

FTR Now

New Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan to Focus on Criminal Justice System & Policing Practices

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With the recent release of the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Strategic Plan for 2017 to 2022, renewed focus will be placed on criminal justice system accountability and issues around systemic discrimination. Find out what's in store for your organization – and what you should be doing to ensure that you're prepared.

The Strategic Plan: 2017 to 2022

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (Commission) has finalized its Strategic Plan for 2017 to 2022. Titled [Putting People and their Rights at the Centre: Building Human Rights Accountability](#), the Plan identifies the Commission's key areas of focus for the next five years as follows:

- Reconciliation
- Criminal Justice System
- Poverty
- Education

Regarding its focus on the criminal justice system, the Commission identifies that it intends to enforce human rights and reduce systemic discrimination by seeking human rights accountability in the criminal justice system. The Commission's goals include ensuring non-discriminatory practices in policing and ending racial profiling in all police practices.

The Strategic Plan states that the Commission intends to actively work towards ending discriminatory practices in policing by:

- engaging strategically with efforts currently underway to address racial profiling in policing
- using its public inquiry function to highlight the experiences of those who come into contact with the criminal justice system
- activating its powers of intervention and initiation of applications before the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, courts and other tribunals
- monitoring, enforcing and reporting on compliance with human rights obligations.

Next Steps for Police Services

Given the Commission's renewed focus on the criminal justice system and policing in particular, we expect that in the coming years, Police Services across the province will likely be the subject of increasing inquiries, applications and requests for information from the Commission. Police Services should:

- review current policing practices and related policies
- audit training programs and protocols
- review services.

In light of the foregoing, ensuring your organization is prepared to respond accurately and in a timely manner will be of critical importance – now more than ever. Should your Police Service need assistance in reviewing its policies or processes, our police, human rights and privacy teams are well-positioned to assist. Do not hesitate to contact [Kathryn Bird](#) or any member of our [Hicks Morley Human Rights practice group](#).

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