



BRIDGING COMMUNITIES

2023–24 Annual Report

CITY OF FORT WAYNE
METRO

Letter from the Board Chair



At the Fort Wayne Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, we believe our differences are a cause for celebration, not discrimination. Through discrimination investigation, education, outreach and training, Fort Wayne Metro empowers residents, giving them all equal opportunity to succeed. We are proud to present the 2023–2024 annual report, highlighting the critical work Fort Wayne Metro Executive Director Nikki Quintana and her team have accomplished over the last two years.

First, I would like to applaud Nikki for her recognition as one of Business Weekly’s *Twelve Influential Women of Northeast Indiana*. She and the entire Fort Wayne Metro team have been dedicated to furthering the mission, and that has been evidenced in the agency’s continued growth over the last two years. The team has continued to present the *Equity for All* report, which presents the findings from a study conducted by Fort Wayne Metro to gain a deeper understanding of the unfair experiences our residents face. These efforts have increased their outreach and education and are a proactive—instead of reactive—approach to influence systemic change.

Relationships and collaboration are essential to our ability to do so. Fort Wayne Metro continues to explore new opportunities—such as partnerships with Fort Wayne Urban League and Amp Lab, which you will learn about in this report—that help us fulfill our mission. We are eager to continue to build upon our partnerships and make Fort Wayne a more diverse and inclusive city where every community member has equal opportunity to flourish.

Aisha Arrington, Commission Chair

Letter from the Executive Director



We are so proud of our 2023–2024 accomplishments. We continue to execute our two-pronged approach—*enforcement and outreach & education*—with the goal of enforcing civil rights and empowering the citizens of Fort Wayne.

Our team continues to build on our community connections and partnerships. We have presented the *Equity for All* report at the local, state and national levels, and trainings have become an increased focus in our work. In the past two years, we have quadrupled the number of organizations served—from 31 in 2022 to 121 in 2023!

We have also enhanced our outreach and collaboration by lending our expertise and partnering with other organizations addressing discrimination and providing solutions. For example, we participated in panel discussions at the City of Fort Wayne’s 2024 Inspire Conference and the 2024 Landlord Education Series.

Thank you to our commissioners, staff and partners—together, we continue to bridge the gaps in our community.

Nikki Quintana, Executive Director

OVERVIEW



MISSION

To enforce civil rights laws and empower the citizens of Fort Wayne through education on diversity and discrimination issues.

VISION

To make Fort Wayne a more diverse and inclusive city where every member of the community has equal opportunity to thrive and flourish and is empowered to assist in the eradication of discrimination.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Aisha Arrington

Mayoral Appointee, 2023/2024 Chair

Tabitha Ervin

Mayoral Appointee, 2023/2024 Vice Chair

Tony Burrus

City Council Appointee, 2023/2024 Commissioner

Lana Keesling

City Council Appointee, 2023/2024 Commissioner

Dr. David Lombard

City Council Appointee, 2023/2024 Commissioner

Dorian Maples

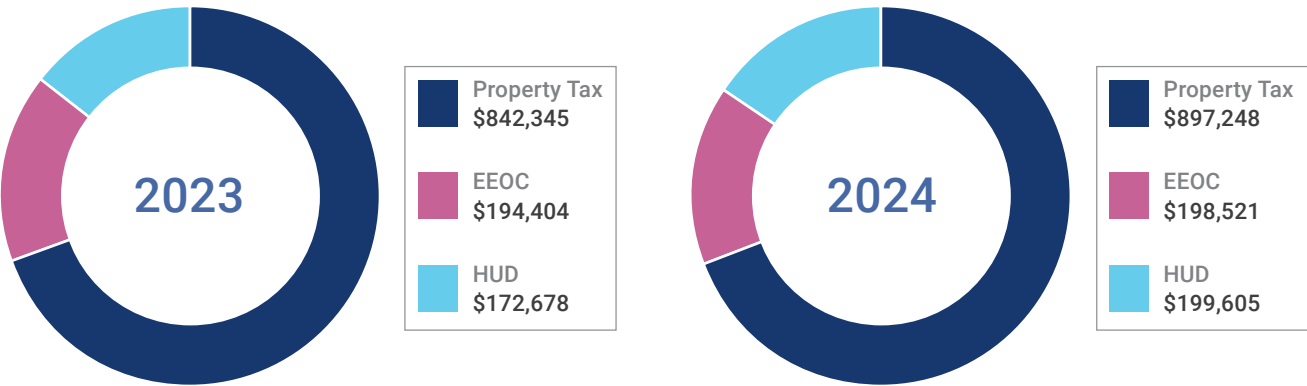
Mayoral Appointee, 2023/2024 Commissioner

Larry Wardlaw

Mayoral Appointee, 2023/2024 Commissioner

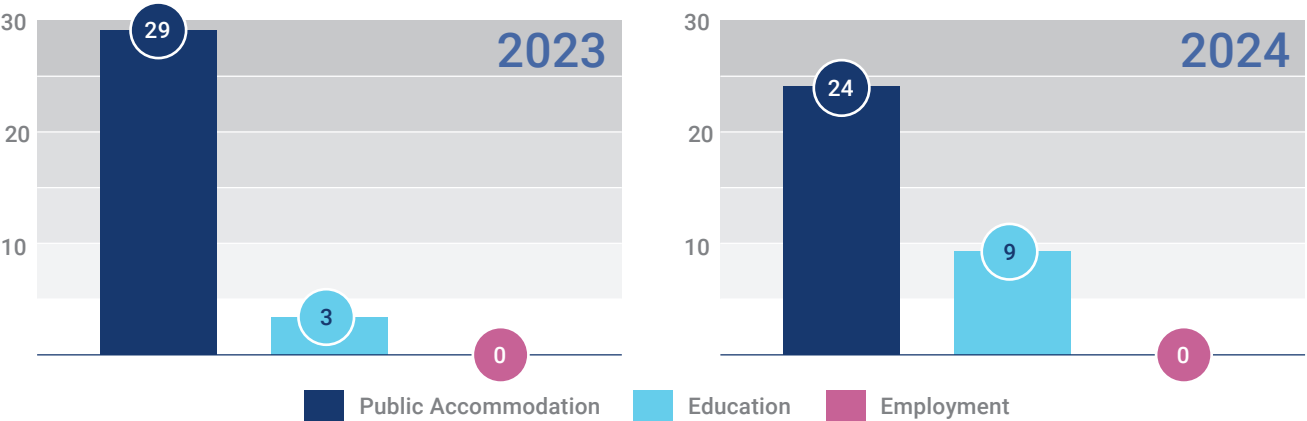


FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Fort Wayne Metro operates on funding from the City of Fort Wayne, United States Housing of Urban Development (HUD) and United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

CITY ORDINANCE CHARGES



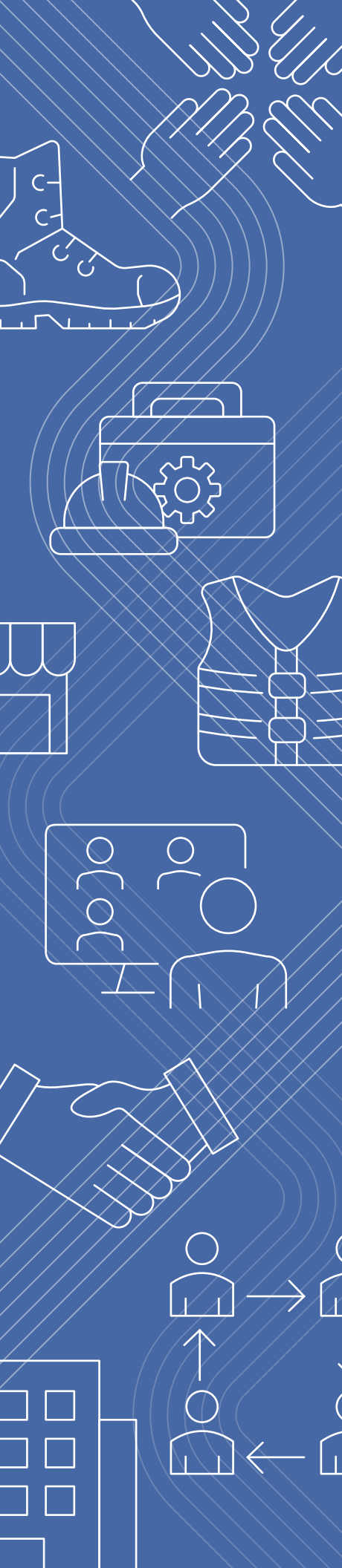
TOTAL CHARGES PROCESSED

All cases filed.

	2023	2024
Charges Drafted	493	473
Charges Investigated	375	360
Monetary Settlement	\$170,499.88	\$207,280.67

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

	2023	2024
Organizations Served	121	50
Individuals Served	7,665	7,875
Inquiries	1,181	1,362
Events	10	13
Trainings	50	55



EMPLOYMENT

Employees have the right to a fair work environment, and providing one is good for business. Any form of discrimination leads to higher turnover and greater instability in the workplace. Improving workplace culture, creating a safe work environment and ensuring respect for all employees positively impacts everyone in our community.

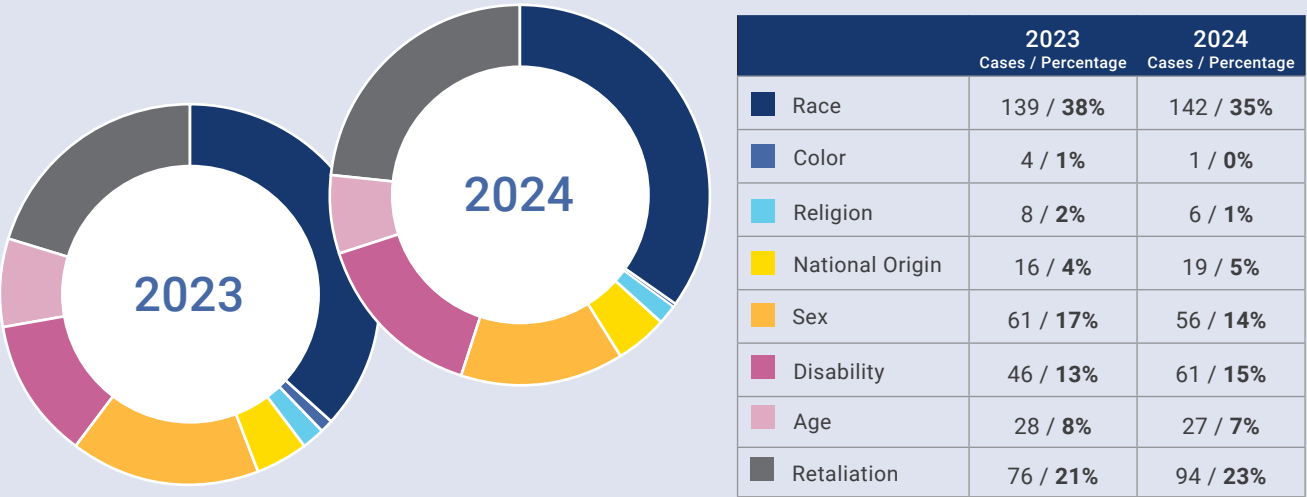
EMPLOYMENT CHARGES PROCESSED

This data reflects dual-filed cases.

	2023	2024
Charges Drafted	278	262
Charges Investigated	281	256
Monetary Settlement	\$154,350.35	\$173,975.00

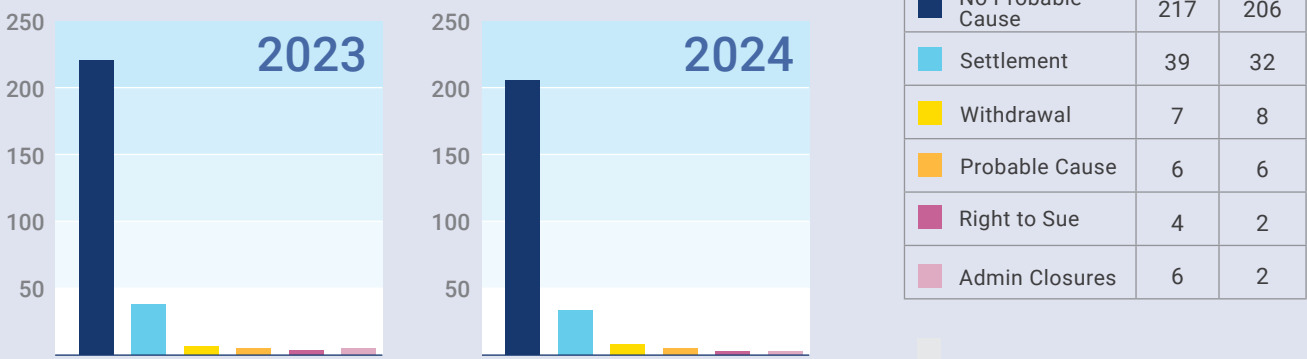
INVESTIGATED EMPLOYMENT CASES BY PROTECTED CLASS

This data reflects the number of dual-filed cases in each of the protected classes. Some cases include multiple protected classes.



EMPLOYMENT CLOSURE FINDINGS

This data reflects dual-filed cases.





HOUSING

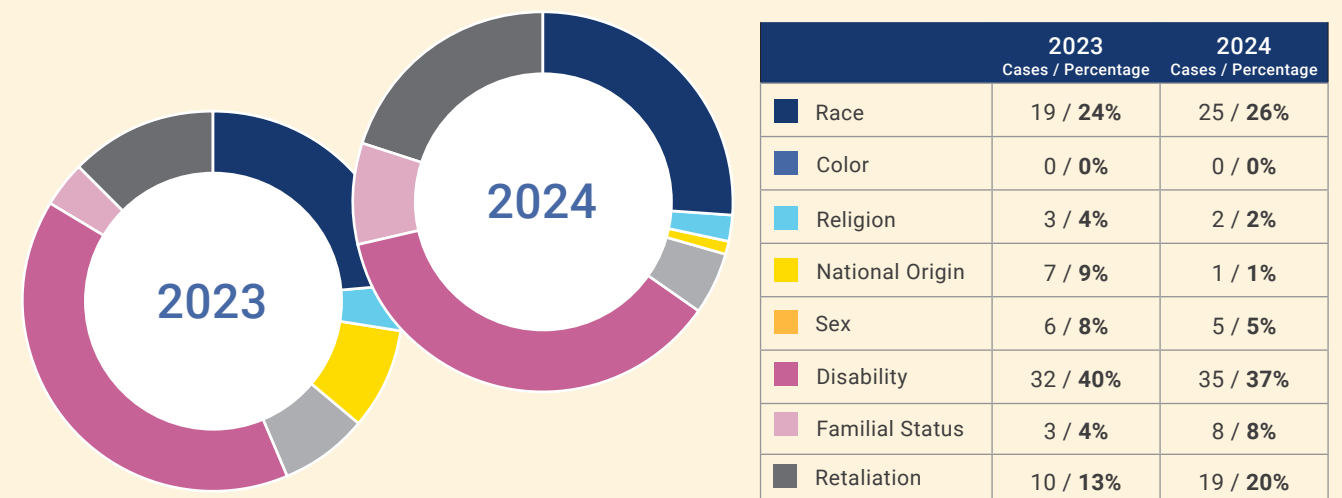
Fair housing fosters inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity. Where a person lives impacts their access to food, jobs, quality education, childcare, transportation, healthcare and more. When we ensure fair housing for everyone, we take steps towards eliminating inequity.

HOUSING CHARGES PROCESSED

	2023	2024
Charges Drafted	62	71
Charges Investigated	62	71
Total Settlement Amount	\$11,849.53	\$32,305.67

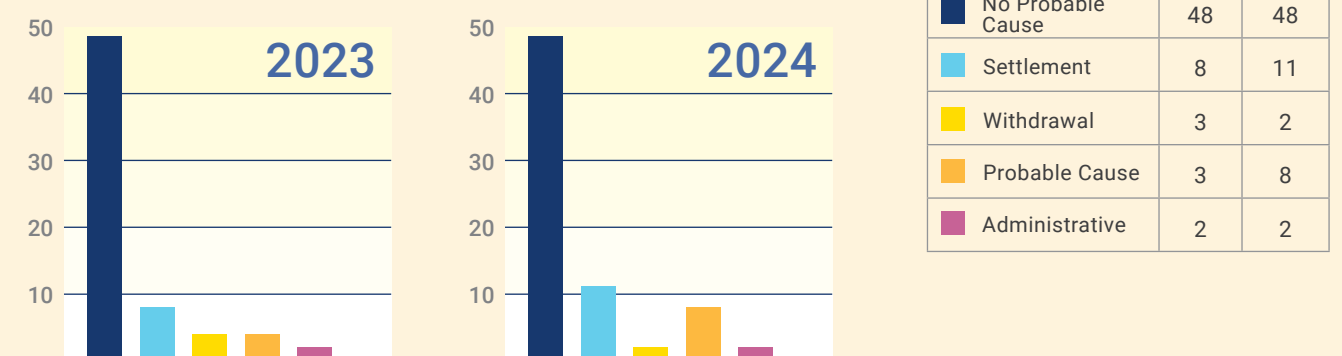
INVESTIGATED HOUSING CASES BY PROTECTED CLASS

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HOUSING CLOSURE FINDINGS

This data reflects dual-filed cases.





2023



2024

FAIR HOUSING SUMMIT

Every year, Fort Wayne Metro and the Office of Housing and Neighborhood Services partner to present the Fair Housing Summit. This free event draws diverse audiences, including individuals representing housing providers, real estate agents, social service agencies and more, to hear from fair housing experts and advocates.



“The partnerships amongst the different agencies in the housing industry are crucial because they can help to address the systemic barriers and promote equitable access to housing. Resource sharing can lead to a more effective and efficient implementation of fair housing policy development and programs. It can also drive more community engagement to make sure that all voices are heard and all needs met.”

Dawn Clopton
Vice President of Community Development, Premier Bank

2023 Fair Housing Summit

The 2023 keynote was delivered by Dr. Andre M. Perry, Senior Fellow at Brookings Metro, scholar-in-residence at American University, professor of economics at Washington University and author of *Know Your Price: Valuing Black Lives and Property in America's Black Cities*. Perry's pioneering work on asset devaluation has made him a go to researcher for policymakers, community development professionals and civil rights groups.

2024 Fair Housing Summit

The 2024 event featured keynote speaker Joshua V. Barr, Esq., Chief Strategist & President of Raising the Barr, LLC. Barr is an Emmy and national award-winning transformational leader who collaborates with organizations to transform their cultures and improve socioeconomic outcomes for their community stakeholders. In 2020, Joshua debuted his Emmy award-winning documentary *Breaking Bread, Building Bridges*, where nearly 40 strangers were matched up together based on their differences to have dinners over the course of a few months.

“Fair housing is a fundamental right, and the Fort Wayne community is actively working to improve housing affordability and accessibility because stable, reliable housing is essential for both family well-being and community strength. Through our hands-on experience working with buyers and sellers, Realtors® gain a firsthand understanding of the Fair Housing Act's importance. This on-the-ground perspective strengthens our commitment to upholding these laws and providing fair, equitable service to every American in their pursuit of homeownership and property.”

Kim Ruffin
Upstar Realtor



“ We value our partnership with Fort Wayne Metro, which is one of the most active human rights commissions in the state. Through their invaluable partnership, we hope citizens will become more educated and engaged not only in challenging housing barriers, but all civil rights issues.”

Amy Nelson,
Executive Director, Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana

UNWELCOMED EXHIBIT



Fort Wayne Metro partnered with the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI) and the Fort Wayne Urban League to present *Unwelcomed Exhibit: A Fair Housing History of Sales and Lending Discrimination*.

The exhibit originated in Indianapolis in 2021 to tell a comprehensive story about the systemic barriers that have impacted today's neighborhoods through redlining, racial covenants, steering, neighborhood intimidation, and other forms of housing discrimination. Through partnerships with FHCCI, it continues to travel to different communities throughout the state. Unique to Fort Wayne's exhibit were six additional panels focused on Fort Wayne, with specific historical context and modern-day data to complement the original exhibit.

Fort Wayne Metro and Fort Wayne Urban League sponsored the exhibit for one month, after which other local organizations sought to keep it in Fort Wayne and host it in their own spaces.

FHCCI will continue to partner with organizations to display the exhibit throughout Indiana and hopes to be able to return the exhibit to Fort Wayne any time someone is interested in hosting it.

Unwelcomed Exhibit Past Exhibitions

September 28– October 27, 2024	October 29– December 8, 2024	January 9– March 3, 2025
Fort Wayne Urban League	Purdue Fort Wayne	Allen County Public Library

“ There is power in collaboration. Metro, FWUL, and FHCCI increased the reach and impact of fair housing initiatives by partnering to engage a wider audience, which amplified the message about the importance of fair housing, helped raise awareness of discriminatory practices, and mobilized community members to advocate for change.”

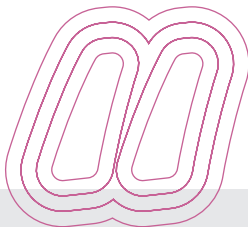
Aisha Arrington
Executive Director, Fort Wayne Urban League

AMP LAB CURATED THINK TANK

Amp Lab at Electric Works provides 11th and 12th graders from the five high schools in the Fort Wayne Community Schools district the opportunity to enhance their educational experience by creating opportunities for students to explore their passions, apply their talents, and make our community a better place.

Part of providing these opportunities includes Curated Think Tanks, where Amp Lab partners with local organizations facing challenges that would benefit from students' creative problem solving.

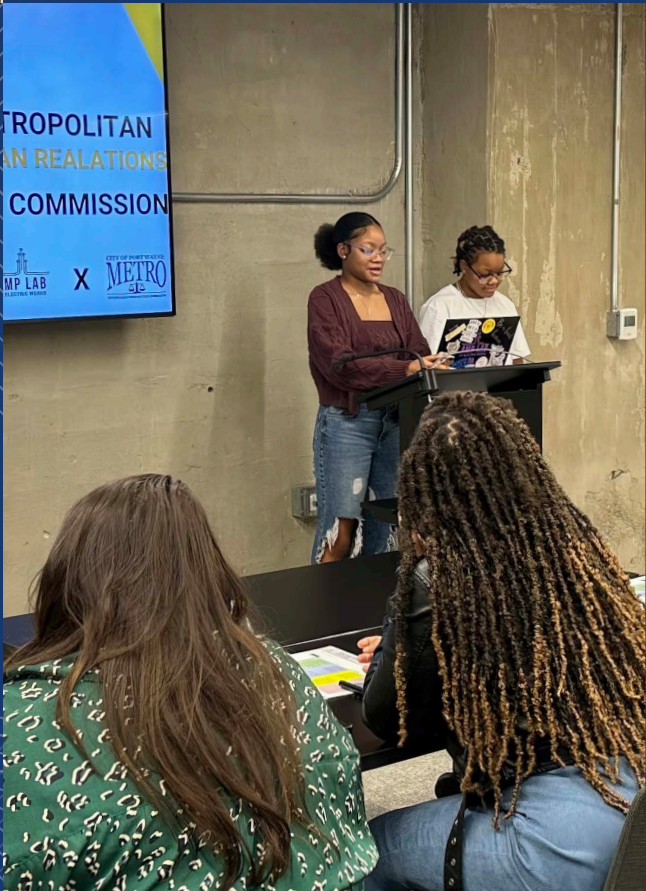
Recognizing young people's struggles to understand their civil rights, Fort Wayne Metro participated in a Curated Think Tank in 2024. Over eight weeks, two groups of 20 Amp Lab students not only brainstormed potential ways to educate their peers about their civil rights, but also engaged in meaningful research and developed skills.



“ This project was especially powerful for students who found research on civil rights and discrimination that supported their own feelings and experiences. Not only did they develop skills and tackle an authentic problem for a local organization, but they are armed with the knowledge on how to be better advocates for themselves and their peers.”

Jeff Roberts
Community Coach, Amp Lab

The Fort Wayne Metro team met with each group once a week to get updates and provide feedback on their progress. At the end of the eight weeks, students developed a proposal summarizing their research and presented recommendations for prototypes of social media posts, flyers, and more.



“ This project opened my eyes to stuff I wasn't aware of. Working with Metro helped me get more knowledge about discrimination and civil rights, and it's great to know we have an organization here that can help in difficult situations.”

Julia Bermudez
Amp Lab Student



FORT WAYNE METRO

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