



Chicago Commission
on Human Relations

CIVIL RIGHTS IN ACTION



Nancy Andrade
Chair & Commissioner

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

In this edition:

1. **Our New Podcast**
2. **Think Before You Hate, A Hate Crime Reporting Program**
3. **Our Commitment to Ending Transfemicide in Chicago**
4. **New Employee Spotlight**

Welcome Message

Welcome to this edition of Civil Rights in Action. This quarterly newsletter captures all the great accomplishments achieved by the Chicago Commission on Human Relations (CCHR) in Q1 of 2025.

In the new year, the CCHR was immediately called into action by Mayor Brandon Johnson to lead efforts on carrying out his executive order to address the tragic issue of Transfemicide, the murder of transgender women. The executive order calls for a working group that is headed by the CCHR and includes city agencies, community and intergovernmental stakeholders as well as the public to study the problem and prepare recommendations to address it.

Our Inter-Group Relations Unit began the next steps on our agency's Think Before You Hate program, an initiative designed to be an additional way to report hate crimes especially for the most vulnerable populations in the city.

We are excited to launch an all-new podcast called the "Think Before You Hate" podcast. This podcast will dive into important conversations surrounding social justice, equality, and civil rights, while also focusing on current events to provide a platform for thought-provoking discussions aimed at creating positive change.

Last, but certainly not least, we are excited to announce that we have hired two legal interns for the spring to support our Adjudication team.

Find out more as we take a closer look at the success we have had this quarter in this issue of our quarterly newsletter!

The THINK BEFORE YOU HATE Podcast



Our New Podcast

We are proud to have started the “Think Before You Hate” podcast. In this podcast we will dive into the most pressing civil rights issues in Chicago and society. Each episode will engage experts in meaningful discussions on social justice and equality and address current events. This series will offer a platform for insightful conversations focused on driving positive change. We kicked off the first episode in late February with our Chair and Commissioner Nancy Andrade who defined the CCHR and gave the public a great overview of how we serve the people of Chicago. She spoke upon how we enforce the civil rights laws for the City of Chicago namely the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance and the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance which gives people protection against discrimination. She also highlighted how the CCHR has a unique civilian role in assisting victims of hate crimes and hate incidents.

Our second episode is a conversation with our First Deputy Commissioner, Kenneth Gunn, who vividly describes the human relations movement in Chicago and takes us on a journey of the transformation of the landscape of civil rights throughout his career serving at the commission.

We have plenty of other episodes planned for 2025 and look forward to more discussions with valiant leaders that work tirelessly to create a more inclusive world. The podcast is an excellent opportunity for us to spread awareness of the CCHR and we hope you join us by listening throughout the year. To check out our podcast, [click here](#).



Think Before You Hate, A Hate Crime Reporting Program

THINK

BEFORE YOU HATE

The CCHR's Think Before You Hate Program is a hate crime reporting program in partnership with the Chicago Police Department. This initiative will be an additional way for Chicagoans to report hate crimes while focusing on improving community relations with law enforcement, educating the public on hate incidents and hate crimes, and developing more accessible spaces for the public to report a hate crime by partnering with local community-based organizations. The program is by no means a replacement for 9-1-1. Always call 9-1-1 when you are in an emergency.

For those who feel that they have been a victim of a hate crime, any one of our partner locations will be available to report the incident. These participating partners will provide staff to help victims report crimes. We are proudly working with the American Defamation League, the Chicago Urban League, IMAN, Northside Community Resources, Instituto del Progreso Latino, the Chinese American Service League, and Metropolitan Family Services in this program.

For any further questions, please contact Daniel Serrano at daniel.serrano1@cityofchicago.org.

Ending Transfemicide in Chicago



Our Commitment to Ending Transfemicide in Chicago

At the end of December of 2024, Mayor Brandon Johnson signed an executive order to declare a Transfemicide emergency in Chicago and establish a working group to address this issue. Transfemicide is defined as the killing of a trans woman because of her gender identity, especially when motivated by transmisogyny. Transfemicide disproportionately affects women of color, particularly Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) women. In February 2025, the city council passed an ordinance that mirrors the language of the executive order. **Click here** to read the executive order. The CCHR along with the Chicago Police Department, Department of Public Health, and the Department of Family and Support Services will seek expertise and advice about the transgender community from community groups and intergovernmental stakeholders.

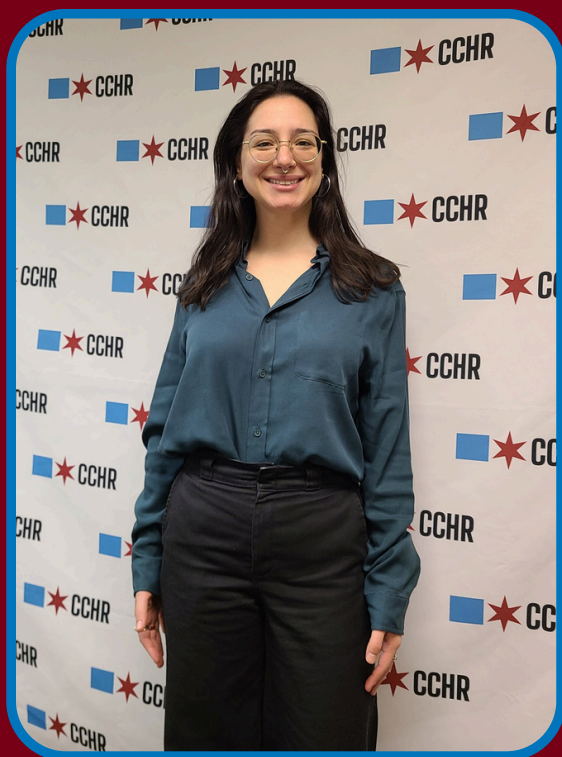
New Employee Spotlight

Please welcome the newest members of the CCHR staff!



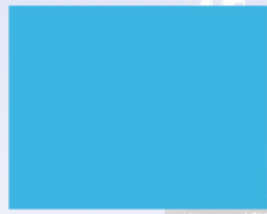
Dede Benissan, Legal Intern

Dede Benissan is a second-year law student at the Loyola University Chicago School of Law where she serves as the incoming Editor-in-Chief of the Volume 57 Loyola Law Journal, an Antitrust Fellow with the Loyola Institute for Consumer Antitrust Studies, and a Rodin Fellow for Social Justice. At the CCHR, Dede prepares legal summaries of the CCHR's precedential decisions and assists with the drafting of the CCHR's Request for Review Orders and the update of the CCHR's Subject Matter Index. Upon graduation, Dede intends to work in federal public defense or civil rights litigation.



Leanna Nichols, Legal Intern

Leanna Nichols is a third-year law student at the Loyola University Chicago School of Law with an interest in a variety of areas in Public Interest Law. She is originally from Long Island, NY and moved to Chicago for law school. At her law school, she is the President of the Public Interest Law Society (PILS) and the Managing Editor of the Public Interest Law Reporter (PILR). The projects Leanna works on at the CCHR include reviewing appeals and updating entries for our Subject Matter Index.



CCHR

Chicago Commission
on Human Relations

Thank you for reading our quarterly newsletter!

If you or anyone you know feels they have been a victim of discrimination in the City of Chicago, contact the Chicago Commission on Human Relations.

To learn more about the CCHR, log onto www.chicago.gov/cchr.



(312) 744-4111



cchr@cityofchicago.org

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Do not forget to check out the Think Before You Hate podcast available on our website where we will discuss the latest topics concerning civil rights in the City of Chicago!

