

Human Rights Action Plan

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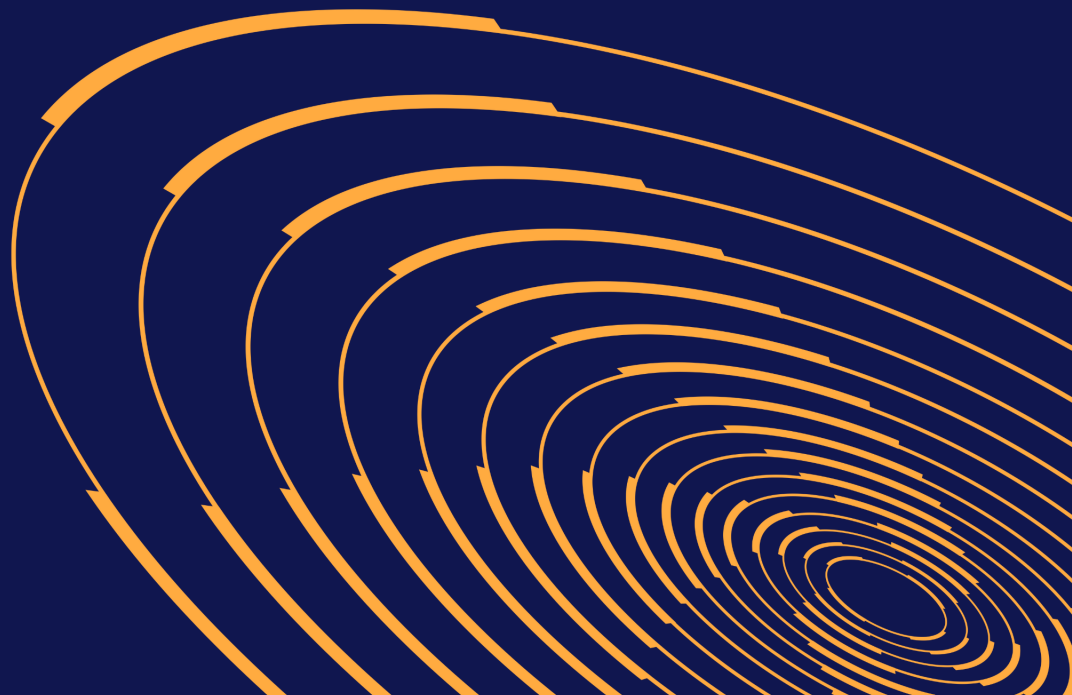


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Executive Summary

As a host city for the FIFA World Cup 26™, Houston will welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors, athletes, workers, and media representatives to one of the most diverse and dynamic regions in the United States. This Human Rights Action Plan establishes how the Houston Host Committee (HOU26) will proactively address and mitigate key human rights issues related to hosting the tournament, ensuring a safe and rights-respecting event for all.

Grounded in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the FIFA World Cup 26™ Human Rights Framework, this plan reflects extensive engagement with local stakeholders and builds upon existing city, county, and regional initiatives. The UNGPs emphasize that due diligence must focus on actual business activities and incorporate stakeholder voices. The targeted actions presented in this plan do both—they address risks within HOU26's control and reflect what stakeholders identified as most critical.

Above all, this plan centers people: ensuring that fans feel safe and welcome, workers receive fair treatment, communities are respected, and the benefits of hosting the FIFA World Cup 26™ extend beyond the tournament itself. HOU26 commits to accomplishing this by employing a human rights-centric approach throughout the planning and execution phases, with continuous stakeholder involvement, for human rights concerns linked to HOU26's business activities.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities: FIFA and HOU26

FIFA's Role

FIFA is the international governing body of soccer and the organizer of the FIFA World Cup™ tournament. FIFA organizes this tournament across different host nations and cities within selected host nations following a competitive bid process

every four years. In 2026, FIFA will host the tournament across the United States, Canada, and Mexico in 16 host cities, with 104 matches scheduled over a 39-day period. This will be the largest FIFA World Cup™ in history, with 48 qualifying national teams—an increase from 32 teams in prior tournaments. Houston will host seven of the 104 matches.

FIFA maintains exclusive operational control over stadiums (during their 60-day exclusive use period), base camps, ticketing systems, and volunteer centers. FIFA deploys its own human rights and safeguarding programs across these jurisdictions and client groups, operating independently from local organizing committees.

HOU26's Role

HOU26 is the local organizing body responsible for a distinct and complementary set of functions. HOU26's mandate covers the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival, public safety and security planning, transportation and mobility support, local supplier initiatives, and broader host city readiness efforts. HOU26 has integrated human rights and safeguarding programs throughout its operations to ensure a safe, culturally inclusive experience and to prevent and mitigate potential adverse impacts that hosting festivities may have on the community.

This clear delineation of responsibilities ensures accountability and enables each organization to implement human rights protections within its respective spheres of control.

Stakeholder Engagement and Methodology

This plan addresses risks identified by a stakeholder group of over 100 people from 91 organizations over four years. It details planned actions to mitigate those risks across the following priority areas in accordance with international human rights standards:

1. Safeguarding
2. Human Trafficking Prevention and Response & Gender-Based Violence
3. Workers' Rights
4. Unsheltered Populations
5. Non-Discrimination and Cultural Awareness
6. Accessibility and Disability Rights

Pre-Host City Designation, Bid Phase (2019-2022)

Between 2019 and 2022, the Houston 2026 World Cup Bid Committee's Human Rights Sub-Committee (HRSC) engaged over 100 local, state, and federal government and civil society stakeholders to address key human rights issues identified by FIFA. Stakeholders completed pre-meeting surveys to capture individual perspectives on risks associated with hosting the FIFA World Cup 26™. In post-survey workshops, stakeholders ranked risks based on severity of impact and likelihood of occurrence, linking them to specific hosting activities such as preparing public venues.

Stakeholders then participated in additional surveys and meetings to develop opportunities to address prioritized risks, resulting in a 200-page Human Rights Plan submitted during the bid process. The HRSC also consulted with numerous agencies with national and international reach to further inform the plan.

Post-Host City Designation (2022-Present)

Following Houston's selection as a host city, FIFA released its [Human Rights Framework](#) in July 2024, initiating a second phase of human rights planning. Unlike the original bid-phase requirements, the FIFA World Cup 26™ Human Rights Framework instructed selected host cities to examine potential human rights risks in three specific issue areas:

- **Safeguarding:** Non-discrimination and cultural awareness, accessibility, welfare and well-being of unsheltered populations, human trafficking, gender equity, gender-based violence, freedom of assembly, expression, and press, and security and policing
- **Workers' Rights:** Fair wages, child labor, non-discrimination, inclusive hiring protocols, forced labor and labor trafficking, adequate working conditions, occupational health and safety, freedom of association and collective bargaining, rest and reasonable limitation of working hours, preventing and addressing harassment and abuse at work, responsible contracting, transparent dealings, and access to remedy
- **Access to Remedy:** Ensuring anyone who may have experienced a human rights violation linked to hosting in Houston has access to remedy, including workers.

HOU26 cross-referenced the bid plan submission developed from 2019-2022 with the new FIFA World Cup 26™ Human Rights Framework to align previous stakeholder input with FIFA's updated expectations. Since 2024, the HOU26 team has developed this Human Rights Action Plan through renewed and continuous consultation with local stakeholders. These consultations—conducted through working groups and ad hoc meetings—helped HOU26 define targeted actions to realize Houston's bid-phase commitment to promote, respect, and remedy human rights in accordance with international standards and in line with the FIFA World Cup 26™ Human Rights Framework.

Host City Context and Plan Differentiation

HOU26 recognizes that this plan will differ from other FIFA World Cup 26™ host city human rights action plans. Each city operates within a distinct set of laws, regulations, programs, and initiatives. Issues of importance in each city, therefore, vary based on these different landscapes and how stakeholders in local settings

prioritized them. This plan directly responds to how Houston stakeholders prioritized issues, with actions designed to address the specific concerns they raised in accordance with international standards.

Plan Structure

For each section—Safeguarding, Workers' Rights, and Access to Remedy—the plan follows this structure:

1. The salient human rights areas as outlined in the FIFA World Cup 26™ Human Rights Framework
2. An explanation of why the issue matters in Houston and stakeholder concerns
3. A summary of existing non-profit and government laws, policies, programs, and initiatives
4. Targeted actions designed to prevent harm and strengthen protections, given the existing landscape

Key Targeted Actions

This plan features multiple targeted actions to address identified issues. Key highlights include (please read the entirety of the plan for a complete list of measures):

Workers' Rights:

- Designed, implemented, and automated a Responsible Contracting Policy (RCP) establishing a \$15/hour wage floor and requiring vendor compliance with international labor standards.
- Will establish a Worker Support Hub at the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival for grievance redress, support services, worker interviews, and upskilling opportunities.

Human Trafficking Prevention and Response & Gender-Based Violence:

- Designed, developed, and recorded specialized training program on human trafficking in partnership with the international trafficking organization A21, available for download for broad community use from the HOU26 website.
- Will launch a social media awareness campaign focused on online child safety, buyers, gender-based violence, catcalling, and street harassment. A toolkit with a campaign calendar and digital assets will be posted on the HOU26 website that interested government officials and community groups can use to amplify messages. This toolkit will be available in April or May 2026, with a planned run time of 12 weeks in May, June, and July of 2026.

Accessibility:

- Designed, developed, and recorded training program on accessibility etiquette for diverse sectors, available for download through the HOU26 website.
- Will plan comprehensive accessibility features at the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival and in transportation services, including accommodations for mobility, visual impairment, hearing impairment, and service animals.

Freedom of Expression:

- Developed a peaceful demonstration toolkit to promote understanding of principles, processes, and permits to advance peaceful demonstrations.

Our Commitment

This Action Plan reflects Houston's commitment to hosting the FIFA World Cup 26™ in a way that prioritizes dignity for all. HOU26 will share updates on targeted actions as planning advances, partnerships deepen, and lessons are learned with stakeholders—ensuring transparency and accountability so that the tournament leaves a positive and lasting legacy for the region.

A. Safeguarding

Houston's culture and hospitality are among its greatest strengths. The FIFA World Cup 26™ presents an opportunity to showcase these strengths to the world. Creating an environment where people feel welcome and safe is foundational to that effort. HOU26 has integrated safeguarding principles throughout its operations to ensure that residents, fans, and visitors from around the globe can participate in a secure, culturally inclusive experience.

Non-Discrimination and Cultural Awareness

To welcome people from around the world, HOU26 recognizes the importance of intentionally respecting and celebrating different cultures. Houston stakeholders emphasized the need for raising awareness and implementing specific measures to facilitate cultural awareness.

Existing Landscape

Houston benefits from robust infrastructure supporting non-discrimination and cultural awareness, including:

- **Mayor's Hispanic Advisory Board:** Serves as a liaison between the Hispanic community and the Mayor.
- **Child Friendly City Initiative (CFCI):** Aims to design a permanent system to support and champion children's rights, an initiative of UNICEF USA and the City of Houston Mayor's Office.
- **Houston Police Department (HPD) Hate Crimes Priority:** Hate crimes receive HPD's highest investigative priority. HPD produces an annual report that provides community transparency about hate crimes.

- **HPD Racial Profiling Prohibited:** Discrimination in any form, including racial profiling, is strictly prohibited, and HPD takes immediate and appropriate action to investigate allegations of discrimination.
- **Public Affairs Division's Community Liaisons:** Dedicated police officers serve as relationship builders with specific communities (including African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Muslim community members).
- **Police and Clergy Alliance (PACA):** HPD partners with clergy from all faiths to develop deep-seated relationships with the community.

Targeted Actions

Building on these existing programs, HOU26 will implement the following culturally inclusive measures:

At the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival

HOU26 will integrate culturally inclusive design throughout the event, including:

- **Diverse food options:** Ensuring vegan, vegetarian, kosher, and halal food options are available, with site maps indicating where these items can be found
- **Interfaith accommodations:** Incorporating a designated interfaith chapel and prayer room, with locations clearly marked on site maps
- **Multilingual wayfinding:** Ensuring appropriate wayfinding signage throughout the event and last-mile routes
- **Entry code of conduct:** Establishing an entry code of conduct that expressly prohibits all forms of discrimination and provides information on how to dial emergency numbers for international callers, in addition to guidance on other safeguarding areas

HOU26 will establish checkpoints with the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival event management company to monitor implementation progress and ensure these cultural accommodations are fully integrated before the event begins.

Community Engagement and Education

To promote cultural awareness throughout the broader community, HOU26 will:

- Partner with consulates, faith organizations, and community leaders to disseminate culturally relevant information, including cultural sensitivity briefings for constituents and the community in coordination with the Consular Corps.
- Post cultural awareness briefings on the HOU26 website for staff, volunteers, security personnel, contractors, and the community at large to promote respectful interactions while emphasizing that visitors may be from countries with more conservative or progressive laws than those in the United States.

These combined measures create a foundation for cultural awareness that extends from event planning through community engagement, ensuring that Houston's vibrant communities are an asset during the tournament.

Human Trafficking Prevention and Response & Gender-Based Violence

Stakeholders identified human trafficking as a risk associated with the increased tourism and temporary labor demand that accompany major sporting events. Specific labor trafficking actions are detailed in the dedicated Workers' Rights section below. This section presents an overview of Houston's long-standing counter-trafficking systems and HOU26's efforts to strengthen coordination and capacity across the ecosystem.

Existing Landscape

Houston benefits from strong state and city government initiatives, specialized law enforcement units, and experienced non-profit service providers. Notable efforts include:

Government and Policy Initiatives

- **Office of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Division:** Established a continuum of care in 2016 with the Texas Medical Center and multiple agencies.
- **State Statutes:** More than 50 anti-trafficking state statutes provide a legal framework for prevention, prosecution, and victim support.
- **Hotel Ordinance (2019):** City Council passed an ordinance requiring all 554 hotels and motels to conduct annual training on sex and labor trafficking.
- **Massage Establishment Ordinance (2015):** Strengthened to allow easier access to investigate illicit parlors that serve as fronts for sex trafficking.
- **Executive Order 1-56:** "Zero Tolerance for Human Trafficking in City Service Contracts and Purchasing" makes it possible to terminate contracts.
- **Ten/Ten Human Trafficking Municipal Fellowship (2019):** Senior-level staff officials from other U.S. cities identified and implemented priorities and initiatives in their cities.

Law Enforcement Task Force and Unit

- **Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance (HTRA):** Works to investigate human trafficking in the Greater Houston Metro area in coordination with multiple law enforcement agencies and victim service providers.
- **Human Trafficking Unit (HTU):** Responsible for investigating and combating all aspects of human trafficking in and around Houston.

Victim Services

- **City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods (DON):** Provides rapid, coordinated reporting pathways and support services for victims and survivors, especially housing and access to medical and psychological care through a direct services program in partnership with Harris Health, the county public health services department.
- **Houston Area Women's Center:** Serves thousands of women, children, and families each year, escaping domestic violence, sexual assault, or sex trafficking.
- **Children's Assessment Center:** Employs a multi-disciplinary team approach in the prevention, assessment, investigation, referral for prosecution, and treatment of child sexual abuse including child trafficking.
- **United Against Human Trafficking Coalition:** Coordinating information flow through their coalition of more than 50 regional organizations to inform their community planning efforts.
- **Strong partnerships:** Collaboration among law enforcement, survivor-led organizations, health providers, and regional coalitions ensures comprehensive support.

Targeted Actions

In collaboration with key counter-trafficking stakeholders, HOU26's human trafficking prevention and response efforts will strengthen coordination, enhance capacities across the ecosystem, and raise awareness among all stakeholders to ensure readiness across the event environment.

Leveraging Existing Programs for Increased Capacity

HOU26 will leverage existing programs for an anticipated increase in law enforcement operations and non-profit outreach that may result in additional recoveries of trafficking victims:

- **Law Enforcement Coordination:** Law enforcement agencies often coordinate operations around mega sporting events. HOU26 will stay informed on recoveries, buyer arrests, and provide referrals for victims to initiate the restoration process if needed.
- **Coalition Information Sharing:** Coordinating information flow through United Against Human Trafficking's Coalition (UAHT) and other community planning efforts to share information bidirectionally through the UAHT coalition of 50+ members and stay apprised of and support planned community actions.
- **Housing and Shelter Services:** Coordinating with DON to leverage its existing shelter collaborative and services to support trafficking victims in accessing housing resources.
- **Victim Services Partnership:** Coordinating with DON's Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence Division's partnership with Harris Health System to place potential victims of trafficking in their program for victim services, which include medical and psychological support.
- **Hotel Ordinance Enforcement:** Leveraging the local hotel ordinance and state law that mandate annual training for hotels and motels to enhance anti-trafficking enforcement.

Training and Capacity Building

To enhance capacity across the region to recognize, report, and respond to human trafficking across sectors, HOU26 has:

- **Developed specialized training:** Produced specialized FIFA World Cup 26™-specific human trafficking training in partnership with international trafficking organization A21 for key sectors like transportation and lodging.
- **Created accessible formats:** Produced these trainings in partnership with Inspire in MP4 and SCORM file formats. The SCORM files enable agencies like METRO and the Houston Airport System to embed training in their Learning

Management Systems used to deliver annual training, allowing hundreds of front-line workers to access the training in a timely fashion.

- **Made training publicly available:** Posted the training for broad community use, available for download from the HOU26 website after completing a short registration form.

Public Awareness Campaign

To raise awareness and broaden the reach of counter-trafficking efforts, HOU26 will launch a comprehensive campaign in partnership with the international child sex trafficking organization Love 146. Through social media advertisements, HOU26 aims to:

- Increase online safety awareness across multiple safeguarding areas.
- Educate parents and guardians across the region on how to keep their children safe online.
- Raise buyer awareness about the consequences of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Address gender-based violence, such as street harassment or catcalling.

The campaign toolkit with calendar and digital assets will be available on the HOU26 website in April or May 2026, with a planned run time of 12 weeks during May, June, and July of 2026. Interested government officials and community groups can amplify these messages through their own channels.

Maintaining Essential Services

To ensure community members know that essential services such as shelters and crisis hotlines remain accessible during the FIFA World Cup 26™ for continued access to police and social services, HOU26 will:

- **Communicate service availability:** Incorporate messaging before the event to inform the community that social services, shelters, and crisis hotlines remain available in the communications messaging grid.
- **Maintain specialized units:** Coordinate with the Safety and Security Lead to ensure that HPD's Family Violence Unit remains operational and is not reassigned to FIFA World Cup 26™-related security tasks, preventing gaps in response to domestic violence and sexual assault cases while FIFA World Cup 26™-related security demands are underway.

State Compliance

To ensure that HOU26's counter-human trafficking measures comply with state regulations, HOU26 submitted the Mega Event Reimbursement Program Human Trafficking Plan to the state in late 2025 for 2026, meeting the state's requirement for submitting a trafficking mitigation plan for major events.

These coordinated efforts across law enforcement, service providers, community organizations, and government agencies create a comprehensive counter-trafficking response that protects vulnerable populations while maintaining essential services for the Houston community.

Public Safety

HOU26 stakeholders emphasized the importance of concerted coordination and thoughtful measures to ensure that heightened public safety challenges accompanying the FIFA World Cup 26™ are appropriately addressed. These challenges include crowd control, heat mitigation, and child reunification.

Existing Landscape

Houston maintains robust public safety systems that HOU26 will leverage and build upon, including:

Specialized Services

- **Houston Recovery Center LGC:** Staffs, manages, and operates a sobering center for the safe short-term treatment and management of persons under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, providing those persons with information on and referrals to community-based outpatient services.
- **Amber/Silver Alert System:** Provides a statewide notification for missing or at-risk children and vulnerable adults to assist in locating them.

Targeted Actions

Building on these existing systems, HOU26 will implement the following public safety measures specifically designed to address FIFA World Cup 26™-related challenges:

Crowd Management and Safety

To address safeguarding concerns exacerbated by large crowds, HOU26 will:

- **Coordinated with Safety and Security Lead:** Learned about tactics and established checkpoints to ensure they are included in operational plans.
- **Enhance security preparedness:** Equip private security, working with local law enforcement, hired for the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival with awareness and protocols to reduce panic and implement appropriate crowd management measures, enhancing overall readiness for scenarios such as lost children, vulnerable adults, and family separation if not already trained.
- **Implement child reunification protocols:** Include information about reunification procedures in the communications messaging grid to address during public safety press conferences.

Heat-Related Safety

Given Houston's summer climate, HOU26 will enact proper safety measures to prevent heat exhaustion, dehydration, injuries, and fatalities among crowds and spectators:

- **Provide hydration access:** Ensure free water distribution or water fountains throughout the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival and the last mile.
- **Implement heat mitigation measures:** Enact proper safety measures to prevent heat exhaustion, dehydration, injuries, and fatalities among crowds and spectators, coordinate with Medical Lead.
- **Include medical monitoring:** Ensure medical checks for crowds and spectators during events are built into operational plans in coordination with Medical Lead.

Legal Education and Awareness

To minimize preventable criminalization incidents, HOU26 will post information about laws in the greater Houston area that may differ from spectators' countries of origin. For example, while purchasing and selling commercial sex may be legal in some countries, it is a first-time felony in Texas. This educational approach aims to prevent visitors from inadvertently violating local laws due to unfamiliarity with U.S. and Texas legal standards.

These public safety measures create multiple layers of protection for crowds, addressing both environmental challenges unique to Houston and the complexities of managing large international gatherings.

Freedom of Assembly, Opinion, Expression, and the Press

The human right to peaceful assembly and free expression is both essential and complex in the context of a globally visible mega sporting event. Recognizing this, HOU26 commits to facilitating lawful expression, coordinating closely with law enforcement and community partners, and ensuring that anyone wishing to

peacefully demonstrate understands their rights and the processes in place to exercise them.

Existing Landscape

Houston benefits from a robust framework of constitutional protections, municipal policies, and law enforcement protocols that safeguard rights to peaceful assembly and free expression. These include:

- **U.S. Constitution:** First Amendment protections under the U.S. Constitution guarantee freedom of speech, press, and peaceful assembly.
- **Texas Constitution:** Article I, Section 8 protects freedom of speech and press.
- **Texas Penal Code:** Provisions distinguish between lawful assembly and criminal conduct, such as obstruction or riot.
- **Mayor's Office of Special Events:** Coordinates with event organizers and demonstrators to facilitate lawful assembly.

Targeted Actions

In the lead-up to the FIFA World Cup 26™, HOU26 will inform potential demonstrators of the processes in place to request appropriate permits, minimize arrests, protect them as they exercise the right to peacefully demonstrate, and increase coordination between demonstrators and police. These actions include:

Peaceful Demonstration Education and Support

- **Developed peaceful demonstration toolkit:** Created content and designed a peaceful demonstration toolkit to reduce arrests and ensure demonstrators understand time, place, and manner restrictions, in coordination with HPD units responsible for managing demonstrations.

- **Circulate demonstration guidelines:** Distribute materials and direct demonstrators on how best to safely demonstrate, in coordination with HPD.
- **Designate peaceful demonstration areas:** Coordinate with the HOU26 Safety and Security Lead on designated peaceful demonstration areas for the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival and communicate those locations publicly.
- **Train security personnel:** Coordinate with the safety and security team on training private security on free speech protection and managing demonstration zones if needed.

Proactive Risk Assessment

- **Examine geopolitical contexts:** Review draw results and match outcomes to identify teams playing with geopolitical tensions; if identified, flag for scenario planning or risk elevation status.

These measures balance the constitutional right to free expression with public safety needs, ensuring that demonstrations can occur peacefully while maintaining security for all participants and spectators.

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and/or Limited Mobility

HOU26 stakeholders asserted that accessibility must be treated as a core requirement at every stage of event planning and execution. To ensure that HOU26's sites and experiences are truly accessible, HOU26 consulted with accessibility groups to identify challenges and opportunities.

Existing Landscape

State resources promote compliance with, and recognition of, those working with or highlighting people with disabilities:

- **Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities:** Makes recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on disability issues; promotes compliance with disability-related laws; promotes a network of local committees doing similar work; recognizes employers for hiring and retaining employees with disabilities; and recognizes media professionals and students for positively depicting Texans with disabilities.
- **Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) Division:** Provides job support services to individuals with disabilities.

Houston maintains dedicated accessibility resources that HOU26 will build upon:

- **Houston Commission on Disabilities:** Ensures that the rights and issues of people with disabilities are at the forefront of the minds of elected officials and members of the community.
- **METROLift:** Offers services for persons with disabilities who are prevented from riding METRO's local accessible fixed-route bus or rail service some or all the time.

Targeted Actions

In consultation with accessibility stakeholders, HOU26 has developed and will implement comprehensive accessibility measures across multiple dimensions:

FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival

HOU26 will embed accessibility measures into the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival and ensure that people with disabilities are aware of accessibility offerings and services. This will be accomplished by:

Infrastructure and Navigation:

- Compiling a comprehensive list of event-specific accessibility needs in collaboration with stakeholders
- Establishing designated parking, entrances, and drop-off zones in coordination with the transportation team
- Ensuring availability of gap transportation, such as golf carts or wheelchair-accessible vehicles
- Implementing multilingual signage, wayfinding, icons, communication boards, and sign language interpretation upon request, in conjunction with HOU26 Marketing and Public Relations leads
- Highlighting nearby service animal relief areas on site maps

Physical Accommodations:

- Reserving areas with accommodations for those with limited mobility, vision, or hearing
- Ensuring lower counters at concessions and tables without chairs for easy wheelchair access
- Ensuring sufficient accessible restrooms throughout the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Fest

Sensory and Communication Accommodations:

- Providing accommodations for low-vision guests, including headsets for audio commentary
- Offering sensory kit rentals for guests with sensory needs

Implementation Oversight:

- Meeting with the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Fest design team to integrate accessibility elements into event planning
- Holding progress meetings with the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Fest designers before final plans are rendered and approved to ensure accessibility items are embedded

Training and Customer Service:

Recognizing the importance of customer service for people with disabilities, HOU26 has:

- **Developed accessibility etiquette training:** Designed and recorded accessibility etiquette training and distributed these files to METRO and the Houston Airport System.
- **Created accessible formats:** Produced these trainings in partnership with Inspire in MP4 and SCORM file formats. The SCORM files enable agencies to embed training in their Learning Management Systems used to deliver annual training, allowing hundreds of front-line workers to access the training in a timely fashion.
- **Made training publicly available:** Posted the training for broad community use on the HOU26 website.

Transportation Accessibility

Recognizing the importance of accessibility across Houston's transport and transport-for-hire ecosystem and appreciating the opportunity to make legacy improvements where and when possible, HOU26 has coordinated with government entities to implement the following measures:

Transit System Assessment:

- Conducted a ride-along with stakeholders to evaluate platform gap fillers, intercoms for clear communications, flashing signage quality, and visual displays for stop announcements. Stakeholder feedback is currently being integrated.
- Inventoried locations where proper accessibility measures are already in place during the ride-along on relevant routes.

Transportation Planning:

- Integrated accessible ride options across public transit, paratransit, and shuttles into the transportation plan.
- Addressed gaps in transportation access by providing accessible shuttles and evaluating existing transit options.
- Coordinated with the Communications team to develop emergency planning and communication strategies.

Economic Inclusion

HOU26 stakeholder consultations highlighted the importance of economic inclusion of people with disabilities. In response, HOU26 will:

- Highlight businesses owned by people with disabilities on the HOU26 website if there is a sufficient quantity.
- Include businesses owned by people with disabilities in procurement opportunities if they are eligible.
- Highlight accessible attractions on the HOU26 website for constituents and visitors.

Communications and Public Awareness

To ensure that visitors and the public are aware that accessibility integrations are embedded across HOU26's operations, HOU26 will:

Public Communications:

- Coordinate press announcements or releases and include messaging for people with disabilities to ensure they know the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival is an accessible event.
- Provide ASL interpretation at every press conference.

Accessible Materials:

- Offer low-vision grayscale documents, accessible PDFs, alt-text for images, and screen reader-compatible materials to support accessibility.

- Conduct a compliance check on HOU26's digital platforms to ensure all web content meets accessibility standards.

These comprehensive accessibility measures ensure that people with disabilities can fully participate in FIFA World Cup 26™ events and activities, while creating lasting infrastructure improvements that benefit the Houston community beyond the tournament.

The Welfare and Well-Being of Unsheltered Populations

HOU26 stakeholders stressed the importance of ensuring that hosting the FIFA World Cup 26™ does not result in the displacement or criminalization of unsheltered residents. In consultation with these stakeholders, HOU26 undertook a series of efforts to address the potential adverse impacts of hosting and staging the FIFA World Cup 26™ on unsheltered populations.

Existing Landscape

Houston maintains comprehensive programs and services that promote the welfare and well-being of unsheltered populations, including:

Housing and Prevention Programs

- **Homeless Prevention/Diversion Program:** Prevents those affected from becoming homeless and entering the homeless system for assistance.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing:** Permanently houses individuals who have spent significant time living on the streets and suffer from a disability, providing case management and voluntary wrap-around supportive services.
- **Rapid Re-Housing:** Provides short-term rental support (up to one to two years) and case management to households who are newly homeless and/or currently staying in shelters.

- **Eviction Prevention Program:** Bridges the gap between landlords and tenants by facilitating mutually beneficial agreements to prevent permanent evictions.

Medical and Mental Health Services

- **The Harris Center:** Provides vital beds and voluntary intensive medical and rehabilitative programs to help stabilize individuals experiencing homelessness who suffer from severe mental health issues.
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Jail Diversion Programs:** Enables first responders to divert individuals experiencing homelessness who run afoul of the law from going to jail.

Comprehensive Support Centers

- **Super Hub on Emancipation:** Program with no requirements that provides comprehensive services beyond shelter, such as healthcare, mental health support, and pathways to permanent housing.

Targeted Actions

With this landscape in view, HOU26 commits to leveraging existing best practices where the unsheltered population is offered services and access to rapid re-housing, ensuring humane solutions to street homelessness. HOU26 will:

Coordination and Planning

- **Collaborate with stakeholders:** Work with the Coalition for the Homeless and the City to align current funding plans within and around the HOU26 footprint if there is an overlap.
- **Conduct geographic mapping:** Map existing concentrations of the homeless population to identify any overlap with footprint areas. Initial mapping revealed no existing overlap. Recognizing that homelessness is a dynamic situation that may change, HOU26 will evaluate the situation closer

to the FIFA World Cup 26™ and coordinate information with transportation and safety and security teams to manage routes and ensure proper service call connections, proactively managing to avoid day-of issues.

- **Leverage outreach capacity:** Coordinate information so the Coalition for Homeless can expand outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness and increase connections to long-term housing opportunities if the need arises, as it pertains to the HOU26 footprint.

Fair Housing Protection

HOU26 will also engage government entities to encourage greater outreach and help mitigate evictions that violate the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination in housing. Targeted actions include:

- Coordinate with the city's fair housing department for accurate information and resources.

These measures ensure that Houston's approach to the FIFA World Cup 26™ protects the dignity and rights of unsheltered populations, prioritizing service connections and housing opportunities over displacement or criminalization and reducing housing discrimination.

Preventing and Mitigating Adverse Environmental Impacts

(This is an excerpt from a larger sustainability plan.)

Hosting a mega sporting event during the summer in Houston creates challenges at the nexus of environmental and social impacts. HOU26 has developed comprehensive strategies to address these challenges.

Existing Landscape

Houston benefits from established environmental advocacy organizations working to protect air quality and advance environmental justice, including:

- **HOU26 Environmental Sustainability Plan:** Aligns with FIFA's sustainability standards and incorporates local resilience priorities in Houston's communities through an Environmental Management System guided by globally recognized best practices to provide accountability, transparency, and measurable progress across sustainability initiatives.
- **Air Alliance Houston:** Is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to reduce public health impacts from air pollution and advance environmental justice.
- **Citizens' Environmental Coalition:** Connects concerned citizens and community leaders with over 100 diverse environmental organizations through programs and publications that enhance understanding and provide balanced perspectives on environmental issues.
- **Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice at Texas Southern University:** Focused on education and training, public policy analysis and policy development, and science across multiple disciplines, including environmental science, social and behavioral science, public health, and urban planning, to create systemic change in impacted communities.

Targeted Actions

The HOU26 Sustainability Chair will implement measures detailed in HOU26's Sustainability Plan, including:

Environmental Monitoring

- Monitor air quality near and around the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival site in partnership with an academic institution.

Sustainable Transportation

- Spotlit a Green Corridor to bring attention to walkable options and the use of public transport surrounding activities linking from the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Fest to the Stadium.

Heat Safety Integration

- Implement extreme heat measures cited in the Public Safety section above, combining environmental consciousness with public health protection.

These environmentally conscious efforts address stakeholder concerns about how the event will impact the environment and vice versa, creating a more sustainable approach to hosting major sporting events in Houston's climate.

B. Workers' Rights

HOU26 affirms that respect for workers' rights is foundational to responsibly hosting and staging the FIFA World Cup 26™. Every person who contributes to the event—from temporary construction to cleaning and food service personnel—deserves safe working conditions, fair compensation, and on-the-job dignity.

Existing Landscape

Harris County and the City of Houston maintain a framework of municipal programs, oversight mechanisms, and accountability systems that support workers' rights and ethical employment practices. These include:

- **Harris County Attorney's Office:** Passed the Harris County Contractor Safety Record Policy in 2023 to ensure that the County engages prime contractors and subcontractors that prioritize the health and safety of their workers.
- **Office of Business Opportunity's (OBO) Contract Compliance Division:** Monitors compliance with prevailing wage rates on construction projects.

Targeted Actions

Responsible Contracting Policy Overview (RCP)

HOU26 developed a comprehensive RCP in conjunction with local labor stakeholders that addresses all salient Workers' Rights areas outlined in the FIFA World Cup 26™ Human Rights Framework. The RCP aligns with FIFA's Sustainable Sourcing Code and reflects best practices in labor standards and ethical procurement.

The RCP promotes worker protections in HOU26's immediate operations and across vendor, supplier, and subcontractor networks. By embedding worker protections into every contract and procurement decision—including Request for Proposal development—the policy reinforces HOU26's recognition that workers who help deliver this event are a top priority.

Implementation Approach:

The RCP was initially implemented manually and has since been automated through an online Bid Management System (BMS). The system requires all vendors to complete the following before being considered for selection:

- **Code of Conduct attestation:** Prohibits labor exploitation and trafficking, reinforces the wage floor, and allows for collective bargaining and non-interference.
- **Supplier Agreement:** Commits vendors to RCP requirements.
- **Supplier Self-Assessment:** Helps HOU26 assess contracting risks, especially in high-risk industries.
- **Workers' Rights Addendum¹:** Details specific workers' rights requirements based on local labor stakeholder input and requires an acknowledging signature from vendors.

¹ The Bid Management System refers to the “Workers’ Rights Addendum” as the “Workers’ Safeguards Addendum.” These are the same document.

The front end of the BMS integrates with an existing Houston Sports Authority supplier program called Buy Houston-By Houston, a pre-existing local supplier program that has been modified to incorporate the human rights documents that constitute the RCP. This integration ensures that small businesses have access to opportunities as they become available.

Workers' Rights Areas Addressed:

The RCP requires vendors to provide evidence of policies and practices addressing each of the following areas. Their submissions are scored by the HOU26 human rights team during the proposal evaluation process, with ongoing compliance monitoring conducted through supply chain due diligence efforts at the Worker Support Hub planned for the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival.

Non-Discrimination

Vendors must provide information on non-discrimination in the workplace as part of their proposals. Evidence of anti-discrimination policies impacts vendor scoring during proposal evaluation.

Fair Wages

The current minimum wage under state and federal law is \$7.25 per hour. HOU26 has established a wage floor of \$15 per hour and codified this commitment in the RCP. This wage floor is required by all Tier 1 vendors and will be negotiated for all sub-tiers. Local labor stakeholders emphasized the importance of addressing non-payment by bad actors. Accordingly, HOU26 established explicit contract language codifying relevant international standards, requiring documentation to exhibit compliance for high-risk vendors, and withholding final payment if necessary to ensure wage compliance.

Safe and Healthy Workplaces

Vendors must provide information on workplace safety and health policies as part of their proposals. Evidence of comprehensive safety programs impacts vendor scoring during proposal evaluation.

Rest and Reasonable Limitation of Working Hours

Vendors must provide information on rest periods and reasonable working hours as part of their proposals. Evidence of policies protecting workers from excessive hours impacts vendor scoring during proposal evaluation.

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

Vendors must commit to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and non-interference. Evidence of policies protecting these rights impacts vendor scoring during proposal evaluation.

Prohibiting and Addressing Harassment and Abuse at Work

Vendors must provide information on policies that prohibit harassment and abuse at work. Evidence of comprehensive anti-harassment programs impacts vendor scoring during proposal evaluation.

Hiring Protocols

Vendors must provide information on local hiring protocols. Evidence of inclusive hiring practices impacts vendor scoring during proposal evaluation.

Child Labor

The RCP contains explicit prohibitions on child labor in HOU26 contracts and sub-tiers to those contracts. The Code of Conduct specifically includes these prohibitions, and compliance is monitored through the Worker Support Hub.

Forced Labor and Labor Trafficking

The RCP contains explicit prohibitions on forced labor and labor trafficking in HOU26 contracts and sub-tiers to those contracts. The Code of Conduct specifically prohibits misclassification of 1099 workers and all forms of forced labor and labor trafficking. Compliance is monitored through the Worker Support Hub.

It is worth noting that Houston's robust counter-trafficking efforts, detailed in the Safeguarding section (pages 11-16), can be mobilized to prevent and respond to potential forced labor and labor trafficking in connection with hosting and staging the FIFA World Cup 26™.

RCP Implementation Actions Completed:

HOU26 has enacted the following actions to ensure effective implementation of the RCP:

- Developed all internal documents required to support the contracting process and socialized them with stakeholders.
- Socialized the procurement process with HOU26 teammates to ensure consistent application across all departments.
- Developed, designed, and implemented vendor training presentations to educate contractors on RCP requirements and BMS use.
- Issued vendor guidance on the integration of all responsible contracting documents to increase vendor knowledge for supply chain implementation.
- Automated the pre-qualification process through an online BMS requiring attestation of the Code of Conduct and Workers' Rights Addendum, and completion of Supplier Agreement and Supplier Self-Assessment.
- Created a Supplier Assessment Questionnaire risk rating tool to assign risk levels and classify bidders according to their likelihood of workers' rights violations.

- Incorporated the local labor stakeholders' list of basic requirements for vendors based on tender amounts into the implementation of the procurement process.

RCP Ongoing and Future Actions:

To ensure continued effectiveness of the RCP, HOU26 will:

- Pre-qualify bidders and require acknowledgment of the Code of Conduct, Supplier Agreement, Workers' Rights Addendum, and Supplier Assessment Questionnaire.
- Hire a third-party firm to conduct spot checks, worker interviews, and on-site assessments of high-risk vendors.
- Operationalize the Worker Support Hub to provide ongoing monitoring and support.

The RCP operationalizes stakeholder feedback and addresses the Workers' Rights areas outlined in the FIFA World Cup 26™ Human Rights Framework, ensuring that labor protections are embedded throughout HOU26's supply chain.

FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival Worker Support Hub

To ensure that HOU26's responsible procurement efforts translate to real-world benefits for workers, and to ensure that local labor stakeholders have agency in the process, HOU26 will establish a Worker Support Hub at the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival.

Worker Support Hub Services:

This support hub will offer a designated space for workers to:

- **Stakeholder access:** Access local labor stakeholders and their training materials

- **Worker interviewers:** Trained professionals to conduct confidential interviews about working conditions
- **Upskilling opportunities:** Access to training and development resources to enhance workers' skills
- **Wellness resources:** Information about cooling stations, snacks, and beverages to support worker health and comfort
- **Referral supports:** Connections to community resources and services
- **Grievance redress:** A confidential mechanism for workers to report concerns and seek remedies

The Worker Support Hub represents a tangible commitment to worker welfare, providing a physical space where workers can access support, raise concerns, and benefit from resources designed to protect their rights and enhance their experience contributing to the FIFA World Cup 26™.

C. Access to Remedy

HOU26 is committed to upholding its human rights commitments by providing clearly communicated pathways to access remedies should adverse human rights impacts occur despite best efforts to prevent them. HOU26's access to remedy efforts aim to ensure timely and effective remedies should harm occur.

Effective and Coordinated Grievance Mechanisms and Remediation Processes

HOU26 recognizes the importance of streamlining grievance and remediation processes and effectively communicating with those who submit concerns. Accordingly, HOU26 has taken and will take methodical actions to establish access to remedy mechanisms addressing issues related to:

- Workers' Rights
- Safeguarding
- Human Trafficking Prevention and Response & Gender-Based Violence
- Public Safety
- Freedom of Assembly, Opinion, Expression, and the Press
- Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and/or Limited Mobility
- The Welfare and Well-being of Unsheltered Populations
- Environmental Impacts
- Other concerns as they may arise from the FIFA World Cup 26™ Human Rights Framework

Existing Landscape

There are several ways to access remedies across multiple issue areas within the FIFA World Cup 26™ Human Rights Framework. We have started to compile a database of multiple agencies at the federal, state, county, and local levels with hotlines or grievance processes.

Emergency and Non-Emergency Services

- **911 emergency and 311 non-emergency services:** With multilingual functionality online or by phone
- **City of Houston Independent Police Oversight Board:** Volunteer members of the community appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council to review internal police investigations of possible misconduct by employees of the Houston Police Department.

Issue-Specific Mechanisms

Hate Crimes:

- [Reports of hate crimes](#), where violent crime (including assault, murder, arson, vandalism, or threats to commit such crimes) is committed on the basis of

the victim's perceived or actual race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or disability, can be filed with the FBI.

Environmental Complaints:

- [The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality receives complaints](#) and, based on its area of purview, conducts investigations to enforce compliance with Texas' environmental laws.

Employment Discrimination:

- [Reports of employment discrimination](#) based on race, color, religion, sex, age (over 40), national origin, or disability can be filed with the Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division. Reports can include instances of potential discrimination in work-related situations, including hiring, firing, promotions, harassment, training, wages, and benefits. Reports can also be filed with the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#).

Targeted Actions

HOU26 will implement the following comprehensive access to remedy measures:

Primary Grievance Mechanisms

- **Promote FIFA Complaint Portal:** Advertise the FIFA Complaint Portal/QR Code as the primary mechanism for receiving grievances through physical advertisements at the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival, making it clear that FIFA's Reporting Portal is not a rapid-response mechanism but a formal channel for documenting human rights concerns.
- **Worker Support Hub protocols:** Establish grievance protocols for the Worker Support Hub at the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival to provide an alternative, worker-focused channel for employment-related concerns.

Grievance Infrastructure Development

- **Conduct comprehensive mapping:** Map local, state, and national hotlines across all salient issue areas to create a comprehensive referral network.
- **Secure legal support:** Obtain pro bono legal counsel to triage complaints, provide legal analysis, and identify the best path to issue resolution.
- **Create referral network:** Establish a referral network of legal aid organizations and support networks to ensure complainants can access appropriate services.
- **Integrate consular support:** Integrate the Consular Corps into access to remedy protocols to support international visitors who may experience human rights violations.

Coordination and Capacity Building

- **Ensure surge readiness:** Coordinate with relevant authorities and community partners to ensure readiness for a potential surge of grievances connected to hosting and staging the FIFA World Cup 26™.
- **Include vulnerable populations:** Ensure that services for homeless youth, including drop-in shelters, are part of the access to remedy infrastructure.
- **Raise internal awareness:** Increase awareness across HOU26 staff and suppliers about the FIFA Reporting Portal, the Worker Support Hub at the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival, and general incident reporting expectations.

Operational Protocols

- **Develop back-of-house processes:** Create clear protocols for HOU26 to triage, refer, and remedy issues in coordination with human rights incident teams.
- **Staff incident response:** Designate a human rights incident lead who will be responsible for managing grievances and incidents during the tournament across all issue areas.

- **Establish communication lines:** Create close communication channels with FIFA World Cup 26™'s incident response team, worker interviewers, and other relevant actors, along with an agreed-upon triage and routing process.

Complaint Information Availability

HOU26 will include information on how to file complaints at the local and national levels on the website and at the end of pre-recorded training sessions, ensuring multiple touchpoints for individuals to learn about available grievance mechanisms.

These coordinated access to remedy measures ensure that anyone who experiences a human rights violation linked to hosting the FIFA World Cup 26™ in Houston has clear pathways to report concerns, receive support, and access appropriate remedies.

Conclusion

This Human Rights Action Plan is more than a compliance document—it is Houston's promise that the world's most celebrated sporting event will be a catalyst for dignity and fairness. From the workers who build the temporary infrastructure to the fans who fill the FIFA World Cup 26™ Houston Fan Festival, from the most vulnerable in the community to visitors from every corner of the globe, this plan affirms that everyone matters.

The FIFA World Cup 26™ will last 39 days. But the systems we strengthened, the protections we embedded, and the culture of respect we championed will endure long after the final match. This is a part of the HOU26 legacy: we welcomed the world—and made it better in the process.

For questions about this plan or to provide feedback, please contact the HOU26 Chief Legacy Officer, Minal Davis, at mdavis@fwc26houston.com. For media inquiries, please contact cgomez@fwc26houston.com.