

Foundation

Our mandate

To address the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice in B.C. by shifting laws, policies, practices and cultures. We do this work through education, research, advocacy, inquiry and monitoring.

Our guiding principles

- We operate on the basis of nothing about us without us. We centre the perspectives and rights of those most marginalized and seek to empower those whose rights are at stake
- We strive to be trauma-informed and culturally safe in all our relationships
- We understand that all of us have intersectional identities and experience discrimination and privilege in diverse ways
- We move at the speed of trust when engaging with community.
- Entrenched problems require bold actions. Acting boldly means taking risks, and sometimes we will make mistakes
- We are strategic and proactive in creating change, and balance timeliness with sustainability and accountability
- We believe that the protection and promotion of human rights is essential to a functioning democracy
- Accessibility of information, space and services is essential to the realization of human rights
- We are accountable to all people on the lands known as British Columbia, and we will continue to be responsive, compassionate and transparent

What we do

- education and engagement
- research and policy reform
- legal interventions and inquiries
- systemic advocacy
- monitoring and reporting
- relationship building
- awareness raising through public communication

Strategic priorities



1. Decolonization

- work to dismantle colonial structures
- support and advocate for self-determination of Indigenous Peoples



2. Discrimination

- address discrimination in communities by improving access to the protections of human rights law



3. Poverty

- reduce discrimination on the basis of poverty
- promote compliance with economic and social rights frameworks



4. Health

- address inequities in access to health care and conditions for a healthy life
- improve respect for human rights in healthcare settings or institutions



5. Democracy

- protect right to equitable and informed participation in democratic systems (i.e., free and responsible press, right to peaceful protest)
- counter mis- and disinformation through individual empowerment and societal resilience

Strategic direction and organizational goals

Grounding approaches

A human-rights based approach

BC’s Office of the Commissioner’s (BCOHRC) work is grounded in a human rights-based approach. How we do things matters. A human rights-based approach seeks to centre the voices of those most marginalized, and to make inequality visible in order to redistribute power.

Climate justice

Climate change is the existential crisis of our time. It poses a massive threat to our planet and all life that grows on it — and therefore to our human rights. We cannot have rights if we do not exist. This crisis is a matter of life and death for all of us; however, climate change, environmental degradation and extreme weather patterns disproportionately impact the daily

lives of marginalized people.

Decolonization

Decolonization is central to human rights work today and to our work at BCOHRC. Decolonization is the dismantling of the process by which one nation asserts and establishes its domination and control over another nation’s land, people and culture. It is the framework through which we are working toward undoing the oppression and subjugation of Indigenous peoples in what is now known as British Columbia and unlearning colonial ways of thinking and being.

Organizational capabilities

Legal Framework

- B.C.’s *Human Rights Code*
- Canadian constitution
- international human rights law

Approach to the Work

- a diverse, skilled staff
- active actor/participant in continuum of human rights system, with focus on prevention, mitigation and informing remediation
- relationships with key human rights actors such as the BC Human Rights Tribunal and the BC Human Rights Clinic

Our Culture and Capabilities

- foundation of equity, diversity and inclusion for BCOHRC with four overarching goals in leadership, attracting and retaining staff, promoting learning culture and serving public
- corporate services and operations teams focused on organizational efficacy, efficiency and sustainability while promoting innovation, collaboration and modernization

Reputable and Maturing Organization

- skilled and progressive communications team that enhances reach and positive reputation
- strong culture of learning and development

Measuring Progress and Success

- focus on updating performance measurement and evaluation to support a learning and maturing organization
- integrating learning outcomes with organizational performance metrics
- improving risk management maturity and developing robust risk management
- understanding success enablers and reflecting in the complex human rights ecosystem with multiple, sometimes competing interests
- ongoing monitoring and reporting on impact in supporting accountability, transparency and reflexivity

Desired outcomes

The impacts we make with our strategy

- the human rights ecosystem is more responsive and accessible to Indigenous Peoples and communities, including through respect for Indigenous legal systems
- the rights of Indigenous Peoples are protected and promoted, and the disproportionate obstacles faced by Indigenous Peoples in their full participation in the social, economic and political aspects of society are alleviated
- BCOHRC is considered a trusted partner and ally to Indigenous Peoples in the work of decolonization and self-determination
- people in B.C. have an improved understanding of human rights and law.
- there is greater public knowledge of how to use B.C.’s human rights system to respond to discrimination

- systemic discrimination is reduced or eliminated in all forms
- discrimination based on socio-economic status or poverty is reduced or eliminated
- the rights of people living in poverty are respected and protected
- rates of poverty, homelessness and other impacts of socio-economic inequality are reduced
- health institutions recognize, understand and make meaningful improvements toward addressing systemic discrimination
- every person living in B.C. — whether they live in an urban, rural and remote area — has access to the highest attainable standard of health
- freedom of press, speech and protest are protected within the limits of hate speech
- police institutions are transparent and held accountable for respecting human rights and

- for addressing systemic discrimination in their practices and cultures
- legal and other governance decisions are made based on demonstrable evidence

Purpose and vision

The difference our organization makes

Our Purpose

We exist to promote and protect human rights.

Our Vision

A province free from inequality, discrimination and injustice where we uphold human rights for all and fulfil our responsibilities to one another.