CRCs are established using a (1) top-down, (2) bottom-up, and (3) mixed process.

1) Top-Down Process

A top-down process is driven by staff members of the SCHAC who typically approach local partners like City/County Councils (members of councils), local Government, local Chambers of Commerce and other appropriate local partners, and encourage them to support establishing a Community Relations Council.

It is important for a potential local partner to identify a member of their organization (e.g. County Clerk, City Manager, head of community relations for a County/City, staff member from local government, staff member of the Chamber of Commerce etc.,) who can work with staff from SCHAC to develop a proposal for a CRC that will fit with local circumstances and needs.

2) Bottom-Process

A bottom-up process is driven by a local sponsor who is a community member(s) and/or a member of a local organization that wishes to be a local partner.

The local sponsor contacts the SCHAC who provides support for the council formation process. The SCHAC typically encourages and helps local sponsors to secure support from a key local partner, if this does not already exist

3) Mixed Process

A mixed-process occurs when top-down efforts of staff members at the SCHAC intersect with the efforts of active local sponsors, and both parties collaborate to help establish a CRC.

Typical steps within the process of establishing a Community Relations Council-

A. Timeline

Develop the Proposal

Staff members of the SCHAC and a local sponsor develop an initial proposal for a CRC. The relationship between the SCHAC and the sponsor can arise from a top-down, bottom-up or mixed process. The local sponsor is typically

a representative of a relevant local organization (e.g. staff member from the County Administrator's office). The local sponsor can also be an individual community member or group of community members who do not represent an official organization but are willing and capable of helping to establish a CRC. The initial proposal typically includes the following:

  a. mission
  b. vision
  c. brief description of the general operating and service provision model (typically selected from the flexible accordion style service provision model offered by the SCHAC)

B. Present and Secure Support for the Proposed Community Relations Council

Where there is a directly or indirectly involved partner(s), the initial proposal is presented to the local partner for review, revision if necessary, and support. If the local sponsor is an individual community member or group of community members who do not represent an official organization, then an advertised community presentation is suggested (e.g. advertised presentation at the local library, church, school, etc.,). Attendees are asked to provide feedback and support for the formation of a CRC.

C. Recruit and Select Council Members

Staff of the SCHAC work with the local sponsor or person(s) designated by a partner organization to recruit and select diverse and collaborative community members who are capable of making a constructive contribution to the activities of the CRC. Local sponsors and partners are expected to lead the process of identifying and selecting council members, and are encouraged to use the following general selection criteria:

  a. Diverse members in terms of sector, demographics, region and any other characteristic deemed important within the community
  b. Diverse members in terms of representing different points of view
  c. Collaborative, willing and capable of providing constructive input into and support for the activities of the council
  d. Set Up and Conduct the First Meeting

Staff of the SCHAC support the local sponsor or person(s) designated by a partner organization to set up and conduct the first meeting. The council is considered formally established when the following has been achieved/developed:

        1. chair, secretary and treasurer have been identified (a treasurer may not be required)

2. list of members

3. general mission and vision statement

4. brief description of (1) general operating model (e.g. "we intend to use Robert's Rules to support our decision-making process"), and (2) service provision model (e.g." we intend to focus our efforts on one annual expedited community review process, and a community relations information management system delivered via a CRD-Council website")

5. brief description of annual goals and general plan for achieving those goals (one page)

6. website has been established for the Council (supplied and supported by the SCHAC, if requested by the council)

e. Support in Functioning Independently

staff of the SCHAC help the Council (if necessary) to become independently functional with regard to (1) general operating processes (planning, goal setting, decision making etc.), and (2) how to plan and execute the elements of the service provision model they have chosen

WOULD YOU LIKE ASSISTANCE IN ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL?

The Community Relations Division (CRD) of the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission (SCHAC) would like to work with local partners to establish Community Relations Councils (CRCs) in counties, cities and other regions throughout the State.

The CRD has a variety of resources that assist in establishing a Community Relations Council. If you would like to explore a possible partnership with the SCHAC for the purposes of establishing a CRC, please contact us at information@schac.sc.gov .