

To: Tanya Hughes, Executive Director  
From: Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director  
Re: **CHRO Outreach Activities**  
Date: September 1, 2023

## **Outreach Successes:**

- **August Social Media**  
The CHRO's Social Media Team of Jody Walker-Smith, Courtney Shields, Spencer Hill, and Rachel O'Reilly created 22 posts for the agency's Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- **Kids Court Academy Year 3**  
**Attendees: 102**  
08/01, 08/15, 08/29 This Program is an outgrowth or expansion of the CT Kids Speak and CT Kids Court Programs. CT Kids Court Academy is a free, 17-week attorney and social justice pipeline program for middle school and high school students.
- **Quarterly Fair Housing Training**  
**Attendees: 60**  
08/02/23 Legal Directors Kimberly Jacobsen and Michelle Dumas Keuler will put on a fair housing training for members of the public.
- **Executive Interns' Summer Symposium**  
**Attendees: 126**  
08/03 The focus was on ***Charting the Future of CT Educational Reform: Navigating the Post-Affirmative Action Landscape***. The symposium was held virtually on Teams. Panelists were Amin Gonzalez, VP and Dean of Admission and Financial Aid at Wesleyan University; Richard Sugarman, President of Hartford Promise; Karrol-Ann Brown, Director of Racial Justice Project at the Center for Children's Advocacy; Jia-Hui Stefanie Wong, Professor of Education Studies at Trinity College; Spencer Hill, CHRO Attorney.
- **Intern Symposium**  
**Attendees:**  
8/03/23 Legal Director Kimberly Jacobsen and other members of the legal staff attended the webinar about Affirmative Action.
- **Charting the Future of CT Educational Reform**  
08/03/23 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith attended the CHRO's summer symposium on affirmative action.
- **Giving Hope an African Orphanage**  
**Attendees: 14**  
08/05 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp, Outreach Coordinator Ana Mitchell, S Representative Sancha Works and Storekeeper Michael Mitchell attended an event where the CHRO presented the services it provides for various stakeholders in Connecticut.

- **IAOHRA Conference**  
**Attendees:**  
 08/13-08/17 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp, Eastern Regional Manager Bob Aldi, Outreach Coordinator Ana Mitchell, and Storekeeper Mike Mitchell participated in the IAOHRA Conference from August 13 through August 17, 2023. CHRO shared its activities and enforcement successes and participate in panel discussions with national leaders. Further, we will be able, during future forums, to share ideas with member agencies and human rights advocates.
- **WICC's Melissa in the Morning**  
 8/14/23 Legal Attorney Spencer Hill spoke on the radio show about DEI programs and the CHRO.
- **Press conference**  
**Attendees: 25**  
 08/16/23 Legal Directors Kimberly Jacobsen and Michelle Dumas Keuler attended a press conference led by the Lt. Governor and the DPH Commissioner to recognize the work the state has done to support people who breastfeed.
- **CHRO's DEI Resource Discussion Series**  
**Attendees: 11**  
 8/16/23– Attorney Jody Walker-Smith led a discussion in the monthly CHRO's DEI Resource Discussion series – this month's discussion was about disability and intersectionality, centering around the book The Pretty One: On Life, Pop Culture, Disability, and Other Reasons to Fall in Love With Me by Keah Brown.
- **August's DEI Monthly Newsletter**  
 8/17/23 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith led a team with Attorneys Spencer Hill and Megan Graefe, investigator Courtney Shields, and Affirmative Action trainee Jase Olavarria in preparing and disseminating a DEI monthly newsletter.
- **WICC's Melissa in the Morning**  
 8/28/23 Legal Director Michelle Dumas Kueler spoke on the radio show about Back to School & Anti-Bullying.
- **CHRO Capitol News Briefing with Lt Governor Susan Bysiewicz on Women's Equality Day**  
**Attendees: 40+**  
 8/28/2023 – Executive Director Tanya Hughes, joined Lt Governor Susan Bysiewicz and CT Women leaders to commemorate Women's Equality Day at the Capitol.
- **CHRO's DEI Committee Monthly Meeting**  
**Attendees: TBD**  
 8/30/23 – Co-chair and attorney Jody Walker-Smith led the agency's monthly DEI committee meeting.

## **Future Outreach Activities:**

- **Social Media**  
The CHRO's Social Media Team of Jody Walker-Smith, Courtney Shields, Spencer Hill, and Rachel O'Reilly are planning to create posts for the agency's Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- **September DEI Monthly Newsletter**  
TBD – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith will lead a team with Attorneys Spencer Hill and Megan Graefe, investigator Courtney Shields, and Affirmative Action trainee Jase Olavarria in preparing and disseminating a DEI monthly newsletter.
- **WICC**  
9/11/23 Legal Director Kimberly Jacobsen will speak on the radio show about Where are we on gender Equity.
- **NYDO FEPA Regional Conference**  
9/13-9/15 Legal Director Kimberly Jacobsen along with other members of the Executive staff will attend the regional EEOC conference in Saratoga NY.
- **CT Management Advisory Council meeting**  
9/20/23 - Legal Director Kimberly Jacobsen will attend this meeting.
- **CHRO's DEI Resource Discussion Series**  
9/20/23 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith will attend the monthly CHRO's DEI Resource Discussion Series – this month's discussion centers around theme or ageism and generational differences in the movie [The Intern](#).
- **WICC's Melissa in the Morning**  
9/25/23 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith will appear on the radio program to discuss National Work and Family Month.
- **CHRO's DEI Committee Monthly Meeting**  
9/27/23 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith, co-chair of the CHRO's DEI Committee, will lead a monthly meeting including education and discussion on DEI topics.
- **Equity and Discrimination Law**  
9/28/23 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith will lead a monthly meeting with the Legal Department on topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion in relation to discrimination law and our work.

## **GRANTS**

We wrapped up the three grants from HUD: CARES, Health Equity and COVID-19. We were awarded a HUD partnership grant so that CHRO can partner with the Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CECSEO) to plan a fair housing webinar and video PSA. We have also applied for several grants with OPM to use CARE funds for civil rights convention, conference and to get needed staff and equipment to meet the demands presented post-pandemic.

## **VIDEO PROJECTS**

- **PSA on Allyship**

The Executive Interns of the CHRO have created a public service announcement on allyship. It was released to the public in mid-August of 2020.

- **Life after Incarceration Video Project**

The Executive and Deputy Directors and members of the legal department will begin production of a documentary film on policing, incarceration, and civil rights in Connecticut. The film will focus on Connecticut as a national leader in reducing the number of incarcerated individuals in Connecticut and the civil rights forward thinking and action in Connecticut. It will focus on the housing and employment challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals and will be used as a training tool for future seminars and conferences that will focus on this topic. This is a long-term project with a target date of 2022 for completion. The project will focus on the lives of at least three formerly incarcerated individuals and look at any civil rights injustices that may have contributed to the negative outcomes for these three individuals. Two formerly incarcerated individuals were interviewed for the film, by CHRO intern Matt Stayner.

- **What is Affirmative Action? What is Contract Compliance? Video Project**

In order to address the misnomers related to affirmative action and contract compliance the CHRO will develop, produce, post and distribute a short video project about affirmative action and contract compliance, its purpose, who is helped, what it all means, how people in the state of Connecticut are helped by these programs, the detrimental effects of not having these types of programs and how both programs are good for business and business friendly. The project will be led by CHRO Deputy Director, the AA/CC Unit and CHRO Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler.

- **SB3**

On October 1, 2019, the CHRO rolled out its sexual harassment training video that was filmed at 450 Columbus Boulevard in Hartford. The video is available to all CT employers and their staff. The video complies with the statutory mandate that the CHRO provide training materials and a free training for the public by October 1, 2019. The law changed in 2021 and has been updated; so has the video.

- **From Lemonade to Light Post Documentary**

The CHRO will be producing a documentary film that has been entitled from Lemonade to Light Post. The focus of the film is human trafficking as a civil rights issue in Connecticut. Human trafficking disproportionately affects African American females in Connecticut and the CHRO will define the issues and interview experts who can help solve the crisis in Connecticut. The CHRO will also take a broader look at the issue to address all the civil rights issues embedded within the subject matter of human trafficking.

## **CONTRACT COMPLIANCE/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OUTREACH**

### **Future Activities:**

None Reported

### **Past Activities:**

- Contract Compliance Technical Assistance Training – 8/8  
**Attendees: 17**
- Contract Compliance Training for Municipalities – 8/8  
**Attendees: 6**

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### **AA/CC**

AA TA:

AA Meetings: 2

AA Special Projects:

**CC TA: 1289**

CC TA Session:2

## Housing

### **Future Activities:**

None Reported

### **Past Activities:**

- **Kids Court Academy 3 Session 12 exercise Richardson v. Ramirez (1974)**  
**Attendees: 30**  
8/15/23 Representative Housing Discrimination Unit, Jacqueline Elam and Representative Housing Discrimination Unit, Shaun Jones
- **DAS Security Awareness Training**  
**Attendees: 1**  
8/21/23 - Representative Housing Discrimination Unit, Jacqueline Elam
- **Reentry Roundtable Outreach**  
**Attendees: 13**  
8/22/23 - Representative Housing Discrimination Unit, Jacqueline Elam  
Talked about our mission, protected classes, how to file a housing discrimination complaint. Emailed brochures to be distributed to the broader group.
- **DAS New Security Awareness Training – Mobile Devices August 22,**  
**Attendees: 1**  
8/21/23 - Representative Housing Discrimination Unit, Jacqueline Elam
- **Angel of Edgewood Back to School Extravaganza - Hartford Dunkin Arena**  
**Attendees: 500**  
8/25/23 - Housing Unit Supervisor, Diane Carter and Representative Housing Discrimination Unit, Jacqueline Elam - Provided CHRO swag, brochures, talked to people about what we do and info on how to file a claim.

## Capitol Region

### **Future Activities:**

None Reported

### **Past Activities:**

- **CHRO Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting**  
**Attendees: 5-10**  
8/30/23 Representative Ann Galer will have attended the CHRO Diversity and Inclusion Committee and discussed various plans for outreach.

## Eastern Region

### Future Activities:

- **GNACC Healthy Living Festival Event**  
9/9/23 at Dodd Stadium 10am-2pm
- **Norwich Rotary Celebrate Cultural Diversity Event**  
9/18/23 at Chelsea Parade 5pm-8pm

### Past Activities:

- **Norwich National Night Out**  
**Attendees: 300+**  
8/1/23 Cathy Chester, Zach Cobb, Rachel O'Reilly, Mario Garrido participated in the well-attended event.
- **Charting the Future of CT Educational Reform**  
**Attendees: 6**  
8/3/23 Zach Cobb to attend.
- **Celebrate Cultural Diversity Committee Meeting**  
8/7, 8/21 and 8/31/23 Cathy Chester attended all the meetings in preparation for the upcoming events.
- **International Association of Human Rights Association**  
**Attendees: 300+**  
8/12-8/17 Robert Aldi attended the conference in Bethesda, MD
- **Tech Committee Meeting**  
**Attendees: 6**  
8/28/23 Cathy Chester attended.

## West Central Region

### Future Activities:

### Past Activities:

- **CHRO Summer Symposium: The Overturning of Affirmative Action in College Admissions**  
**Attendees: 100+**  
08/03 Representative Christopher Blustein and Trainee Ashanti Fleming attended the symposium which focused on discussing and navigating the educational landscape after the repeal of affirmative action.
- **Giving Hope an African Orphanage**  
**Attendees: 14**  
08/05 Representative Sancha Works attended an event where the CHRO presented the services it provides for various stakeholders in Connecticut.
- **Community Engagement Ambassadors**  
**Attendees: 5**  
08/10 Trainee Ashanti Fleming attended the Community Engagement meeting and planned for future projects.
- **AmeriCorps Summer Senior Expo**  
**Attendees: 100+**  
08/10 Trainee Ashanti Fleming attended an event focused on highlighting community resources available for senior citizens, where she explained the ways in which those senior citizens can file complaints.
- **YMCA Pre-K Graduation**  
**Attendees: 80+**  
08/18 Trainee Ashanti Fleming attended the graduation where she handed out gift cards to graduating students as well as CHRO anti-bullying flyers so that the children and their families can learn more about filing CHRO complaints.

## Southwest Region

### Future Activities:

- **CHRO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Newsletter Subcommittee**  
Southwest HRO Representative Courtney Shields will collaborate with her colleagues to edit text, create images, and distribute the September 2023 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Newsletter on behalf of the agency and plan the October 2023 CHRO DEI Newsletter.



- **CHRO Diversity & Inclusion Committee**  
9/27 Southwest HRO Representative Courtney Shields will attend the Diversity & Inclusion Committee's monthly meeting and participate in researching and writing for special projects as needed.
- **CHRO DEI Social Media Team Subcommittee**  
Southwest HRO Representative Courtney Shields will update the text and create images for social media posts throughout the month. She will also work with a small team of agency staff to edit and publish all other agency social media posts throughout the month and plan posts for October 2023.
- **MAC State of CT Management Advisory Committees**  
9/20 Southwest Regional Manager Jamie Rubin will attend the September committee meeting open to all State of Connecticut non-union managers as the CHRO Representative and will additionally attend the voting member subcommittee meeting the same day.
- **CHRO Technology Committee**  
Southwest Human Rights Representative Jessica Kohut will attend the September meeting to review and discuss regional tech. concerns and to brainstorm potential future improvements.
- **CHRO Outreach Ambassador Meeting**  
Southwest Human Rights Representative Christine Rowan will attend the September meeting to review and discuss possible outreach and education opportunities.

### **Past Activities:**

- **CHRO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Social Media Team Subcommittee**  
**Attendees: 4**  
Southwest HRO Representative Courtney Shields drafted and updated text and created images for agency social media posts for Single Working Women's Day, Women's Equality Day, and an update to Part Two of the "What is the CHRO?" series. She also worked with a small team of agency staff to edit and publish all other agency social media posts throughout the month and to plan posts for September 2023.
- **CHRO Kids Court Academy**  
**Attendees: 50 - 75**  
8/1 Southwest HRO Representative Debra Drexler participated in the virtual session as a volunteer facilitator.
- **Charting The Future of CT Educational Reform: Navigating the Post Affirmative Action Landscape**  
8/3 Southwest Regional Staff attended the virtual symposium hosted by the CHRO summer interns.

- **Trans 101**

- **Attendees: 30**

- 8/15/23 Southwest HRO Representative Jessica Kohut attended Trans 101. This event was presented by speaker and advocate, Clare McCarthy, host of TransQat podcast, blog and website. Ms. McCarthy, in the course of approximately two hours, educated a full meeting room on the basic information necessary to understand and respect trans people. Through topics ranging from inclusive language to usage and respect of another's pronouns, to the myriad of harmful political myths and misconceptions and other prejudices endured by the trans community, Ms. McCarthy's dedication to advocacy and skill as a former educator blended to create a warm and inviting atmosphere for anyone at any level of understanding to learn together. After introducing herself prior to the event and sharing CHRO literature for attendees, Jessica was asked to speak briefly about the CHRO and our purpose at the start of the event. Ms. McCarthy expressed interest in future collaborative efforts with the Commission, possibly joining her on her podcast at some point. The event was hosted at the Lyme Public Library in Lyme, Connecticut, and was free and open to the public.

- **CHRO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Newsletter Subcommittee**

- **Attendees: 4, Published**

- 8/16/23, 1,062 Newsletter Subscribers

- Southwest HRO Representative Courtney Shields collaborated with her colleagues to edit text, create images, and distribute the August 2023 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Newsletter on behalf of the agency and plan the September 2023 CHRO DEI Newsletter.

- **CHRO Technology Committee**

- 8/28 Southwest Human Rights Representative Jessica Kohut attended the August meeting to review and discuss regional tech. concerns and to brainstorm potential future improvements.

- **CHRO Diversity & Inclusion Committee**

- 8/30 Southwest HRO Representative Courtney Shields attended the Diversity & Inclusion Committee's monthly meeting and participated in researching and writing for special projects as needed.

Media Inquiries: 2

Meetings: 17

Inquiries: 6

Public hearings: n/a

Sexual Harassment Law: 40 (July) and 7593 (cumulative)

