on program outcomes, demonstrating their effectiveness in advancing human rights.

Evaluation findings suggest that while the value of special programs is generally recognized, their overall impact on human rights promotion remains unclear to many key informants. More than two-thirds of survey respondents expressed uncertainty regarding their influence and the sole Indigenous informant aware of the programs rated their impact as somewhat positive. This evaluation did not include perspectives from organizations that have been granted special program designations. As such, it is not possible to fully assess how the designation is working in practice or what outcomes it may have supported. This represents a limitation and future evaluations should consider engaging directly with designated organizations to better understand the effectiveness and impact of special programs (although it is noteworthy that approving qualified special program applications is required by the *Human Rights Code*).

Additionally, in the interviews, BCOHRC staff discussed how administrative processes remain labour-intensive due to legislative requirements mandating formal approval or rejection of applications. Unlike other human rights commissions in Canada, which primarily provide guidance, BCOHRC must approve qualified special programs, limiting its ability to take on a more advisory role.

BCOHRC has established relationships to fulfill the strategic priorities and advance its mandate

BCOHRC has established meaningful relationships with a range of actors to support the achievement of its strategic priorities and advance its mandate of addressing systemic discrimination and inequality in B.C. The Office has built strong connections with government agencies, human rights organizations and advocacy groups while fostering engagement with impacted communities. These relationships have supported policy development, enhanced accessibility and ensured that BCOHRC's work remains informed by diverse perspectives. While key informant feedback confirms that BCOHRC is viewed as a credible and collaborative partner, they also highlighted opportunities to enhance culturally responsive engagement, improve transparency in collaborations and expand outreach to marginalized communities.

Guided by its "Policy and Practices Framework," BCOHRC has implemented **various internal policies and approaches** to ensure structured, inclusive and transparent engagement with partners and the public. These mechanisms demonstrate a commitment to fostering respectful, accountable and equitable relationships. Examples identified through the evaluation include:

- **Clear and respectful communication:** The 2024 "Email Policy"⁸ incorporates trauma-informed practices and response guidelines, ensuring public inquiries are acknowledged promptly and respectfully. This structured approach fosters trust and accessibility.

⁸ British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) Policy, Email Policy, Date first effective: January 31, 2024, Education and Engagement.

- **Inclusive procurement practices:** Accessibility-focused procurement guidelines⁹ ensure services meet diverse user needs, reinforcing the Office’s commitment to equity and accountability.
- **Ongoing accessibility improvements:** “Accessibility at BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner”¹⁰ includes regular evaluations, feedback mechanisms and initiatives to promote inclusivity in operations, engagement and employment practices.
- **Engagement frameworks:** The “Engagement Plan Template”¹¹ provides a structured approach to planning interactions, ensuring transparency, accountability and inclusivity.
- **Request management procedures**¹²: Standard operating procedures (SOPs) and the 2024 “Email Policy” streamline handling inquiries from the public, promoting consistent and respectful interactions.

Evaluation results indicate that **BCOHRC’s communications** are seen as a strength through the Office’s respectful, accessible and effective practices:

- All key informants who took the survey rated BCOHRC’s communication as **respectful and effective**, reinforcing perceptions of professionalism and responsiveness.
- In the survey, 88% of key informants found BCOHRC’s communication to be **culturally appropriate**. Some key informants, particularly expert and academic informants, were unsure about the Office’s trauma-informed practices and sensitivity to Indigenous ways of knowing. These results may reflect the difficulty in assessing these criteria, particularly depending on the type of communication respondents have received from the Office.
- **Accessibility in communication was rated positively** by 91% of key informants in the survey, reflecting efforts to reduce barriers through varied communication methods (e.g., proactive outreach through email, virtual meetings and community events). Key informants valued these practices for their structure, responsiveness and ability to facilitate input, which suggests that documents like “Accessibility at BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner” are supporting BCOHRC in achieving its goals.
- Key informant interviewees and survey participants **praised BCOHRC staff for their accessibility, responsiveness and follow-through on commitments**, which were noted as key factors in fostering trust.

Evaluation findings suggest that BCOHRC has built **strong and effective partnerships** with key informants who recognize the Office’s commitment to respectful engagement and collaboration:

⁹ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC), Accessible Procurement of Services, Date first effective: March 2024.

¹⁰ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC), Accessibility of BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, Date first effective: December 19, 2023, <https://bchumanrights.ca/resources/publications/publication/accessibility-report-2023/>

¹¹ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) Template, Internal Engagement Plan Template, Date first effective: Unknown, Education and Engagement.

¹² British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) Template, Request Management SOP, Date first effective: March 1, 2024, Operations and Engagement.

- In the survey, 84% of key informants agreed that **BCOHRC maintains strong working relationships with their organizations**, reflecting its ability to foster meaningful partnerships.
- Key informants in the interviews, particularly those in the “other priority key informants” category, highlighted **BCOHRC’s professionalism, adaptability and commitment to mutual benefit**, noting that the Office consistently demonstrates its core values through respectful and effective interactions, even when perspectives differ.
- The Office’s **relationships with the federal and provincial government and with human rights bodies were identified as key strengths** in the interviews, with government and IOLA staff key informants emphasizing open communication and collaborative problem-solving as key contributors to the Office’s influence.
- In the interviews, some key informants, including “other priority key informants” and government staff, expressed a **need for more frequent updates and increased transparency regarding ongoing and past collaborations**, suggesting that clearer communication could strengthen trust and accountability.
- In the interviews and focus groups, some staff identified **opportunities to expand engagement with municipal governments and key ministries** to address systemic human rights challenges more effectively across B.C.

Enhancing BCOHRC’s relationships for greater impact

While BCOHRC has built strong partnerships, evaluation findings highlight opportunities to improve role clarity, cultural responsiveness, transparency and outreach. Some key informants, including staff and “other priority key informants,” identified unclear engagement roles at BCOHRC, with one key informant suggesting the creation of a community liaison role to streamline communication, improve coordination and provide a consistent point of contact for partners.

Key informant survey findings suggest gaps in trauma-informed and Indigenous engagement practices. While trauma-informed practices were rated positively by all government and IOLA staff respondents and 88% of “other priority key informants,” only 56% of experts and academics shared this view. However, across all informant groups, 14% were unsure of whether engagement with the Office is trauma-informed. Similarly, sensitivity to Indigenous ways of knowing received mixed ratings, with 63% of “other priority key informants” and 78% of experts and academics expressing confidence in BCOHRC’s approach, while 21% across all informant groups remained uncertain. The proportion of uncertain responses suggests that many key informants may not have had direct experience with BCOHRC’s trauma-informed and Indigenous engagement practices, reflecting the nature of their interactions with the Office rather than a lack of these practices. However, the findings highlight an opportunity for BCOHRC to further explore how these engagement approaches are perceived and experienced across different groups, ensuring that they are both effective and widely understood.

Although BCOHRC has made significant efforts in community engagement and has undertaken numerous initiatives to elevate marginalized voices, some key informants identified gaps that persist in outreach to certain underrepresented groups. While the Office actively engages

communities through public presentations, digital engagement and interactive events, some informants recommended more frequent updates on past and ongoing collaborations to reinforce trust and accountability. Additionally, they highlighted opportunities to expand outreach to specific groups, including queer organizations, educational institutions, low-income communities and rural populations, to further strengthen the inclusivity and impact of BCOHRC's engagement efforts.

Lastly, some key informants, including staff and "other priority" key informants, suggested that relationship-building efforts currently rely heavily on the Commissioner's networks, which may limit broader staff involvement in long-term engagement. However, BCOHRC has a dedicated Education & Engagement department that fosters accessibility and community trust, as well as a Communications department that amplifies outreach efforts, both of which play a role in sustaining relationships beyond the Commissioner's direct networks. While these departments contribute to engagement efforts, some staff and "other priority" key informants suggested that further decentralizing relationship-building responsibilities across the Office could enhance sustainability and consistency, ensuring that partnerships are maintained through broader institutional mechanisms rather than individual relationships.

Missteps and errors

BCOHRC demonstrates a proactive approach to addressing missteps and maintaining accountability, reflecting its commitment to fostering trust and resilience in relationships. Instances of reported missteps from key informants are rare—just two survey respondents noted errors—but details about these incidents or their resolutions were minimal. One key informant described a past instance where a public statement provided by BCOHRC created temporary tension but did not impact the relationship in the long term. The minimal details shared leave gaps in understanding how BCOHRC's broader response to missteps is perceived, an area that warrants greater exploration.

Key strengths in addressing missteps

1. **Commitment to accountability:** In the interviews and focus groups, staff shared how BCOHRC prioritizes rebuilding trust through personalized responses, including formal and informal apologies. Both the Commissioner and staff actively take responsibility when issues arise, underscoring the Office's values-driven approach to maintaining integrity in its interactions.
2. **Emphasis on learning:** In the interviews and focus groups, staff shared how the Office views feedback as an opportunity for growth, reflecting on missteps to refine practices and prevent future errors. This iterative approach demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and stronger relationships.
3. **Acknowledgment of challenges in human rights work:** Some key informants from all groups acknowledged the inherent complexity of human rights work, with an understanding that occasional errors are likely given the nature of BCOHRC's mandate. This recognition indicates a degree of trust and understanding of the Office's overall commitment to its mission.

Opportunities for improvement in addressing missteps

While BCOHRC's approach to accountability is valued, key informants highlighted a need for greater transparency in how missteps are managed. Suggestions from key informants include:

- **Formal feedback mechanisms:** Establish structured processes to consistently capture and respond to partner feedback.
- **Clearer communication on error management:** Strengthen public and partner understanding of how errors are addressed to build trust and credibility. Share lessons learned and examples of resolved issues to reinforce accountability and transparency.

Recommendation 4: Continue to strengthen relationship-building

While BCOHRC has built relationships with government bodies, human rights organizations, Indigenous communities and advocacy groups, evaluation findings indicate opportunities to enhance engagement with underrepresented communities and improve transparency in partnerships.

Key actions:

- **Increase transparency:** Provide more frequent updates on past and ongoing collaborations to reinforce trust and accountability, ensuring all key groups have a clear understanding of the Office's efforts.
- **Continue to foster relationships with Indigenous communities:** Prioritize inclusivity, ongoing collaboration and clear communication.
- **Expand outreach to marginalized communities:** Strengthen engagement with historically underrepresented groups such as low-income communities, rural populations and other equity-deserving groups, ensuring that BCOHRC's initiatives are inclusive and accessible.
- **Broaden relationships with government bodies:** Expand engagement with a wider range of government partners, including municipalities, to support alignment with BCOHRC's strategic priorities and improve the uptake of its recommendations, building on the recommendations verification process.

BCOHRC's staffing structure, including its departmental organization, supported the achievement of its strategic priorities

BCOHRC's staffing structure and departmental organization shape its ability to achieve its strategic priorities by leveraging specialized expertise, fostering a collaborative culture and enhancing its capacity to drive systemic, long-term improvements in human rights protection and advancing equity in B.C. However, structural inefficiencies and administrative burdens may limit its full impact. While recent initiatives, including the creation of the Corporate Services department, have strengthened operations, further improvements are needed to enhance efficiency and interdepartmental coordination.

Strong mission alignment drives progress

BCOHRC staff demonstrate deep alignment with the Office's mission and values, which enhances motivation and engagement. The 2023 BCOHRC Workplace Environment Survey, implemented by the Office and designed with questions tailored specifically for its employees, found that 81% of staff integrate a human rights-based approach into their work. Staff interviews and focus groups completed by the evaluation echoed these findings, with staff describing a strong sense of purpose and commitment to systemic change around the strategic priorities.

"I've never worked in a place where everyone is so committed to a shared purpose and shared values. The dedication and knowledge within our team are significant strengths."

—Staff key informant

Staff turnover can impact the achievement of strategic priorities

BCOHRC staff participated in the BC Public Service Workplace Environment Survey, which is conducted by the broader BC Public Service, in both 2022 and 2024. The results described in this report reflect responses from BCOHRC employees only.

The overall engagement score in 2024 was 79 out of 100 (n=22). According to the Public Service Agency, units that score 78 or higher are considered top performing¹³ in employee engagement, indicating strong levels of commitment, satisfaction and organizational connection among staff. However, based on feedback from staff during the evaluation, it is possible that newer members of staff did not take part in the 2024 BC Public Service WES as they may not have been with the organization long enough to meaningfully assess its culture or engagement. The focus groups and interviews conducted through the evaluation have provided additional insights to surface perspectives that may be missing from the survey data. In 2024, 82% of staff reported confidence in the Office's long-term success, but perceptions of support during organizational change declined from 71% in 2022 to 37% in 2024. This decline, along with insights from staff interviews

¹³ Government of British Columbia, About the Survey Scores, Accessed March 26, 2025, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/surveys/wes/methodology/about-survey-scores>

and focus groups, highlights frequent staffing changes as an ongoing challenge. Staff noted impacts on preserving institutional knowledge, maintaining continuity in long-term projects and ensuring consistency in internal processes. In the interviews and focus groups, staff emphasized that turnover disrupts workflow, increases onboarding demands and creates gaps in expertise, making it more difficult to sustain momentum on strategic initiatives. Staff suggested enhancing onboarding processes and documentation to ensure new employees can integrate smoothly and that organizational knowledge is preserved.

Departmental specialization supports expertise

BCOHRC's departmental organization allows teams to develop specialized expertise, contributing to the Office's strategic priorities:

- **Education & Engagement** develops educational initiatives and fosters accessibility and community trust.
- **Research & Policy** supports evidence-based decision-making and advocacy.
- **Legal** conducts systemic interventions, inquiries and investigations.
- **Communications** amplifies BCOHRC's outreach.
- **Operations** and **Corporate Services** provide foundational support.

BCOHRC's workplace culture is widely described by staff in interviews and focus groups as collaborative, respectful and values-driven, which contribute to high job satisfaction. For example, the 2024 BC Public Service WES indicates improvements in workload management (59%, up from 45% in 2022) and work-life balance (86%, up from 57% in 2022), suggesting success in initiatives like the 2023 "Flexible Work Policy."

Enhancing administrative efficiency to support strategic priorities

In the interviews and focus groups, staff shared concerns about administrative workloads, which reduce the time available for high-impact human rights initiatives. Staff described administrative operational and procedural tasks as limiting the capacity for substantive policy, legal and community engagement work. For example, one staff member noted:

"Sometimes staff are not supported to work to the best of their abilities and kept busy with a heavy admin-burden."

—Staff key informant

Staff emphasized the need to enhance administrative support and implement clearer processes for task delegation to reduce inefficiencies and allow teams to better contribute to the strategic priorities.

While the departmental structure strengthens BCOHRC's ability to address human rights issues, staff interviews and focus groups revealed that departmental silos can limit collaboration and slow decision-making due to challenges in accessing the right people or information. For example,

some staff expressed uncertainty about whom to approach for specific tasks or decisions, which can slow adaptability. Staff described some uncertainty about roles and responsibilities across teams, as well as a lack of standardized project management processes, leading to duplication of efforts and workflow inefficiencies. For instance, staff shared how tools like Asana can enhance project management and collaboration but are hindered by inconsistent implementation and usability challenges. Some staff believe that the virtual work environment has further reduced opportunities for informal knowledge-sharing, making collaboration more challenging.

BCOHRC transitioned to using an internal Corporate Services department in April 2024, which consists of Finance, Human Resources and Information Management and Information Technology (IM/IT) teams, and is updating the “Project Management Framework,” which aims to improve interdepartmental coordination and workflow efficiency. However, full implementation remains ongoing and staff emphasized the need for clearer processes and strengthened internal communication channels to reduce departmental silos and enhance collaboration.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen internal coordination, knowledge retention and administrative efficiency

While BCOHRC’s departmental structure supports its strategic priorities, evaluation findings indicate opportunities to improve interdepartmental coordination, knowledge retention and administrative efficiency to enhance overall impact.

Key actions:

- **Improve cross-departmental collaboration:** Strengthen internal coordination through regular cross-team meetings and standardized collaboration protocols to reduce departmental silos and enhance communication.
- **Enhance knowledge retention:** Strengthen a centralized knowledge-sharing repository and structured onboarding processes to preserve institutional knowledge and improve staff transitions.
- **Reduce administrative burdens for non-administrative staff:** Assess administrative support needs and refine internal processes to improve efficiency and ensure staff capacity is focused on high-impact initiatives.

The accessibility of BCOHRC’s programming and resources supported the achievement of its strategic priorities

The accessibility of BCOHRC’s programming and resources is central to advancing its strategic priorities by ensuring that human rights information, education and awareness efforts effectively reach diverse communities across B.C. BCOHRC has made meaningful progress in improving accessibility through digital enhancements and internal accessibility practices; this is reflected in positive findings from the key informant survey. The Office has also demonstrated leadership in accessibility governance by co-chairing the Independent office of the Legislative Assembly (IOLA)

Joint Accessibility Committee, reinforcing its commitment to inclusivity and systemic accessibility improvements.

Commitment to accessibility through policy and collaboration

BCOHRC has taken deliberate steps to improve accessibility across its operations, aligning with human rights principles and the *Accessible British Columbia Act*¹⁴. The “Accessibility at BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner”¹⁵ report outlines a three-year priority action plan, highlighting key initiatives aimed at identifying, removing and preventing barriers to ensure equitable access to its resources and programming. These initiatives include:

- **Establishing an internal Accessibility Working Group** to assess and address barriers across the Office, bringing together staff from multiple departments, including Education & Engagement, Legal, Communications and Operations. This group plays a central role in developing, implementing, evaluating and reporting on BCOHRC’s accessibility plan and ensures that accessibility remains a core principle in organizational policies and practices.
- **Co-chairing the Joint Accessibility Committee**, a collaborative effort with IOLAs, including the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Office of the Auditor General and the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) among others. The Committee’s mandate is to advise on accessibility initiatives, support compliance with the *Accessible British Columbia Act* and identify and mitigate accessibility barriers within each office’s operations.
- **Ensuring that the composition of the Joint Accessibility Committee integrates both professional and lived experience.** To the extent possible, membership is structured to ensure that at least half of the members are either persons with disabilities or individuals who support or are from organizations that support persons with disabilities. The Committee also includes at least one Indigenous member and strives to represent the broader diversity of B.C.’s population.

Beyond governance and collaboration, BCOHRC has integrated accessibility into its public engagement, digital communications, physical workspaces and internal policies. The “Joint Accessibility Memorandum of Understanding”¹⁶ (MOU) reinforces BCOHRC’s commitment to collaborative accessibility efforts, building public trust through transparent, coordinated and proactive initiatives that align with universal design principles. The Office has incorporated accessibility considerations across educational materials, recruitment practices, digital resources and public campaigns including the “Let’s #RewriteTheRules” campaign, which challenged ableism and highlighted systemic barriers. Additionally, accessibility audits of BCOHRC’s office space, digital platforms and engagement processes have led to key improvements, such

¹⁴ *Accessible British Columbia Act*. (BC Laws, June 17, 2021, <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019>).

¹⁵ *Accessibility at BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner Report* (British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, December 19, 2023, <https://bchumanrights.ca/accessibility-report-2023>).

¹⁶ Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU), Joint Accessibility Committee (the Committee), 2023.

as physical office modifications, the procurement of accessibility-enhancing software and the expansion of multilingual resources.

BCOHRC's commitment to accessibility ensures that its human rights advocacy, research and public education efforts are inclusive, equitable and widely available. The Office integrates accessibility into its operations to enable individuals and communities across B.C. to meaningfully engage with its resources, services and legal interventions.

Key informant perceptions of accessibility

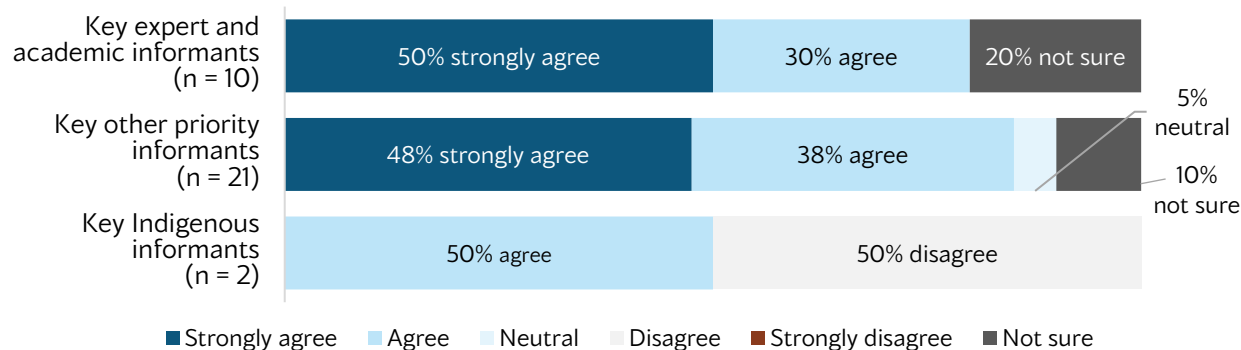
Outside of the evaluation interviews and focus groups, staff shared the following strategies BCOHRC has implemented to ensure that its digital and published materials are inclusive:

- Updated the website to align with current accessibility standards.
- Maintained a detailed accessibility checklist to guide the production of external publications.
- Provided staff training on accessible documents, spreadsheets and presentation creation.
- Reviewed translation and video accessibility practices to ensure that resources are user-friendly for diverse audiences.

These initiatives enhance the Office's ability to communicate human rights information effectively, supporting its strategic priorities in public education and systemic advocacy.

Survey data indicates that 81% of key informants consider BCOHRC's resources accessible. However, one of the two Indigenous key informants disagreed, though it is unclear whether this reflects direct experiences with BCOHRC's resources or broader systemic accessibility challenges. This finding suggests the need for further exploration of accessibility challenges among specific communities.

Figure 2. Key informant survey results: Accessibility of Office resources by informant group¹⁷



**Note: Government and IOLA staff informants were not asked this question.*

¹⁷ Indigenous key informants have a small sample size (n=2); results should be interpreted with caution.

Digital infrastructure and accessibility enhancements

Recognizing that digital equity is fundamental to human rights, BCOHRC is committed to ensuring its website is accessible to the widest possible audience, regardless of circumstances or ability. In alignment with this goal, the Office aims to meet the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). These standards support access for people with a range of disabilities and barriers, including blindness, motor impairments, visual impairments and cognitive disabilities, helping to ensure that BCOHRC's online presence supports inclusive and equitable participation for all B.C. residents. BCOHRC's reliance on digital platforms for engagement, education and advocacy highlights the importance of a secure and accessible digital infrastructure.

The "IM/IT Assessment Report" (2024), developed as part of the transition to an internal Corporate Services department, assessed whether BCOHRC should manage its own IM/IT functions or continue partnering with external providers. The report identified several key areas for improvement, including:

- Gaps in the Security Threat & Risk Assessment (STRA) that could affect system reliability.
- The absence of a tested disaster recovery plan, which may impact the continuity of public access to digital resources.
- Opportunities for full adoption of Microsoft Office 365 cloud solutions, which could improve accessibility and operational efficiency.

BCOHRC has actively leveraged partnerships with other IOLAs to enhance accessibility. BCOHRC independently managed its own website, document production and some internal HR decisions including matters related to accessibility. However, the Office relied on the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) for financial, IM/IT and HR support through a shared services partnership until 2024, when BCOHRC transitioned these responsibilities in-house, which supported a more tailored approach to operational needs. However, continued collaboration and the sharing of best practices with RCY, Elections BC and other IOLAs present opportunities to strengthen accessibility frameworks.

BCOHRC's internal processes supported the achievement of its strategic priorities

BCOHRC's internal processes play a key role in advancing its strategic priorities by providing structure, consistency and accountability across initiatives. Strategic planning tools, KPIs and reporting mechanisms help align departmental efforts with organizational goals. Staff capacity constraints and opportunities to refine strategic priorities indicate areas for improvement. Overall, as a relatively new organization, BCOHRC has made significant progress in establishing comprehensive policies, guidelines and procedures to support its strategic priorities. Moving forward, continued refinement and consistent implementation of these processes will be key to sustaining progress and enhancing impact.

BCOHRC employs internal tools like the “Project Management Framework”¹⁸ to ensure these initiatives align with its strategic priorities. This framework is intended to enhance efficiency, consistency, collaboration and accountability while fostering transparency through effective communication and documentation. It can help the Office evaluate whether and how each project contributes to meaningful, long-term human rights advancements. Staff feedback indicates that the framework is appreciated and viewed as a valuable mechanism for promoting consistency and strategic alignment across projects. However, its application is not yet consistent.

Internal planning and performance measurement drive strategic alignment

BCOHRC has established a range of internal planning and evaluation processes to support strategic alignment. As previously mentioned, many of BCOHRC’s KPIs and evaluation methods are still in the early phases of implementation, reflecting the organization’s ongoing development and growth. Departmental strategic plans, annual planning documents and structured project templates, such as the “Concept Note Template,”¹⁹ “Education Project Template”²⁰ and the “E&E Indicators Consolidated Spreadsheet,”²¹ provide frameworks for evaluating risks, methodologies and outcomes. These tools enhance consistency in decision-making and help assess the Office’s effectiveness in achieving its strategic priorities.

¹⁸ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC), Project Management Framework, Updated: July 5, 2021.

¹⁹ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) Template, Concept Note Template, Date first effective: Unknown, Education and Engagement.

²⁰ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) Template, Education Project Template, Date first effective: Unknown, Education and Engagement.

²¹ British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC), E&E Indicators Consolidated Spreadsheet, Date first effective: Unknown, Education and Engagement.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen Indigenous engagement in future evaluations

The current evaluation incorporated Indigenous engagement approaches, including utilizing Keeoukaywin (The Visiting Way) to ensure culturally appropriate methods within the timeframe of the evaluation. However, available time and relational constraints limited the depth and breadth of participation. Even with earlier planning, fully embodying Keeoukaywin requires sustained relationship-building that extends beyond typical evaluation timelines. Future evaluations should begin Indigenous engagement as early as possible and allocate sufficient time to build trust, deepen relationships and follow community-guided approaches.

Key actions:

- **Begin engagement early and allow time to build trust:** Initiate relationship-building well in advance of data collection to meaningfully engage with hereditary and elected leaders, youth, urban Indigenous populations and other underrepresented groups.
- **Follow community-guided engagement approaches:** Invite Indigenous communities to define how they wish to be involved in the evaluation, including preferred participants, timelines and methods of engagement.
- **Acknowledge the long-term nature of Keeoukaywin:** Recognize that fully practicing Keeoukaywin may not align with typical evaluation timelines and should be supported through flexible, sustained engagement approaches.

Recommendation 7: Broaden participation in future evaluations to strengthen performance measurement

Evaluations are a key tool for accountability and learning, enabling BCOHRC to assess the effectiveness of its initiatives, demonstrate progress toward its strategic priorities and strengthen its ability to fulfill its mandate by identifying opportunities for improvement. Low response rates in this evaluation highlight two challenges: (1) some individuals and communities were unfamiliar with the full scope of BCOHRC's work, limiting their ability to provide informed feedback, and (2) some groups were hesitant to comment on BCOHRC's impact due to difficulty attributing systemic outcomes directly to the Office's activities. Future evaluations should expand outreach efforts and integrate more accessible, inclusive mechanisms for gathering feedback to improve awareness, participation and long-term outcome tracking.

Key actions:

- **Expand outreach beyond existing relationships:** Future evaluations should allow sufficient time to build new connections with individuals and communities not currently engaged with BCOHRC, including through trusted intermediaries such as advocacy organizations, legal clinics and community-based service providers. Actions include considering offering appropriate incentives to encourage participation.
- **Integrate ongoing, low-barrier feedback opportunities:** To better understand outcomes and effectiveness over time, future evaluations should include embedded opportunities for participants to share reflections after key activities, engagements or initiative milestones. While the Office already conducts ongoing evaluations for some projects, implementing more frequent and systematically documented approaches could help capture timely, relevant data to support specific outcome assessments and reduce participation barriers.

Structured communications and grant-making support systemic change

BCOHRC employs semi-annual reporting on communications impact, ensuring ongoing evaluation and refinement of its outreach efforts. Additionally, the "BCOHRC Grants Procedure"²² guides the administration of grant funding. The Office currently lacks a structured process for evaluating the long-term impact of grant-funded initiatives. Future efforts should focus on assessing the effectiveness of grants in advancing strategic priorities.

²² British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) Procedure, Grants Procedure, Date first effective: May 8, 2020, Operations.

Strategic priorities reflect BCOHRC mandate

BCOHRC's six strategic priorities are intentionally ambitious, reflecting its legislative mandate to address systemic human rights issues. Staff discussions in the interviews and focus groups indicated strong alignment between the priorities and the Office's mandate. However, some staff expressed concerns that limited staff capacity may constrain the Office's ability to execute all priorities effectively. While the broad scope allows for flexibility in addressing emerging human rights challenges, staff believe that refining or consolidating priorities could improve focus, collaboration and feasibility. Ensuring that available resources, including funding and staff capacity, are effectively aligned with strategic priorities could strengthen the Office's impact and long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

Since its establishment in 2019, BCOHRC has made meaningful progress in fulfilling the Commissioner's mandate to address the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice in B.C. This evaluation finds that the Office has contributed to influencing laws, policies and practices through legal interventions, systemic inquiries and research-informed advocacy. Its work has raised public awareness and expanded dialogue on human rights, particularly through education campaigns and community engagement efforts. While progress has been more visible in some strategic priorities—such as addressing discrimination under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*—other areas, such as poverty as a cause and effect of inequality and injustice and human rights protections for those being detained by the state, received lower recognition from key informants, in part due to limited visibility or awareness.

BCOHRC's internal operations have evolved to support its growing mandate. Initiatives such as the establishment of a Corporate Services department, enhancements to operational efficiency and continued improvements to staff support and well-being have strengthened its organizational capacity. However, the evaluation also highlights ongoing challenges, including administrative burden, staff turnover, interdepartmental coordination issues and the early-stage development of performance measurement systems.

Importantly, the evaluation recognizes the complexity of achieving and measuring systemic change, particularly over a five-year period. Findings reflect that not all key informants were familiar with the full range of BCOHRC's work, which may have contributed to varied perceptions of impact. Despite these limitations, the Office has built strong foundations in key areas of law reform, public education and engagement. Moving forward, BCOHRC is well-positioned to deepen its impact through expanded outreach and continued development of evaluation frameworks that support long-term learning and accountability.

Recommendations

This section consolidates all recommendations from the preceding findings, offering a consolidated overview for ease of reference. The recommendations are grounded in a comprehensive review of evaluation findings, incorporating insights from key informant interviews, surveys, focus groups and a document review. These recommendations reflect Three Hive Consulting's independent assessment of BCOHRC's progress, strengths and opportunities for growth. They are designed to support BCOHRC in advancing its strategic priorities, strengthening its impact and enhancing its contributions to systemic human rights protections in B.C.

Recommendation 1: Continue efforts to strengthen visibility and demonstrate impact

While BCOHRC has established broad public awareness, evaluation findings suggest opportunities to deepen understanding of its work and impact among key groups, particularly in areas such as detention advocacy and recommendations made by the Commissioner to government and other duty bearers. Clarifying the Office's role and strategically amplifying key initiatives will improve recognition among key groups.

Key actions:

- **Clarify the Office's role and contributions:** Use plain-language materials to explain BCOHRC's non-partisan mandate, legal powers and systemic advocacy.
- **Highlight and promote key initiatives:** Strategically identify priority projects to emphasize at appropriate times to improve visibility and engagement.
- **Enhance public reporting:** Continue to communicate activities and outcomes in accessible formats across multiple channels to reinforce BCOHRC's influence and improve public understanding of its contributions, including the public reporting of evaluation findings.

Recommendation 2: Enhance measurable outcomes

While BCOHRC has established KPIs to track progress, evaluation findings indicate opportunities to expand these across all departments and refine strategic priorities with more measurable goals to improve accountability and impact assessment.

Key actions:

- **Establish clear performance targets:** Develop specific, attainable KPIs to assess progress across all strategic priorities, ensuring alignment with BCOHRC's long-term goals.
- **Strengthen impact tracking:** Implement structured monitoring processes to ensure alignment between strategic initiatives and measurable outcomes.
- **Improve internal accountability:** Provide staff with clear benchmarks for success to enhance transparency and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals.

- **Strengthen a centralized data repository:** Expand a centralized repository to ensure primary data is well-documented and to facilitate access, analysis and alignment with evaluation indicators and metrics. Strengthening a repository will streamline evaluation efforts and improve data-driven decision-making. A repository should include “lessons learned” from each project to identify trends and operationalize an action plan for continuous improvement.

Recommendation 3: Increase public education and awareness efforts

While BCOHRC has taken meaningful steps to improve the visibility of its work, evaluation findings indicate further opportunities to expand public education and improve awareness, particularly among underrepresented communities. Continuing to increase clarity and reach through strategic communications will help ensure that diverse audiences understand BCOHRC’s mandate, initiatives and available resources.

Key actions:

- **Expand public education and outreach:** Continue to utilize and expand on targeted campaigns, plain-language materials, digital story-telling and community-specific communication strategies. Strengthen awareness efforts through more intentional outreach by leveraging educational partnerships, both existing and new, to extend BCOHRC’s reach and impact.
- **Ensure visibility of key initiatives:** Continue to use and expand the use of accessible formats and platforms to promote BCOHRC’s work more broadly, ensuring public audiences are aware of its role and systemic impact.

Recommendation 4: Continue to strengthen relationship-building

While BCOHRC has built relationships with government bodies, human rights organizations, Indigenous communities and advocacy groups, evaluation findings indicate opportunities to enhance engagement with underrepresented communities and improve transparency in partnerships.

Key actions:

- **Increase transparency:** Provide more frequent updates on past and ongoing collaborations to reinforce trust and accountability, ensuring all key groups have a clear understanding of the Office’s efforts.
- **Continue to foster relationships with Indigenous communities:** Prioritize inclusivity, ongoing collaboration and clear communication.
- **Expand outreach to marginalized communities:** Strengthen engagement with historically underrepresented groups such as low-income communities, rural populations and other equity-deserving groups ensuring that BCOHRC’s initiatives are inclusive and accessible.

- **Broaden relationships with government bodies:** Expand engagement with a wider range of government partners, including municipalities, to support alignment with BCOHRC's strategic priorities and improve the uptake of its recommendations, building on the recommendations verification process.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen internal coordination, knowledge retention and administrative efficiency

While BCOHRC's departmental structure supports its strategic priorities, evaluation findings indicate opportunities to improve interdepartmental coordination, knowledge retention and administrative efficiency to enhance overall impact.

Key actions:

- **Improve cross-departmental collaboration:** Strengthen internal coordination through regular cross-team meetings and standardized collaboration protocols to reduce departmental silos and enhance communication.
- **Enhance knowledge retention:** Strengthen a centralized knowledge-sharing repository and structured onboarding processes to preserve institutional knowledge and improve staff transitions.
- **Reduce administrative burdens for non-administrative staff:** Assess administrative support needs and refine internal processes to improve efficiency and ensure staff capacity is focused on high-impact initiatives.

The following recommendations are intended to **inform and strengthen future evaluations**. They are based on the evaluators' reflections and learnings from this process and are aimed at improving the inclusivity, relevance and overall effectiveness of future evaluative efforts.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen Indigenous engagement in future evaluations

The current evaluation incorporated Indigenous engagement approaches, including utilizing Keeoukaywin (The Visiting Way) to ensure culturally appropriate methods within the timeframe of the evaluation. However, available time and relational constraints limited the depth and breadth of participation. Even with earlier planning, fully embodying Keeoukaywin requires sustained relationship-building that extends beyond typical evaluation timelines. Future evaluations should begin Indigenous engagement as early as possible and allocate sufficient time to build trust, deepen relationships and follow community-guided approaches.

Key actions:

- **Begin engagement early and allow time to build trust:** Initiate relationship-building well in advance of data collection to meaningfully engage with hereditary and elected leaders, youth, urban Indigenous populations and other underrepresented groups.

- **Follow community-guided engagement approaches:** Invite Indigenous communities to define how they wish to be involved in the evaluation, including preferred participants, timelines and methods of engagement.
- **Acknowledge the long-term nature of Keeoukaywin:** Recognize that fully practicing Keeoukaywin may not align with typical evaluation timelines and should be supported through flexible, sustained engagement approaches.

Recommendation 7: Broaden participation in future evaluations to strengthen performance measurement

Evaluations are a key tool for accountability and learning, enabling BCOHRC to assess the effectiveness of its initiatives, demonstrate progress toward its strategic priorities and strengthen its ability to fulfill its mandate by identifying opportunities for improvement. Low response rates in this evaluation highlight two challenges: (1) some individuals and communities were unfamiliar with the full scope of BCOHRC's work, limiting their ability to provide informed feedback, and (2) some groups were hesitant to comment on BCOHRC's impact due to difficulty attributing systemic outcomes directly to the Office's activities. Future evaluations should expand outreach efforts and integrate more accessible, inclusive mechanisms for gathering feedback to improve awareness, participation and long-term outcome tracking.

Key actions:

- **Expand outreach beyond existing relationships:** Future evaluations should allow sufficient time to build new connections with individuals and communities not currently engaged with BCOHRC, including through trusted intermediaries such as advocacy organizations, legal clinics and community-based service providers. Actions include considering offering appropriate incentives to encourage participation.
- **Integrate ongoing, low-barrier feedback opportunities:** To better understand outcomes and effectiveness over time, future evaluations should include embedded opportunities for participants to share reflections after key activities, engagements or initiative milestones. While the Office already conducts ongoing evaluations for some projects, implementing more frequent and systematically documented approaches could help capture timely, relevant data to support specific outcome assessments and reduce participation barriers.

Glossary

If you are unsure about the terminology used in this report, we invite you to visit BCOHRC's Human Rights Glossary at: bchumanrights.ca/glossary. The following glossary draws on definitions from the Eval Academy Dictionary²³ developed by Three Hive Consulting. It is intended to support shared understanding of key terms used throughout this evaluation report.

BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC or the Office)

BCOHRC is the office that supports the independent Human Rights Commissioner, established in 2019, in their legislative mandate to promote and protect human rights in British Columbia through research, policy advocacy, legal interventions and public education.

Benchmark/Benchmarking

A benchmark (a.k.a. baseline) is the standard level we measure against. We need to compare our results with a benchmark to tell if something got better, worse or stayed the same.

Evaluation framework

An evaluation framework (a.k.a. evaluation plan) is a road map for conducting an evaluation. It identifies the questions the evaluation will answer, the data to be collected and the time and resources required.

Focus group

A focus group is an interview conducted with a small group of people (often four to 10 people), used to collect in-depth qualitative data from multiple people at the same time. Focus groups may help participants feel more comfortable and allow them to build on the answers of others. However, the facilitator must be aware of social dynamics among participants to make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to share their perspectives.

Human Rights Tribunal (BC)

The BC Human Rights Tribunal is a neutral decision-making body that deals with complaints under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*.

Impact assessment

Impact assessment is a type of outcome evaluation that focuses on the impacts produced by a program.

Impact

Impacts are the effects produced by a program. They can be positive, negative or neutral; primary or secondary; direct or indirect; and intended or unintended. Impacts usually refer to broad societal changes such as reduced poverty or increased health.

Inquiry

A public inquiry is an official review of major events or issues to establish facts and make recommendations for change. It is an opportunity to delve deeply into the human rights implications of a particular incident or issue, to gather factual and expert evidence, to hear directly from people impacted through witness statements or surveys and to make recommendations to address the human rights issues raised. An inquiry is not conducted by a court of law and the Commissioner cannot make legal findings of guilt or liability or compel governments to accept inquiry recommendations.

²³ Eval Academy Dictionary (Accessed March 24, 2025, <https://www.evalacademy.com/evaluation-dictionary>)

Keeoukaywin (The Visiting Way)

An Indigenous research methodology introduced by Cindy Gaudet that emphasizes relationship-building, story-telling and respectful engagement with Indigenous communities.

Key informant

A key informant is someone who can provide specialized knowledge or first-hand experience on the topic in question.

Mixed-methods

Mixed methods refer to the use of one data collection strategy to explain or explore another. A mixed method approach typically uses both qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Outcome

Program outcomes are the changes or benefits expected from a program. Outcomes could be improved quality of life, increased social skills or more job opportunities. In a logic model, a program's outcomes are the result of its outputs. Outcomes can be short-term, medium-term or long-term. Measuring outcomes can tell you if the program being evaluated has achieved its goals.

Output

Outputs of a program are the things produced by activities. They could include increased public awareness, education provided, personalized treatment plans or community events attended. In a logic model, outputs are created by activities, then outputs lead to outcomes.

Performance measurement

Performance measurement collects and analyzes data to evaluate progress toward goals and objectives. It can be input-based, output-based, outcome-based, process-based, quality-based or financial-based. It can help improve accountability, decision-making, motivation and resource allocation. Performance measurement data describes program achievement on selected indicators and program evaluation explains why we see those results.

Qualitative

Qualitative data are any type of non-numerical data and may include things such as interview transcripts, images or newspaper articles. Qualitative data can be collected using surveys, interviews and focus groups, among other methods. Some approaches to qualitative data analysis include content analysis and grounded theory.

Quantitative

Quantitative data are any type of numerical data, which may be expressed as measures or counts. Examples of quantitative data include age, income and number of children. Approaches to quantitative data analysis include statistics such as mean, standard deviation, t-tests and chi-square tests.

Statutory officer

A statutory officer is a non-partisan official appointed by the B.C. Legislative Assembly to carry out specific functions, monitor government programs and hold the government accountable while being independent of the executive. The Human Rights Commissioner is a statutory officer established under the B.C. *Human Rights Code*.

Systemic discrimination

Systemic discrimination comprises patterns of policies, practices or cultural norms—rather than individual

acts of discrimination—that create and maintain the power of certain groups over others or reinforce the disadvantage of certain groups.

Triangulate/Triangulation

Triangulation means using more than one method to study the same thing. By combining a suite of methods and data sources, we can come to a more complete answer to a question. The term is loosely borrowed from geometry, where it refers to calculating the distance to a point by looking at it from two other points. By using multiple methods, data types or evaluators, we can overcome the weaknesses of any one alone.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Evaluation purpose and use

This evaluation focuses on BCOHRC's progress in the strategic priorities that have guided the Office's work to date: discrimination under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*, decolonization, poverty as a cause and effect of inequality and injustice, hate and the rise of white supremacy, human rights protections for those being detained by the state and creating a strong and sustainable organization. The evaluation also:

1. **Discusses relevance:** This evaluation includes a brief discussion of the context in which BCOHRC operates, including the importance of addressing the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice and BCOHRC's role in doing so. This sets the stage for assessing the Office's impact, especially for external audiences.
2. **Examines processes and implementation:** This evaluation assesses the processes, strategies and internal operations that contribute to achieving the desired outcomes. This assessment includes examining organizational capacity, internal processes, staff engagement and key informant collaboration. Specific areas of focus include:
 - i. **Investigating the impact of internal structures, processes and capacity** on implementation of the strategic priorities.
 - ii. **Examining the accessibility (e.g., openness, inclusivity, availability) of BCOHRC resources to the public.** This assessment includes evaluating how effectively resources are communicated and made available to diverse communities, including marginalized groups, which is a key factor in contributing to the intended changes.
3. **Measures outcomes and impacts:** The evaluation measures progress toward the change BCOHRC intends to create through its initiatives and outputs. This assessment includes:
 - i. **Reviewing BCOHRC's relationships with key informants** to address pressing human rights issues.
 - ii. **Assessing the Office's contributions over the past five years** in influencing laws, policies, practices and culture and the knowledge gained within the broader human rights landscape in B.C.

By focusing on these objectives, the evaluation aims to provide comprehensive insights into BCOHRC's contributions to addressing human rights challenges, promoting equity and upholding human rights across the province.

Appendix B: Evaluation questions, assumptions and external factors

The evaluation questions are key components that guide the entire evaluation process, shaping what the evaluation seeks to explore, measure and comprehend. These questions cover a range of

outcomes and establish the indicators used to assess effectiveness. They also serve as the foundation for designing data collection tools which were tailored to suit various key informant groups. The evaluation questions and corresponding indicators were developed collaboratively with BCOHRC, drawing on its expertise and building on the evaluation framework.

Evaluation Question 1: What contributions has BCOHRC made toward advancing human rights and reducing inequality and discrimination in B.C. since its inception?

- 1.1 To what extent has BCOHRC achieved its strategic objectives?
- 1.2 How have BCOHRC's initiatives contributed to influencing laws, policies, practices and the culture of human rights in B.C.?
- 1.3 What relationships have BCOHRC established to fulfill the strategic priorities?

Evaluation Question 2: How effective are the processes and strategies used by BCOHRC in implementing its strategic priorities?

- 2.1 How does BCOHRC's staffing structure impact the achievement of its strategic priorities?
- 2.2 How does the accessibility of BCOHRC's programming and resources impact the achievement of its strategic priorities?
- 2.3 How do BCOHRC's internal processes impact the achievement of its strategic priorities?
- 2.4 How do the different departments within BCOHRC impact the achievement of its strategic priorities?

Assumptions

Assumptions are the beliefs or conditions we take for granted as true, often operating in the background of a program or evaluation without being explicitly stated. In evaluation, these assumptions shape how we understand change, define success and interpret outcomes. While often invisible or unquestioned, surfacing them is critical for a meaningful and accurate evaluation. By documenting these assumptions, we can ensure clarity and alignment in the evaluation process and proactively address any potential issues that may influence findings or interpretation.

Appropriateness

- BCOHRC's initiatives effectively address the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice in B.C., ensuring they are relevant to the current social and political climate. The context within which the Office operates will be discussed as part of the evaluation.

- Definitions are consistent and understood across the human rights ecosystem (the Office and provincially).

Alignment

- BCOHRC's strategic plan aligns with its mandate to shift laws, policies, practices and cultures to uphold human rights in B.C.

Demand

- BCOHRC's partners will support and engage with the evaluation activities and findings.

Timing

- There are unexpected significant disruptions that might impact engagement activities from events such as elections.

Effectiveness

- BCOHRC's programs and initiatives are set up for success in meeting the diverse needs of B.C.'s population. Effectiveness will be measured as part of the evaluation.

Data access and quality

- Accessible and quality data is available for evaluation purposes, including data that ensures privacy and security.

Infrastructure

- There is sufficient infrastructure to support partner engagement and data collection activities.

Knowledge

- The contractor/consultant has or gains sufficient knowledge of the human rights ecosystem and culture to enable the evaluation process.
- BCOHRC staff and partners have sufficient understanding of evaluations to engage with the evaluation process.

Resourcing

- Sufficient funding and resources are available to support the comprehensive evaluation of the BCOHRC's strategic plan.
- BCOHRC staff have dedicated time and resources to support the evaluation activities.
- Resources are allocated to support data collection, analysis and reporting for the evaluation.

Sponsorship

- BCOHRC leadership and staff are supportive of the evaluation process and committed to its success.
- Relevant partners support the evaluation and its objectives.

External factors and risks

By acknowledging these external factors, the evaluation team can set realistic expectations and better prepare for potential challenges that may arise during the evaluation of BCOHRC. External factors identified for this evaluation include:

Timelines and approval:

- The 2024 provincial election may have affected the level of engagement and data collection, potentially causing delays or limited availability of key partners during the evaluation process.
- Any delays in receiving approval for evaluation activities could impact the overall timeline of the evaluation process.
- The successful execution of data collection and subsequent reporting relies on cooperative efforts to meet designated timelines for implementing data collection methods promptly. Delays in one section of the overall timeline will have a rollover effect on reporting.
- Vacation time, particularly over the summer, could impact timelines.

Organizational readiness:

- Variations in the readiness and capacity of BCOHRC staff and partners to support the evaluation could impact the quality and consistency of data collection and analysis.
- Variations in the quality of previously collected evaluation data by BCOHRC departments may affect the reliability and consistency of the overall evaluation.

Funding availability:

- Availability and continuity of funding are crucial for the evaluation's execution and sustainability. Any changes or cuts in funding could hinder the evaluation's progress and scope.

Partnership and collaboration:

- Collaboration with internal and external partners may impact the timeline and quality of the evaluation if coordination issues arise.

Regulatory and policy changes:

- Changes in human rights regulations or policies at the provincial level could impact the evaluation framework and the interpretation of findings.

Social and environmental factors:

- Changes in the social or political environment could influence partner engagement and the relevance of evaluation findings.

Data privacy and security concerns:

- Concerns about data privacy and security (for any data included in the evaluation), especially with the use of sensitive human rights policies and other highly confidential work, could affect partners' willingness to participate in the evaluation.
- Ensuring robust data protection measures are in place is essential to maintain trust and compliance with privacy regulations.

Appendix C: Evaluation methods and limitations

Document review and administrative data

BCOHRC provided Three Hive with access to relevant documents and administrative data. Three Hive systematically reviewed these documents and mapped the data to the corresponding outcomes. This thorough examination of BCOHRC’s existing documents and data aimed to establish a foundational understanding of the Office’s work and its impact on advancing human rights and addressing inequality in B.C. The review covered a range of sources, including:

- Documents such as annual reports, policy frameworks and publications (e.g., reports, briefs and submissions).
- Insights from previous staff consultations implemented by BCOHRC, including the Workplace Environment Survey and departmental reviews.
- Feedback mechanisms such as post-event feedback forms and public polling data.
- Media monitoring to assess trends in media and social media coverage.

Interviews with key informants

Collaboration with key informants provides valuable insights into BCOHRC’s impact. To gather these insights, BCOHRC identified key informants, including human rights experts and academics, non-profit organizations and community interest organizations, government offices, independent offices of the Legislative Assembly (IOLAs) and other duty bearers, based on established relationships and prior engagements. Using indicators from the evaluation plan, an interview guide was developed for each participant group. Participants were invited to take part in confidential interviews conducted by trained Three Hive evaluators via phone or video call.

Participation was voluntary and confidential between the participants and Three Hive. Participants could withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was ensured under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, with data securely stored and identifying details excluded from analysis and reporting. Access to the interview recordings was restricted to designated Three Hive staff members directly responsible for conducting the interviews and completing the analysis. The decision to aim to conduct 26 key informant interviews was guided by a pragmatic balance of available resources, evaluation needs and the targeted engagement of diverse perspectives. While the number of interviews was not statistically significant, it was deemed appropriate for a qualitative evaluation, allowing for in-depth exploration of key themes while remaining feasible within the available time and resources.

Table C1. Targeted and completed interviews

Interview target	Number of invitations	Number completed
26	38	20

Interviews were transcribed and coded using a pre-established codebook, with consistency ensured through a round of code-checking. Transcripts were cleaned, categorized and analyzed based on participant groups. Participants, including but not limited to those already interviewed,

were also invited to complete an online survey after the interview period to provide additional feedback (see [Surveys](#) below).

Engaging Indigenous key informants

To engage Indigenous key informants and governments, the evaluation employed Keeoukaywin (The Visiting Way),²⁴ an Indigenous research methodology introduced by Indigenous scholar Cindy Gaudet, to connect with Indigenous communities. This methodology guided the interactions, emphasizing listening to and understanding Indigenous perspectives. The visiting guide was developed in collaboration with Three Hive's Indigenous Engagement Advisor and included an understanding that Indigenous people in B.C. are diverse and do not engage in only one way. Invitations were extended by BCOHRC's relationship holder, ensuring confidentiality throughout the process. Each visit was scheduled for up to an hour and a half to allow time for relationship-building. However, the actual duration of each completed visit was less than one hour.

Confidentiality and anonymity were prioritized and participants received the transcript of the visit for their records. Participation was voluntary, allowing individuals to skip questions if they wanted or withdraw at any time. Eight invitations were sent and two visits were completed. Visits were transcribed and coded using a pre-established codebook, with checks conducted to ensure consistency.

Engagements with BCOHRC staff

A total of five focus groups were conducted with staff from various departments within BCOHRC. Two interviews were completed with executive leadership. Participation in the sessions was voluntary and, to uphold confidentiality, participants were instructed not to share the discussion with others. The focus groups and interviews were transcribed and coded by the Three Hive evaluator who facilitated the discussions using a pre-established codebook derived from the guide. A round of code-checking was completed for accuracy and consistency.

Surveys

Following challenges in connecting with key informants to conduct interviews, Three Hive conducted a review of qualitative data quality which revealed some gaps due to limited information from certain participant groups. Consequently, a joint decision was made to transition to a broader key informant survey to enhance data collection. The content of the survey aligned with interview guides to ensure consistency.

To facilitate effective distribution, BCOHRC identified key participants and used established relationships to circulate the survey.

The confidential and voluntary survey was open from October 21 until November 8, 2024. Participants had the opportunity to complete the survey online or via phone and could skip questions or withdraw at any time. A total of 80 survey invitations were sent and 37 survey responses were received. No one opted to complete the survey over the phone.

²⁴ Gaudet, J.C. (2019). Keeoukaywin: The visiting way-fostering an Indigenous research methodology. *Aboriginal Policy Studies*, 7(2), 47–64

Table C2. Key informant survey: invited and completed surveys

Key informant group	# invited	# completed (%)
Independent office of the Legislature staff	3	2 (67%)
Human rights experts and academics	20	10 (50%)
Other priority key informants	43	21 (49%)
Government staff	6	2 (33%)
Indigenous informants	8	2 (25%)
TOTAL	80	37 (46%)

Data analysis: Assessing contribution

Evaluating BCOHRC's contribution to observed outcomes involves recognizing the multiple factors at play within the context of human rights in the province. This evaluation focuses on:

1. **Outcomes from the Theory of Change (ToC):** The ToC developed in 2022 outlines the causal pathways from activities to outcomes. This evaluation:
 - o Links past initiatives to expected outcomes, with the understanding that achieving short-term goals is expected to lead to intermediate and long-term changes.
 - o Identifies assumptions regarding the influence of external factors contributing to outcomes.
2. **Contribution analysis:** This method clarifies BCOHRC's role in achieving outcomes by:
 - o Defining clear contribution claims.
 - o Reviewing qualitative and quantitative evidence on BCOHRC's activities and the external context.
 - o Presenting a narrative within this report that links BCOHRC's initiatives to observed results, validated through feedback from key informants.
3. **Contextual analysis:** This evaluation briefly describes the broader environment in which BCOHRC operates, examining processes, organizational capacity and collaboration with key informants.
4. **Case studies:** Two plain-language case studies have been developed to illustrate key evaluation findings from specific BCOHRC projects. These case studies are designed to be accessible and engaging to highlight critical aspects of BCOHRC's work and its impact.

Limitations

Table C3. Methods used to address limitations.

Method	Limitations	Efforts made to overcome limitations
Document review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliance on existing documents may introduce gaps in data, limiting the understanding of BCOHRC's impact. There may be potential biases due to the documentation reflecting only formally recorded activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangulation of data sources: The evaluation uses multiple sources of data, such as interviews, surveys and focus groups, alongside document reviews. This triangulation captures a more comprehensive view of BCOHRC's impact.
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A suboptimal response rate, with only 20 out of 38 invited key informants completing interviews, restricts the diversity of perspectives. Self-selection bias may occur, as individuals with stronger opinions might be more likely to participate. Given the public education mandate held by the Office, it's important to recognize the potential limitations of relying on informants. These groups may not fully capture the perspectives of broader public audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivating trust through existing relationships: Initial interview invitations were customized and sent by a relationship holder from BCOHRC, ensuring a familiar and trusted approach for participants. Triangulation of results: Results from the interviews were triangulated with administrative data including public polls completed by BCOHRC. Reminders: Two reminders were provided to participants about their invitation to take part in the interview. Commitment to confidentiality: Participants were assured that their contributions would remain confidential, creating a space for honest and open feedback. Inclusive implementation: A survey was designed to engage a wider audience, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative questions in a concise format to respect participants' time while gathering a rich diversity of insights.
Indigenous engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The limited number of visits with Indigenous key informants and governments does not fully capture the range of perspectives from all involved communities. Time constraints could affect the depth of insights gathered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivating trust through existing relationships: Initial visit invitations were customized and sent by a relationship holder from BCOHRC, ensuring a familiar approach for participants. Reminders: Two reminders were provided to participants about their invitation to take part in a visit. Commitment to confidentiality: Participants were assured that their contributions would remain confidential, creating a space for honest and open feedback.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive survey implementation: A survey was designed to engage a wider audience, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative questions in a concise format to respect participants' time while gathering a rich diversity of insights. • Sharing of transcripts: Following each interview, transcripts were shared with participants to ensure accuracy. This practice not only supports reflection and feedback but also aligns with OCAP^{®25} principles, affirming participants' ownership over their own data and insights.
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured questions may limit the depth of participants' experiences and insights. • Open-ended responses: The survey included open-ended questions so participants could voluntarily add more detail. • Triangulation of data sources: The evaluation uses multiple sources of data, such as interviews, visits, document review and focus groups, alongside surveys. This triangulation helps to capture a more comprehensive view of BCOHRC's impact.

²⁵ <https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/>

Appendix D: Relevance of BCOHRC

To contextualize BCOHRC's role and importance, this section provides a brief discussion of the societal, legal and historical factors that shaped the establishment of the Office and its first five years of work. This discussion highlights the necessity of addressing the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice, providing a critical background for assessing the Office's impact.

The Commissioner started her role in September 2019 and one of her first priorities was establishing the Office to support the delivery of her mandate. The Office was established in response to the need for a broader, systemic approach to addressing discrimination and inequality in B.C. Previously, the provincial government relied solely on a complaints-based model, which puts the responsibility on individuals to navigate potentially complicated processes and systems and advocate for their rights. While the complaint mechanism remains in place, this approach was criticized as insufficient for addressing the structural and widespread causes of discrimination as it focused on individual cases rather than systemic issues²⁶. The Human Rights Commissioner's role was established as an additional mechanism to address this gap, prioritizing systemic interventions such as public education, policy advocacy, legal interventions and inquiries to promote human rights and tackle the root causes of inequality across the province.

Key areas of human rights concern in B.C.

The "Rights in Focus: Lived Realities in B.C."²⁷ 2024 report by BCOHRC provides a snapshot of human rights challenges across the province. It highlights 10 key areas where unfair systems and inequalities continue to exist, affecting marginalized communities the most. The 10 areas include inequities in:

1. **Housing:** Issues of affordability and accessibility, disproportionately affecting Indigenous peoples and low-income communities.
2. **Employment:** Inequities in hiring, workplace practices and wage gaps, particularly impacting women, racialized groups and people with disabilities.
3. **Education:** Systemic racism, discrimination against LGBTQ2SAI+ students and inadequate support services for Indigenous students and students with disabilities lead to poorer outcomes such as lower graduation rates, reduced access to higher education opportunities, limited career advancement, poorer mental health and well-being and heightened risk of disengagement from the educational system.
4. **Health:** Barriers to accessing equitable and culturally appropriate healthcare for marginalized populations, including inequities in health outcomes and access to health care services, with a particular focus on the toxic drug crisis.
5. **Criminal justice:** Disproportionate criminalization and unequal treatment of racialized and Indigenous individuals within the justice system, along with inequities in the treatment of individuals with mental health and substance use challenges in corrections.
6. **Public spaces:** Rising rates of hate-based violence and discrimination in outdoor public spaces and online, particularly targeting racialized religious, and gender-diverse communities.

²⁶ Submission to Parliamentary Secretary Ravi Kahlon – Re-establishment of a Human Rights Commission in British Columbia (Vancouver, BC: British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal, October 13, 2017), <https://www.bchrt.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/876/2023/03/bchrt-re-establishment-hr-commission.pdf>.

²⁷ Rights in focus: Lived realities in B.C. (British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, accessed July 2024, <https://baseline.bchumanrights.ca/in-focus/>).

7. **The family sphere:** Inequities in the distribution of caregiving and other domestic labour, combined with lower pay in the workforce, increase women's economic vulnerability and make it more difficult to escape intimate partner violence.
8. **The child welfare system:** The child welfare system disproportionately affects children from marginalized families, particularly those who are Indigenous, experiencing poverty or living with disabilities.
9. **The social safety net:** Systemic barriers limiting access to essential resources and opportunities disproportionately affect marginalized groups, with a focus on poverty. Inequities include the gap between social assistance, minimum wage and living costs, as well as the lack of legal protection against discrimination based on social condition.
10. **The effects of the environmental crisis:** The impacts of climate change and environmental crises fall disproportionately on marginalized communities who have contributed least to the crisis and whose rights are already least secure.

Public perceptions and evolving priorities in human rights

BCOHRC's annual provincial polling provides insights into public attitudes toward human rights in B.C. In 2024, 67% of respondents agreed that systemic discrimination is a problem in the province.

In 2024, more than one in 10 people living in B.C. have personally experienced discrimination. The 2024 provincial poll highlights age as the most frequently reported basis for personal experiences of discrimination (20%) followed by race-based discrimination (18%). Further, in 2024, at least one in four B.C. residents reported knowing someone who experienced discrimination. Discrimination based on perceptions of race and skin colour were the most frequently reported (29%) types of discrimination.

Despite the prevalence of discrimination, formal action remains rare. One-third of respondents (34%) took no action after experiencing discrimination while 31% relied on family for support. Responses such as contacting police or seeking counseling remain less common at 12%. There were several key reasons why individuals chose not to act after experiencing discrimination, with the leading factor being a belief that it wouldn't make a difference (40%) followed by lack of knowledge on how to proceed (25%). Other barriers included perceptions that the issue wasn't serious enough (23%) and concerns about the time and effort required (21%).

These trends demonstrate the current context and prevalence of discrimination in B.C. and the importance of targeted action to address inequities across these areas.

Appendix E: Contribution to the strategic priorities: Evolution of BCOHRC efforts

Strategic priority 1: Discrimination under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*

2019/2020: Building the foundation for human rights protections

- **Improving protections and access:** Issued recommendations to government to amend the *Human Rights Code* and created educational materials for the public.
- **Raising awareness:** Developed guides, videos, webinars and workshops; established a system for managing public requests and referrals; and launched a framework for inquiries into systemic issues. Initiated the Baseline Project assessing the state of human rights in B.C., the benchmarking survey and a one-time service organization survey.

2020/2021: Expanding public education and strategic interventions

- **Public education:** Launched the “Human Rights 101” video, viewed over 5,100 times and created webinars on the *Human Rights Code*.
- **Community engagement:** Completed regional engagements in eight communities, connecting with over 500 participants.
- **Special programs:** Managed 83 special program applications prioritizing equity in employment and housing.
- **Advocacy and outreach:** Grew social media reach to over 8,000 followers, provided information and referrals to over 2,000 members of the public, Commissioner participated in 27 external speaking engagements and launched the multilingual website, drawing 90,000 visitors.

2021/2022: Strengthening awareness and systemic change

- **Public services:** Responded to over 20,000 public inquiries, a tenfold increase from the prior year.
- **Workshops and engagement:** Delivered rights-based workshops to over 450 participants and launched the “Employment Equity Toolkit” to support workplace inclusion.
- **Special programs:** Managed 45 special program applications.
- **Equity is Safer report:** Produced a comprehensive analysis of policing and arrest, mental health calls and strip search data and issued supporting recommendations to address systemic racism.
- **“Am I Racist?” campaign:** Launched the campaign, which generated significant and growing media interest with over 92 articles published and an estimated reach of 80 million readers. The campaign also drove strong engagement, attracting more than 10,000 website visitors and over 2,200 video views.

2022/2023: Scaling public awareness and access

- **Public campaigns:** Launched the “Let’s #RewriteTheRules” campaign on ableism, reaching over four million people across 12 languages.
- **Baseline research:** Conducted community-embedded research in Chetwynd, Cranbrook, Terrace and Chilliwack, engaging over 250 participants through interviews and focus groups.

- **Educational resources:** Released videos and conducted workshops introducing the *Human Rights Code*.
- **Special programs:** Managed 48 special programs, bringing the total to 128 active initiatives by March 2023.
- **Workshops:** Delivered educational workshops on the *Human Rights Code* to over 500 people across B.C.

2023/2024: Innovating tools and accessibility

- **Digital tools:** Released the “Recommendations Database” cataloging nearly 1,700 human rights recommendations and launched a new “No Wrong Door” web portal to guide users through B.C.’s human rights system in collaboration with the BC Human Rights Tribunal and the BC Human Rights Clinic.
- **Educational accessibility:** Translated the “*Human Rights Code*” workshops into 10 languages. Released the third “Human Rights in B.C.” video of the series accompanied by three workshops which received 908 registrants and 898 attendees.
- **Commitment to accessibility:** Published the first “Accessibility at BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner” report and continued community research through the “Baseline Project” supported by localized “Community Briefs”.
- **Advocacy:** Called for continued masking mandates in healthcare to protect vulnerable populations.
- **Intervention:** Intervened in *Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS) v. R.R.*, a case involving the BC Human Rights Tribunal’s jurisdiction over discrimination in child protection cases.

Strategic priority 2: Decolonization

2019/2020: Laying the groundwork for decolonization efforts

- **Law reform advocacy:** Recommended amending the *Human Rights Code* to include Indigenous identity as a protected ground of discrimination.
- **Indigenous collaboration:** Supported the BC Human Rights Tribunal’s Indigenous initiatives, including participation in the Tribunal’s Indigenous Committee.
- **Engagement:** Began relationship-building with First Nation communities.
- ***Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)*:** Implemented the Declaration Act in recommendations made to government and conducted analysis of the Declaration Act implementation plan through consultation with Indigenous leaders.
- **Awareness-building:** Raised awareness of Indigenous discrimination through speaking engagements and initial monitoring of data-related recommendations.

2020/2021: Strengthening partnerships and Indigenous engagement

- **Formal agreements:** Signed MOUs with the First Nations Education Steering Committee and First Nations Leadership Council to establish protocols for collaborative work.
- **Indigenous accessibility in the human rights system:** Supported the BC Human Rights Tribunal’s efforts to create a separate Indigenous review stream, including Indigenous adjudicators and cultural safety training for staff.

- **Data advocacy:** Recommended Indigenous data governance, which was included in the draft action plan for Declaration Act implementation, and produced the “Grandmother Perspective” report.
- **Community engagement:** Developed an Indigenous engagement strategy and conducted outreach to Indigenous governments and organizations to listen deeply.
- **Law reform:** Advocated to include “Indigeneity” as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

2021/2022: Advancing policy reform and amplifying Indigenous voices

- **Code amendment success:** Successfully advocated, along with others, for adding Indigenous identity as a protected ground of discrimination under the *Human Rights Code*.
- **Data governance leadership:** The “Grandmother Perspective” report influenced the *Anti-Racism Data Act*, introducing a framework for community-based data governance.
- **Deep listening and engagement:** The Commissioner engaged with representatives from over 15 First Nation and Métis communities across B.C.
- **Elevating Indigenous leadership:** Held the “Elders Gathering” as part of the “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic,” creating space for Indigenous partners to lead on priorities and recommendations.

2022/2023: Supporting legal challenges and expanding engagement

- **Strategic interventions:** Was granted intervenor status in *Gitxaala Nation v. Chief Gold Commissioner of B.C. et al.* and *Ehattesaht First Nation v. His Majesty the King in Right of B.C. et al.* cases at the BC Supreme Court, which involved the status and interpretation of the Declaration Act as human rights legislation.
- **Ongoing engagement:** The Commissioner met with representatives from more than 20 Indigenous communities.
- **Parent advocacy:** Participated in the First Nations Parents Club Conference, engaging with over 100 Indigenous parents on combating racism in education.
- **International presence:** Spoke at the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, advocating for effective mechanisms to implement the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).

2023/2024: Making legal interventions and advancing accountability

- ***Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* advocacy:** Made submissions in *Gitxaala Nation v. Chief Gold Commissioner of B.C. et al.* and *Ehattesaht First Nation v. His Majesty the King in Right of B.C. et al.*
- **Child welfare advocacy:** Was granted leave to intervene and made submissions in *VACFSS v. R.R.* at the B.C. Supreme Court, a case about jurisdiction as it relates to discrimination in child protection.
- **Accountability report:** Released an interim report on anti-Indigenous racism in policing, highlighting shortcomings in agreements between partners.
- **Community engagement:** The Commissioner met with Shackan First Nation, Heiltsuk First Nation and other Indigenous organizations.

Strategic priority 3: Poverty as a cause and effect of inequality and injustice

2019/2020: Building awareness and advocacy foundations

- **Raising awareness:** Developed policy guidelines, informational materials and an online presentation highlighting the link between poverty and discrimination.
- **Monitoring government initiatives:** Conducted analysis and response to the annual report of Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction's Together BC program and to provincial government accessibility legislation. Monitored and analyzed the provincial government's basic income report to identify opportunities for integrating human rights approaches.

2020/2021: Advancing legislative and policy advocacy

- **Advocating for social condition protections:** Issued a report calling for "social condition" to be added as a protected ground under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*.
- **COVID-19 recommendations:** Delivered targeted recommendations to B.C. government ministries on housing, income support, food security and harm reduction services for marginalized communities.
- **Encampments advocacy:** Monitored government actions related to the rights of people in encampments and promoted security and human rights for people experiencing homelessness.

2021/2022: Strengthening protections through partnerships and advocacy

- **Strategic interventions:** Was granted leave to intervene and made submissions in *Gibraltar Mines Ltd. v. Harvey*, a case at the B.C. Supreme Court about family status discrimination.
- **Anti-poverty consultations:** Convened meetings with provincial anti-poverty and shelter organizations to provide input on the provincial homelessness strategy.
- **Paid sick leave advocacy:** Worked with coalitions to secure 10 days of paid sick leave for workers across B.C.
- **Keynote advocacy:** The Commissioner delivered a keynote address for the Homelessness Services Association of B.C. emphasizing protections against poverty-based discrimination.

2022/2023: Expanding awareness and education

- **"Employment Equity Toolkit":** Launched a toolkit to help employers remove barriers for historically marginalized groups in the workplace.
- **Encampment advocacy:** Advocated directly with municipalities and the province to protect the rights of unhoused people during encampment removals, emphasizing their right to housing and consultation.
- **Homelessness strategy input:** Recommended stronger rental supplements, prevention of affordable housing loss and the affirmation of the right to housing in the provincial homelessness strategy.

2023/2024: Conducting targeted advocacy and community engagement

- **Encampments guidance:** Held more than 50 meetings with municipalities, advocates and the Province on the subjects of encampments, homelessness and the rights of people experiencing poverty and issued guidance on the subjects of human rights obligations and best practices in responding to encampments.
- **Tenant education:** Published plain-language materials outlining tenant rights and landlord responsibilities under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*.

Strategic priority 4: Hate and the rise of white supremacy

2019/2020: Setting the stage for anti-hate advocacy

- **Public awareness campaigns:** Launched a provincial anti-racism campaign featuring bus ads, an interactive website resource and social media outreach.
- **Monitoring hate:** Tracked the rise of racism and hate, particularly within the pandemic context, and shared resources on organizations combating hate.
- **Policy guidance:** Developed policy guidance including education on racial discrimination within the COVID-19 context.

2020/2021: Expanding awareness and preparing for systemic inquiry

- **Anti-racism campaigns:** Delivered a province-wide anti-racism campaign in 24 communities and nine languages, reaching thousands of people.
- **Public inquiry preparation:** Initiated planning for the "Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic," including terms of reference, guides and an inquiry website.
- **Community engagement:** Surveyed over 800 people living in B.C. to assess public knowledge and views on racism and discrimination.
- **Educational efforts:** Released legal education materials on hate speech and promoted anti-racism resources via social media to over 8,000 followers.
- **Public advocacy:** The Commissioner delivered 27 community speeches, seven of which focused specifically on hate and anti-racism.

2021/2022: Being granted leave to intervene

- **"Inquiry into Hate" activities:**
 - Surveyed more than 2,500 people on their experiences of hate.
 - Partnered with 15 community organizations to ensure diverse participation.
 - Held 10 "Knowledge Holder" ceremonies to ground the process in community leadership.
 - Heard from 100 participants, representing over 60 organizations, during public hearings.
- **Public education:** Released a "Hate Speech Q & A" and a resource titled "Top 5 Things B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner Wants You to Know About Hate Speech," viewed more than 2,000 times. Held a public education webinar about the resources.
- **Anti-hate campaigns:** Partnered with the BC Association of Broadcasters to launch the "Never Accept Hate" (#NAH) campaign, achieving \$2.5 million in advertising visibility across TV, radio and print.

- **Strategic interventions:** Was granted leave to intervene in *British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) on behalf of Chilliwack Teachers' Association v Neufeld*, a BC Supreme Court case about alleged hate and discriminatory speech.

2022/2023: Publishing inquiry findings and broadening awareness

- **Inquiry findings:** Released findings from the "Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic," which included 12 key recommendations.
- **National and local advocacy:**
 - Presented to the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights about Islamophobia.
 - Delivered keynote addresses on anti-racism at the Network to End Gender-Based Violence and UBC's "Anti-Racism Speaker Series."
- **Anti-hate campaigns:** Concluded the "Never Accept Hate" campaign, which is estimated to have reached 20% of people living in B.C. Among those who saw the campaign, 70% felt it impacted their attitudes and 44% discussed anti-hate issues with others.

2023/2024: Promoting community dialogue and legal action

- **Community engagement:**
 - Held community dialogue events in Penticton, Fort St. John and Nanaimo to empower leaders to identify local actions to address hate.
 - Collaborated with youth groups and artists to create murals in Keremeos, Nanaimo, Fort St. John and Vancouver, using art to ground the "Inquiry into Hate's" findings and foster unity.
 - Developed an immersive exhibit featuring sound and video to highlight the stories of hate and inspire hope.
- **Legal advocacy:** Made submissions in *British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) on Behalf of Chilliwack Teachers' Association v Neufeld* at the BC Supreme Court, a case involving alleged hate speech and jurisdiction of the BC Human Rights Tribunal over online hate speech.
- **Public statements:** Condemned hate marches targeting trans and LGBTQ2SAI+ communities and called for action against rising antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Strategic priority 5: Human rights protections for those being detained by the state

2019/2020: Establishing the framework for advocacy on the rights of those detained

- **Mental health detention advocacy:** Provided recommendations on *Bill 22* to address the overuse and discriminatory application of involuntary mental health detention.
- **Standards in detention:** Advocated for improved data collection in corrections and mental health systems to align with human rights standards.
- **Policing practices:** Monitored street check practices and recommended changes to policing standards.

2020/2021: Responding to pandemic challenges in detention

- **COVID-19 in corrections:** Made recommendations to government and public institutions on ways to mitigate the human rights impacts of the pandemic and for the targeted release of non-violent offenders to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and for improved access to services upon release.
- **Advocating for detainee communication:** Called for open, free access to phone calls for detainees to maintain family connections during pandemic-related restrictions.
- **Youth detention advocacy:** Opposed legislative proposals to detain youth who overdose under the *Mental Health Act*, highlighting concerns about involuntary detention without robust voluntary care options.
- **Engagement with the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act:** Made oral and written submissions to Special Committee of Reforming the Police Act.

2021/2022: Continuing advocacy

- **Ending immigration detention in jails:** Alongside others in community, called for the termination of B.C.'s agreement with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) that allowed migrants to be held in provincial jails, initiating a review that led to policy changes the following year.
- **Improving detention conditions:** Highlighted the unsafe conditions at North Fraser Pretrial Centre, resulting in improved cleaning and quality assurance processes.
- **Mental health advocacy:** Successfully opposed the government's involuntary youth stabilization care proposal and joined the Ombudsperson and Representative for Children and Youth in calling for independent legal advice for youth detained under the *Mental Health Act*.
- **Practice reform:** Released the "Equity is Safer" report, which highlighted systemic racism and unsafe policing practices and advocated for culturally safe, trauma-informed approaches in substance use care and the end of systemic racism in policing practices.

2022/2023: Making progress in detention rights advocacy

- **Supporting the end to immigration detention in jails:** Expressed support as B.C. became the first jurisdiction to end its agreement with CBSA, removing provincial jails as an option for migrant detention.
- **Accountability in policing:** Audited a settlement agreement between the Vancouver Police Board and a Heiltsuk grandfather and granddaughter wrongly arrested, detained and handcuffed in a case of systemic racism.
- **Advocacy on school liaison officers:** Called for evidence-based research centering marginalized students before continuing the school liaison officer program in schools.
- **Public awareness:** Promoted findings from "Equity is Safer" to municipal leaders, educators and law enforcement oversight bodies to highlight systemic racism in policing.

2023/2024: Advancing inquiries and policing reform

- **Inquiries into detention and policing:**
 - Launched an inquiry into the use of involuntary detentions under the *Adult Guardianship Act* to assess alignment with human rights laws and standards.

- Initiated an inquiry into police use of force against racialized individuals and those with mental health and substance use issues, building on the “Equity is safer” report.
- Initiated an inquiry examining freedom of the press and alleged exclusion of media from a decampment in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside to assess its alignment with human rights law and principles.
- **Policing reform:** Advanced the implementation of 29 recommendations from the “Equity is Safer” report, aimed at reducing systemic discrimination in policing.

Strategic priority 6: Creating a strong and sustainable organization

2019/2020: Establishing the foundations of organizational strength

- **Strategic and operational frameworks:** Established annual work plans, refined strategic and service plans and developed an evaluation framework with key performance indicators for monitoring performance.
- **Recruitment and organizational culture:** Initiated an equity-focused recruitment strategy and created a staff training and professional development framework to foster a diverse and inclusive team.
- **Public identity:** Developed website content, built an online education platform and established a partner relationship management system to enhance visibility and credibility as a trusted voice in human rights.

2020/2021: Building capacity and adapting to pandemic challenges

- **Operational policies and systems:** Drafted 35 policies, procedures and frameworks to align operational practices with guiding principles, ensuring the organization’s human rights-based approach.
- **Equitable recruitment:** Attracted a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates through an accessible and equitable hiring process.
- **Staff engagement:** Maintained staff engagement through virtual check-ins, team events and peer support during the pandemic.
- **Office space improvements:** Completed upgrades to the Vancouver office under budget, aligning with government standards.

2021/2022: Strengthening staff capacity and organizational values

- **Equity-focused recruitment:** Hired 25 people using an inclusive and accessible recruitment process, attracting a large and diverse pool of candidates.
- **Staff education:** Developed an internal education program including office-wide training on accessibility best practices and mandatory Indigenous cultural safety training.
- **Mental health supports:** Introduced a specialized counselling policy to expand mental health benefits for staff, particularly those with lived experience of discrimination.
- **Workplace engagement:** Participated in the Public Service Workplace Environment Survey.
- **Policy alignment framework:** Worked with equity and community engagement experts to ensure policies aligned with guiding principles.

- **Sustainable practices:** Partnered with Simon Fraser University to research sustainable procurement practices, minimizing the ecological footprint and addressing the human rights impacts of purchased items.

2022/2023: Supporting staff and improving service accessibility

- **Improving staff well-being:** Conducted the 2023 BCOHRC Workplace Environment Survey, showing 75% of staff felt they were thriving at work—an increase of 23% from 2021.
- **Flexible and inclusive work practices:** Created a Future of Work working group to develop hybrid and remote work policies that promote inclusivity and flexibility.
- **Trauma-informed practices:** Delivered staff-wide training on trauma-informed research and engagement to enhance community-focused work.

2023/2024: Enhancing internal systems and accessibility

- **Accessibility initiatives:** Released the “Accessibility at BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner” report, detailing measures to make services, information and spaces accessible to all residents of B.C.
- **Recognition for excellence:** Won the Top Work Unit award for the BC Public Service in 2024, reflecting exceptional teamwork, accountability and leadership.
- **Corporate Services department:** Established a new department to lead finance, information management and information technology and human resources functions.
- **Operational enhancements:** Launched an internal intranet site, created a project management framework and developed standard operating procedures, onboarding and training resources to support staff.

Appendix F: Perception of the impact of misinformation and disinformation

Understanding how BCOHRC addresses misinformation and disinformation is key to evaluating its impact on laws, policies, practices and the culture of human rights in B.C. as these issues can shape public perceptions and influence the broader policy and cultural landscape.

Misinformation can perpetuate systemic discrimination and undermine trust in human rights systems, while disinformation campaigns can erode public understanding and hinder equity-driven reforms.

Evidence-based research: A foundation for combating misinformation

BCOHRC leverages evidence-based research and accurate information to challenge misinformation and advance informed public discourse. Reports like “Rights in Focus: Lived Realities in B.C.” and “From Hate to Hope: Report of the Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic” analyze the rise of misinformation and disinformation, offering actionable recommendations. The “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic” drew on interdisciplinary expertise to propose strategies for combating harmful narratives, while reports such as “Equity is Safer” address systemic issues by presenting data-driven findings. Key informants believe these research efforts position BCOHRC as a trusted authority on human rights and demonstrate its capacity to influence public understanding and policy development.

Public education: Tackling disinformation through accessible resources

BCOHRC’s targeted educational campaigns aim to combat disinformation and enhance public understanding of human rights issues. For example, the “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Hiring Q and A” provides evidence-based responses to disinformation about equity hiring practices. Similarly, the “Hate Speech Q and A” is among the Office’s most visited resources, frequently shared on social media during debates about hate speech. These data suggest that some materials could be reaching audiences beyond those already informed, potentially helping to shape broader conversations. However, some key informants reiterated how education efforts could benefit from a more diverse dissemination strategy to ensure they engage underrepresented and vulnerable populations.

Appendix G: Case studies

Case study: Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Overview

BCOHRC conducted the “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic” between 2021 and 2023 to investigate the reported rise in hate incidents across the province. The inquiry focused on understanding the root causes of hate, its disproportionate impact on marginalized communities and systemic shortcomings in addressing these issues. It provided 12 recommendations aimed at fostering accountability, creating lasting change, empowering communities and building resilience.

The inquiry's final report and its follow-up community initiatives provide one roadmap for combating hate and advancing human rights in B.C.

“The Hate to Hope inquiry really stands out as one of their most comprehensive projects. It involved a lot of external partners and addressed hate crimes in a way that they hadn’t been done before.”

—IOLA staff key informant

Key activities of the “Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic”

1. Extensive data collection and consultation:

- Conducted an **opening ceremony** with **10 knowledge holders**.
- Conducted **46 virtual oral hearings** with input from **52 organizations** and over **100 individuals**.
- Collected **20 written submissions** and analyzed over **2,600 survey responses**. The survey was available in 15 languages.
- Completed **24 information requests** to **police departments and RCMP detachments** across B.C.
- Developed **five research reports**, **46 information requests** to public bodies and **seven social media companies** received orders and information requests.
- Conducted a public opinion poll of **800 people living in B.C.**, gathering insights into perceptions and experiences of hate during the pandemic.
- Engaged **15 Community Liaison Organizations** to support safe and inclusive participation from marginalized communities in the public survey.

“The Hate inquiry...was successful in hearing from diverse communities and individuals. It was structured and well organized both from a staffing and financial viewpoint” —BCOHRC staff

2. Indigenous and cultural engagement:

- Hosted consultations with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders.

3. Creative community initiatives:

- Organized community dialogue events in Fort St. John, Penticton, Nanaimo and Vancouver in 2023.

- Co-created murals in collaboration with local artists and youth, reflecting community resilience and connection. These murals were later featured in a 25-minute immersive art exhibit that toured B.C.

"It's more than just paint on a wall. It's changed this space completely, created an invitation to talk and celebrates Nanaimo's unique community." —Mural collaborator Lys Glassford

Select key findings of the inquiry

1. There was a rise in hate incidents during the pandemic.
2. Hate is disproportionately experienced by marginalized communities.
3. Gender-based violence and online hate increased dramatically during the pandemic.
4. Hate is not new. Hate has a long history in B.C. rooted in power, control and long-standing patterns of discrimination and oppression.
5. The lack of data on hate incidents that occur in different sectors and settings across the province impedes action.
6. Legal responses to hate have been largely ineffective.
7. Government responses to hate have been largely ineffective.
8. Community response to hate can be effective with adequate funding and coordination.

Outcomes and impacts

1. **Twelve recommendations to address hate:** The Commissioner recommended reforms to all people in B.C., the B.C. government, police and social media companies aimed at addressing hate during times of crisis and beyond. These included:
 - Developing a province-wide strategy for preventing and responding to hate, incorporating a human rights-based approach to emergency procedures that includes plans for addressing rises in hate.
 - Mandatory police training on hate crimes.
 - Creating a centralized reporting system for hate incidents.
 - Directly including anti-hate education in B.C. schools.

"They didn't just look at hate crimes in a vacuum; they tied it to systematic issues like racism and inequality, which made the recommendations so much stronger." —"Other priority key informant"

The Office has tracked long-term changes through its recommendation monitoring efforts and is publishing the results of this monitoring in spring 2025.

2. **Elevated awareness and education:** The inquiry fostered public dialogue on the roots of hate and systemic discrimination, enhancing the understanding of its societal impacts. By providing accessible educational resources, the inquiry contributed to improved public awareness and accountability.
 - The inquiry's public reach and engagement grew alongside the Office's expanding reputation in its initial years. Media reach increased from 83.5 million at the inquiry's

launch to 286 million by the final report's release, while media hits rose from 164 to 710. This growth reflects not only heightened visibility and public interest in the inquiry but also the broader establishment and recognition of BCOHRC as a trusted authority during this period. Similarly, press coverage surged from 19 mentions to 110, showcasing the inquiry's ability to sustain media attention and amplify its findings.

- 3. Community connection:** Dialogue sessions, community-based events and murals aimed to foster connection and community conversations, turning findings into hope and action.

"The fact that we were able to put up a mural in that space...to envision what hope looks like, involving folks who were feeling the impacts of hate in their own lives...had a lot of impact for folks."
—BCOHRC staff

- 4. Transformative art:** Post-inquiry initiatives included a touring immersive art exhibit that allowed participants to reflect on their own experiences and actions being taken to address hate in their communities.

Lessons learned

- 1. Institutionalize cross-department collaboration:** The success of the inquiry was enhanced by collaboration across BCOHRC departments, leveraging expertise from Legal, Education, Research, Policy, Engagement and Communications teams. The Office should consider formalizing this practice to ensure all initiatives benefit from comprehensive and coordinated input.
- 2. Design actionable, context-specific recommendations:** Broad, generalized recommendations were noted by some key informants as less effective in driving action by duty bearers. The Office should ensure its recommendations are specific and actionable by those governments and systems.
- 3. Trauma-informed approaches are essential:** Trauma-informed methods during the inquiry were crucial in fostering emotional safety for participants. The Office should continue integrating these practices into all appropriate engagements.
- 4. Engaging communities directly strengthens impact:** Dialogue sessions and creative projects like the community murals showcased the value of co-creating solutions with communities. The Office should consider continuing to empower community organizations through funding and structural support to foster grassroots human rights advocacy and provide effective avenues for change.
- 5. Education is fundamental to long-term change:** Education was highlighted as a cornerstone for combating hate over the long term. By continuing its education programs, the Office could help to equip future generations with the tools to recognize and challenge systemic hate and extremism.

Conclusion

The "Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic" investigated the rise in hate during the pandemic and its disproportionate impact on marginalized communities. The inquiry delivered actionable recommendations that aimed to inform policy development and strengthen systemic accountability. Its innovative public engagement and culturally informed consultations elevated public awareness on the topic and set an example for building community connection and hope.

Case Study: The grandmother perspective

Overview

The BCOHRC report “Disaggregated Demographic Data Collection in British Columbia: The Grandmother Perspective” presents a research framework for addressing systemic racism and inequities through the ethical collection and use of disaggregated demographic data. Rooted in the words of Indigenous data specialist Gwen Phillips (Ktunaxa Nation), this approach espouses orienting research from a position of caring about the sample population rather than from a position of control. The approach emphasizes relationship-based data governance with an equity-achieving purpose. The initiative has helped to influence policies, research practices and public discourse, most notably influencing the “groundbreaking” B.C. *Anti-Racism Data Act* and advancing equity-driven systemic reforms across sectors.

Objectives and principles

The initiative was guided by core goals:

1. **Promoting ethical and respectful data practices:** Grounded in community care and cultural respect, the approach prioritizes reducing systemic harm and fostering equity.
2. **Encouraging data-driven decisions:** By exposing inequities through disaggregated data, the initiative provides actionable insights to inform the creation of equitable policies.
3. **Informing systemic change:** The framework used is made up of three components, Purpose, Process and Tool, and advocates for data-driven solutions that address systemic racism and oppression.

The report and subsequent workshops and ongoing awareness efforts have sought to ground participants and policymakers in these principles.

Activities and methodology

1. **Community consultations:** The initiative engaged Indigenous, Black and People of Colour, LGBTQ2SAI+ and disability communities through dialogue sessions and one-on-one consultations to explore the benefits, risks and ethical frameworks for disaggregated data collection. Feedback from these groups highlighted the need for relationship-based data governance and protection against harm.
2. **Literature and policy analysis:** Best practices from international and national frameworks were studied then tailored to the B.C. context to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
3. **Critical race and decolonizing frameworks:** The approach emphasized challenging colonial and oppressive narratives while centering marginalized voices.
4. **Advocacy for legislative change:** Proposed the Anti-Discrimination Data Act (ADDA), a legal framework to govern disaggregated data collection with robust privacy protections, community input and equitable outcomes.

Outcomes and impacts

1. Legislative influence

The “Grandmother Perspective” report influenced the *Anti-Racism Data Act* through its recommendations for disaggregated demographic data collection to address systemic racism and inequities. The report provided a blueprint for embedding community-driven governance

into legislative frameworks and was developed in response to a request from the Premier of B.C., prompted by civil society advocacy for disaggregated demographic data collection.

“The Act very much is consistent with the grandmother perspective report, other than the fact that it is focused on anti-racism and not more broadly on discrimination in general.”

—Government staff key informant

These findings underscore the report’s influence as a foundational framework for anti-racism initiatives in B.C., demonstrating how its focus on systemic racism, ethical data practices and community-driven processes resonated with policymakers and shaped the development of legislation.

2. Advocacy and education

Following the report, BCOHRC continued to meet with government to provide input on the implementation of the *Anti-Racism Data Act*. These efforts bridged gaps between high-level policy recommendations and day-to-day implementation.

“The Human Rights Commissioner worked really hard on the anti-racism data legislation...those are key behind the scenes pieces to advancing human rights in B.C.” —Indigenous key informant

This statement highlights the dual strategy of the BCOHRC: public-facing reports to spark discourse and advocacy to ensure these principles were embedded in legislative and administrative processes.

The “Grandmother Perspective” workshops were designed as introductions to the framework, primarily aimed at public servants and open to anyone who may use or collect demographic data in their work, as well as interested members of the general public. Of the 46 workshop participants, 87% stated that the session was useful for them. No participants stated that it was not useful.

3. Research and practical applications

The report laid the foundation for research initiatives and community-led applications, including “set[ting] a benchmark for research that directly influences systemic change.”²⁸ Notably, the framework has been adopted in health equity projects, including the Mothering Co/Lab,²⁹ which applies the “Grandmother Perspective” principles in their work monitoring perinatal substance use. By applying the framework to perinatal substance use monitoring, the Mothering Co/Lab aims to promote justice for mothers, families and communities, showcasing the versatility of the “Grandmother Perspective” in addressing diverse systemic inequities.

“We have...relied quite heavily on the recommendations from that report to inform the work we do...to report on the health of all British Columbians.” —IOLA staff key informant

4. Public and professional engagement

The “Grandmother Perspective” report garnered public and professional interest with **17,488 views**, **15,701 unique visits** and **4,571 downloads** at the time of the evaluation, highlighting its

²⁸ Quote from Government/IOLA staff key informant in a key informant interview.

²⁹ *Sparkling Change*. (Vancouver BC: British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, September 2023), <https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHRC-Annual-Report-2022-23-FINAL.pdf>.

value as a research, educational and advocacy tool for systemic reform and readiness to engage with data-driven solutions.

“The grandmother perspective report has achieved significant reach...showing a clear appetite for data-driven systemic reform.” —Government staff key informant

5. Recognition and validation

The “Grandmother Perspective” report received acknowledgment from government staff interview and survey respondents, who noted its transformative role in shaping equitable data practices and policies.

“The recommendations that all government data make visible the experiences of all British Columbians...has been very helpful to us...to inform our work and to reference when there may be resistance.” —Government staff key informant

Lessons learned

BCOHRC’s experience with the “Grandmother Perspective” report highlights lessons about how systemic change within human rights can be achieved:

1. **Develop long-term advocacy and engagement plans:** The success of the “Grandmother Perspective” report in influencing the *Anti-Racism Data Act* was driven by its responsiveness to a government need and its foundation in community-based data. While the initial advocacy did not occur over a long period, the report’s findings played a key role in shaping the Act. Its ongoing advocacy and education efforts continue to have a broader impact across government and other sectors, reinforcing the importance of community-driven research in policy development.
2. **Broaden applications of proven frameworks:** The “Grandmother Perspective” principles have already been applied successfully to health equity projects demonstrating the potential for broader adoption across other sectors and initiatives.
3. **Leverage public interest for broader impact:** The public and professional interest in the “Grandmother Perspective” report demonstrates a readiness to engage with systemic reforms and a need for tools and practices for systemic reform.

Conclusion

The “Grandmother Perspective” report highlights BCOHRC’s contribution to improving human rights outcomes in policies and practices by providing a framework for addressing systemic inequities through ethical, community-driven data collection. Its principles have contributed to the *Anti-Racism Data Act*, informed research practices and elevated public discourse, showcasing its impact. By aligning its principles with practical applications, the initiative has supported equity-driven reforms across sectors, demonstrating that community-based ethical data practices can be a powerful tool for advancing systemic change and strengthening human rights in B.C.