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# NC Martin Luther King Jr. Commission

## 2024 Annual Report



**NC DOA**  
Department of Administration





**Josh Stein**  
Governor

**Gabe Esparza**  
Secretary

My fellow North Carolinians,

As we continue the work of the North Carolina Martin Luther King Jr. Commission, we honor and acknowledge the decades of work and dedication from both previous and current Commission members. With a consistent focus on the most important values to Dr. King, the MLK Jr. Commission has always strived to lead the state's efforts in ensuring peace, justice, and equity in our communities. I am excited to continue working with my fellow members to educate, advocate, support, and uplift North Carolina's underserved and underrepresented populations each year as we prioritize various projects and events.

We hope to continue building a network of collaborators, partners, and passionate leaders who commit to uplifting and carrying out Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work. We look forward to more opportunities to partner with state government agencies as they align with our charge and mission. I hope to see the MLK Jr. Commission bridge necessary connections between North Carolinians and their government to foster better relationships and build the future our Commission sees for this great state.

From previous Commission members to current ones, there is a connecting thread of passion for a just and equitable society created through the efforts started by Dr. King. I am excited to continue learning and advocating on behalf of the people of North Carolina.

Sincerely,

*Warren L. Herndon*

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Rev. Dr. Warren L. Herndon, Chair

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Report completed by Jordan Eppers, program and policy coordinator, on behalf of the MLK Jr. Commission.

# 2024 Annual Commission Summary

Created in 1993 pursuant to [G.S. §143B-426.34A](https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_143B/GS_143B-426.34A.pdf)<sup>1</sup> and [G.S. §143B-426.34B](https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_143B/GS_143B-426.34B.pdf)<sup>2</sup>, the NC Martin Luther King Jr. Commission is directed to (i) encourage appropriate ceremonies and activities throughout the state relating to the observance of the legal holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday; (ii) provide advice and assistance to local governments and private organizations across the state with respect to the observance of such holidays; and (iii) promote among the people of North Carolina an awareness and appreciation of the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr.

After numerous conversations on the potential benefits of strategic planning efforts, the Commission began discussing the possibility of facilitated strategic planning opportunities with the NC Office of State Budget and Management. Seeking to establish a clear foundation for the Commission by creating updated mission and vision statements along with identifying clear Commission values, members dove in with the full support of the DOA staff. The new mission and vision statements and the values identified by Commission members are included below. With new and continuing members, the Commission has collaboratively built upon its existing foundation and will continue working on strategic planning efforts related to goal setting for 2025.

Although not required by NC General Statute or Executive Order, this report provides an overview and review of the focus areas, projects, and ongoing work of the NC Martin Luther King Jr. Commission throughout 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter\\_143B/GS\\_143B-426.34A.pdf](https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_143B/GS_143B-426.34A.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter\\_143B/GS\\_143B-426.34B.pdf](https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_143B/GS_143B-426.34B.pdf)

# 2024 Commission Members

## **Chair:**

Rev. Dr. Warren L. Herndon

## **Members:**

Dr. Stan K. Holt  
Catherine Williamson-Hardy  
Dr. Tiffany Tuma  
Jennifer Nehlsen  
Marcus R. Bass\*  
Phyllis Mack Horton\*  
Walter Rogers  
Rabbi Lucy H.F. Dinner  
Mildred Christmas\*  
Laureen G. Jones  
Verlina P. Lomick  
Roosevelt Ethridge\*  
Resha Peregrino-Brimah\*  
Chery Hart\*  
Dr. Charles Johnson\*

## **Former Members:**

Kenneth Raymond  
Dr. Allison Mathews  
Dr. Roosevelt McPherson  
Jamilla Hawkins  
Rebecca Trammel  
Demetrius Deloatch  
Dr. Rodney Harris (*previous chair*)

\* Indicates a new member who was appointed in 2024

# Mission, Vision, & Values

## **Mission**

*The NC MLK Jr. Commission embodies the values of Dr. Martin Luther King by acting urgently to reduce inequity and drive comprehensive justice-centered change for all North Carolinians by amplifying the efforts of organizations championing humanity and supporting celebratory events in honor of Dr. King's birthday.*

## **Vision**

*The NC MLK Jr. Commission envisions a North Carolina in which diversity is celebrated, all people are respected, the systems of our society perpetuate justice and equity, and "we must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience" (MLK Jr. 1965) now and for generations to come.*

## **Values**

*Transformation*

*Accountability*

*Respect*

*Equity*

*Service*

# Overview of Meetings

## **January 11, 2024** *(Special Meeting)*

The Commission met virtually to conduct a formal vote to approve the 2023 Annual Commission Report. The Report was approved by a majority quorum.

## **January 31, 2024**

The Commission met virtually to review the MLK Day of Service Project (collecting donated cold weather items for Oak City Cares in downtown Raleigh). Further, the group discussed 2024 project proposals, and members interested in joining an Events Planning Committee were identified.

## **February 28, 2024**

The Commission met virtually to hear a report from the Events Planning Committee and an update on the Leandro Court Case. Members were added to a working document created to brainstorm Commission project ideas and events.

## **March 27, 2024**

The Commission met virtually to hear their monthly report from the Events Planning Committee; specifically, a project proposal for a half-day social justice conference was shared with the Commission. Members reviewed the Commission's budget, available funds, and the idea of obtaining sponsorships from outside organizations.

## **April 24, 2024**

The Commission met virtually to hear their monthly report from the Events Planning Committee; the group discussed details of the proposed social justice conference to finally approve the proposed idea and spending plan for the remaining FY 23-24 funds on the project. Further, members discussed the state of DEI and approved drafting language on a correlated resolution.

## **May 22, 2024** *(Special Meeting)*

The Commission met virtually to conduct a formal vote to approve the language drafted for the DEI Resolution. The draft resolution was approved by a majority quorum.

## **May 29, 2024**

The Commission met virtually to hear their monthly report from the Events Planning Committee; the group continued discussions of the approved social justice conference. Further, members participated in an open discussion opportunity and brainstorming session.

### **August 28, 2024**

The Commission met virtually to formally swear-in new members. Further, members heard an update about Commission leadership and budget. Members participated in an open discussion where new members asked questions, and the Events Planning Committee provided an update on the social justice conference project.

### **September 25, 2024**

The Commission met virtually for an informal meeting to hear an update on the Commission's budget and continued strategic planning opportunities. Further, new members received an orientation from DOA staff covering background on the Commission, requirements, and other important information relating to their positions.

### **October 30, 2024**

The Commission met virtually to formally swear-in new members. Further, the Commission members discussed and agreed upon moving towards another facilitated strategic planning session with a facilitator who offered their services. Members heard updates on the budget, Commission leadership, and discussed potential projects for 2025.

### **November 20, 2024**

The Commission met virtually for an informal meeting to hear and discuss updates on the Commission's strategic planning efforts, the 2024 Annual Commission Report, and leadership changes. Further, members briefly discussed key priorities and focus areas to consider for 2025.

### **December 18, 2024**

The Commission met virtually to formally swear-in the two remaining new members of the Commission. Further, members discussed and approved the 2024 Annual Commission Report and identified important aspects for the 2025 strategic planning session and projects for the year. Lastly, members shared information about upcoming local MLK Jr. Holiday celebrations and events.



# Annual Commission Key Priorities

## Events Planning Committee

At the beginning of 2024, the Commission determined it was important to designate members to serve on a formal Events Planning Committee. In hopes of broadening the scope of work for the Commission, past the statutory requirements, this committee would facilitate the detailed planning of event(s) throughout the year. The committee met five times throughout the year outside of full Commission meetings while closely collaborating with the Commission chair. Committee members include:

Dr. Tiffany Tuma (committee chair)

Dr. Stan K. Holt

Catherine Williamson-Hardy

Laureen G. Jones

## Social Justice Conference

In an effort to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and bring awareness to specific social justice issues, the Event Planning Committee proposed a half-day social justice conference project, which was approved by the Commission. The purpose of this conference will be to honor Dr. King's commitment to equal access to education amid the anniversary of the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision to desegregate public schools. The Commission plans for participants to obtain key takeaways from this conference after hearing from a keynote speaker and panelists then taking part in two workshops before networking. A proposed budget has been presented to the Commission; but, with a high amount of membership turnover and a transition in Commission leadership this year, planning for this event was interrupted. The Events Planning Committee, with support from the DOA team, will continue putting this event together for 2025.

## Strategic Planning Continuation

After successful strategic planning efforts in 2023, Commission members are eager to continue working in this area to establish a clear focus and path forward for themselves and the commission as a whole. In partnership with the DOA staff, the Commission is working with a facilitator at Partners for Impact to plan a second half-day strategic planning session focused on goal setting. The agenda for this session will act as a continuation of the initial 2023 session facilitated by the Office of State Budget & Management. The session will be held in January of 2025.

# 2025 Proposed Meeting Dates

January 13, 2025 - Strategic Planning Session

January 29, 2025

February 26, 2025

March 26, 2025

April 30, 2025

May 28, 2025

June 25, 2025

July 30, 2025

August 27, 2025

September 24, 2025

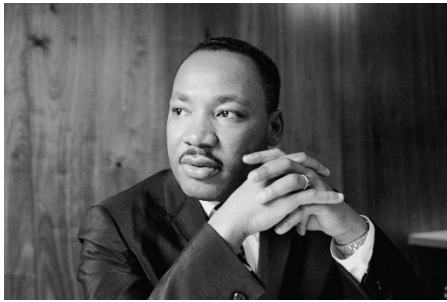
October 29, 2025

November 19, 2025

# Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Influence

*"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?"*

*–Dr. King Jr. (1957)*



The NC Martin Luther King Jr. Commission is named in honor of the late Baptist minister, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a social activist who led the civil rights movement in the United States. Following his premature death, Dr. King Jr. remained the most impactful and well-known African American leader of his era, which was confirmed by the establishment of a national holiday in his honor. Like the impact felt throughout the United States, North Carolina

continues to promote the importance of understanding, appreciating, and continuing the work of Dr. King Jr. when it comes to civil equity in our state.

In 1993, the NC Martin Luther King Jr. Commission was created after the Human Relations Commission of the NC Department of Administration passed the establishing legislation. To honor the birthday of Dr. King Jr., the NC MLK Jr. Commission was made to partner in spearheading the statewide celebration of the January 15<sup>th</sup> national holiday. However, it is important to remember that the legacy and influence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. does not dissipate after this holiday. Throughout each year, the NC MLK Jr. Commission works intentionally to embody the ideals of Dr. King Jr. by advocating for an equitable and just North Carolina through inclusive discussions, diverse partnerships, and widespread education.

END OF REPORT