

**UNITED STATES
COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS**



**REQUEST FOR CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATION
FOR FISCAL 2024**

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USCCR BUDGET REQUEST FOR SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Congressional Appropriation Request for FY 2024.....	\$15,587,000
Congressional Appropriation for FY 2023	\$14,350,000
Congressional Appropriation for FY 2022.....	\$13,000,000

APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

FEDERAL FUNDS

Salaries and Expenses

For necessary expenses of the Commission on Civil Rights, including hire of passenger motor vehicles, \$15,587,000 [\$14,350,000]: Provided, That none of the funds appropriated in this paragraph may be used to employ any individuals under Schedule C of subpart C of part 213 of title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations exclusive of one special assistant for each Commissioner: Provided further, That none of the funds appropriated in this paragraph shall be used to reimburse Commissioners for more than 75 billable days, with the exception of the chairperson, who is permitted 125 billable days: Provided further, That the Chair may accept and use any gift or donation to carry out the work of the Commission: Provided further, That none of the funds appropriated in this paragraph shall be used for any activity or expense that is not explicitly authorized by section 3 of the Civil Rights Commission Act of 1983 (42 U.S.C. 1975a): Provided further, That notwithstanding the preceding proviso, \$2,000,000 [\$2,000,000] shall be used to separately fund the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys.

FY 2024 U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS BUDGET REQUEST

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights budget request of \$15,587.000 will support both the Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) and the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys (CSSBMB). The Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys Act (Public Law 116-156) established CSSBMB within the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Office of the Staff Director (Public Law 116-156).

FY 2024 U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

This request includes \$13.587 million appropriation to support our civil rights agenda of promoting equal opportunity without regard to color, race, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin. The mission of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) is to inform the development of

national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of Federal civil rights laws. The Commission pursues this mission by investigating alleged deprivations of voting rights or allegations of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, or in the administration of justice. The Commission also serves as a monitor of effective enforcement of civil rights laws by the Federal government. The Commission is committed to quality research that leads to findings and policy recommendations to inform the President, Congress, and the public on important civil rights issues.

Our strategic vision consists of three goals:

- The Commission will function as a monitor of effective federal enforcement of civil rights laws and inform national civil rights laws and policy. The Commission is aided in this endeavor by the work of its Advisory Committees.
- The Commission will serve as a national clearinghouse to inform and raise awareness on civil rights issues amongst the public.
- The Commission will continue to strengthen the Commission's financial and operational controls and advance the Commission's mission through management excellence, efficiency, and accountability.

A more detailed discussion of the Commission's Strategic Plan is in the FY 2022 - 2026 Strategic Goals and Objectives section in this document.

FY 2024 COMMISSION OF THE SOCIAL STATUS OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

This request includes \$2 million to staff and support the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys (CSSBMB). The Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys studies and makes recommendations to address social problems affecting Black men and boys.

CSSBMB performs the following duties:

- Study, document, and report on the conditions affecting Black men and boys, including homicide rates, arrests homicide rates, arrest and incarceration rates, poverty, violence, fatherhood, mentorship, drug abuse, death rates, disparate income and wealth levels, school performance in all grade levels including postsecondary education and college, and health issues.
- Propose measures to alleviate and remedy the underlying causes of the conditions affecting Black men and boys which may include recommendations of changes to the law, recommendations for how to implement related policies, and recommendations for how to create, develop, or improve upon government programs.

- Accept suggestions or comments from members of Congress, governmental agencies, public and private organizations, and private citizens.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Our FY 2024 Appropriation Request is \$15.587 million which will support 62 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. This request will provide \$13.587 million for the USCCR and \$2 million to the CSSBMB. It will support 54 FTE for the USCCR and 8 FTE for the CSSBMB.

REVIEW OF THE AGENCY’S FY 2024 FUNDING REQUEST

A. Budget Request by Object Class

The following table provides a summary of the Commission’s Budget Request:

Object Class and Title	FY 2024 Appropriation Request	FY 2023 Appropriation Act	Difference
10 Personnel Compensation & Benefits	\$10,401,000	\$9,300,000	\$1,101,000
21 Travel & Transportation of Persons	\$350,000	\$390,000	(\$40,000)
23 Rent, Communications, and Utilities	\$1,755,000	\$825,000	\$930,000
24 Printing and Reproduction	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$0
25 Other Contractual Services	\$2,872,000	\$3,485,000	(\$613,000)
26 Supplies and Materials	\$39,000	\$40,000	(\$1,000)
31 Equipment	\$60,000	\$200,000	(\$140,000)
Total Appropriation	\$15,587,000	\$14,350,000	\$1,237,000

B. Description of Budget Increases and Decreases

The following is a description of the budget increases and decreases from the Commission’s FY 2023 Appropriation Act Request.

Increases to Maintain Current Services:

Personnel Compensation and Benefits - \$415,000/ 0 FTE

This increase will cover the expected pay raise in FY 2024 and the annualization of the FY 2023 pay raise.

Program Increases

Personnel Compensation and Benefits - \$686,000/ 4 FTE

This increase will support 2 additional FTE for CSSBMB and 2 FTE for the Commission. The additional staffing for CSSBMB will allow the organization to study and make recommendations to address social problems affecting black men and boys. The additional staffing for the Commission will provide subject matter and analytical expertise required to prepare evaluations of civil rights issues. The Commission will use intern hiring to support and strengthen its talent pipeline and recruitment of individuals from underserved communities.

Rent, Communications, and Utilities – \$930,000

This is primarily due an increase in rent. USCCR received temporary rent credits for our national office as part of a new lease agreement in FY 2022 and FY 2023. These credits ended in 2023.

Program Decreases

Travel – (\$40,000)

The decrease is due to reductions in travel for Commission briefings and meetings.

Other Contractual Services – (\$613,000)

The decrease is primarily due to a decrease in CSSBMB contractual services. As CSSBMB onboards additional staff, contractual support will be decreased.

Supplies – (\$1,000)

The decrease is due lower supply costs.

Equipment – (\$140,000)

The Commission plans to replace information technology equipment in FY 2023 but not in FY 2024.

C. Budget Request by Organization

The Commission’s FY 2024 budget request supports several major organizational components. The following table provides a summary of the Commission’s budget request by these components:

	FY 2024 Appropriation Request	Percent Of Request	FY 2023 Appropriation Act	Percent Of Request	Difference
National Program Offices	\$2,922,000	18.7%	\$2,958,000	20.6%	(\$36,000)
Regional Program Offices	\$2,267,000	14.5%	\$1,883,000	13.1%	\$384,000
Commissioners and Commissioner Assistants	\$2,021,000	13.0%	\$1,957,000	13.6%	\$64,000
Office of Staff Director	\$728,000	4.7%	\$571,000	4.0%	\$157,000
Robert S. Rankin Civil Rights Library	\$230,000	1.5%	\$235,000	1.6%	(\$5,000)
Operations & Administrative	\$5,419,000	34.8%	\$4,746,000	33.1%	\$673,000
CSSBMB	<u>\$2,000,000</u>	12.8%	<u>\$2,000,000</u>	13.9%	<u>\$0</u>
Total Appropriation	\$15,587,000	100%	\$14,350,000	100%	\$1,237,000

The National Program Offices consist of the Office of General Counsel (OGC) and the Office of Civil Rights Evaluation (OCRE). The Office of the General Counsel provides legal expertise and advice to support the Commission’s mission and ensures the legal integrity of our written products. The Office of Civil Rights Evaluation provides subject matter and analytical expertise required to monitor, evaluate, and report on the civil rights enforcement effort of the Federal Government. Their combined budget is \$2,922,000 and supports 12 FTE. The National Program Offices’ budget is 18.7 percent of the Commission’s total budget request.

The Regional Program Offices provide critical support to the 51 State Advisory Committees (SACs) required by our statute. In additions, the Commission supports Advisory Committees in the U.S. Territories - Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Marianas Islands. The Regional Program Offices’ combined budget in FY 2024 is \$2,267,000 and supports 15 FTE. The Regional Program Office’s budget is 14.5 percent of the Commission’s total budget request.

The Commissioners and Commissioner Assistants’ request covers the salary, benefits, and travel for Commissioners and their Assistants. The FY 2024 Commissioners and Commissioner Assistants’ budget is \$2,021,000 and supports 10 FTE. The Commission and Assistants’ budget is 13 percent of the Commission’s total budget request.

The Office of Staff Director's request covers the salary, benefits, and travel for Staff Director and their staff. The FY 2024 Office of Staff Director budget is \$728,000 and supports 5 FTE. The Office of Staff Director's budget is 4.7 percent of the Commission's total budget request.

The Library is an information source for Commission staff, government agencies, private organizations, and individuals. The Library request includes Westlaw access for Commission staff and the cost of storing and mailing Commission reports. The FY 2024 budget request for the Library is \$230,000. The Library's budget is 1.5 percent of the Commission's total budget request.

The Operations and Administrative budget request covers of rent, communications, information technology, human resources, financial management, and other functions necessary to maintain a federal agency's operations. The FY 2023 budget request for the Operations and Administrative budget is \$5,419,000 and supports 11 FTE. Thus, the Operations and Administrative budget is 3.8 percent of the Commission's total budget request.

The Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys (CSSBMB) budget request covers salary, benefits, and other costs to support their mission. The funding will allow the CSSBMB to hold meetings, conduct field visits to relevant sites such as prisons, issue recommendations on social problems affecting Black men and boys. The FY 2024 budget request for CSSBMB is \$2 million and supports 8 FTE. The CSSBMB budget is 12.8 percent of the total budget request.

FY 2022 PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

This section highlights the Commission's FY 2022 program accomplishments and activities.

A. Public Briefings

Civil Rights Implications of Disaster Relief: Hurricane Harvey in Texas

On October 21, 2021, the Commission held a virtual public briefing on the civil rights implications of the federal response and impact of Hurricane Harvey in Texas. At this virtual public briefing, the Commissioners heard from subject matter experts such as government officials, volunteer organizations, non-governmental advocates, and academics. This briefing assisted the Commission in three purposes. One, review the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its role in disaster preparedness and response. Two, evaluate efforts by FEMA to comply with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Act along with other federal civil rights and policies. And three, compare the response of FEMA to significant hurricane systems, including, but not limited to, Hurricanes Harvey and Maria.

Video of the briefing, including the expert panels and open comment period, along with written statements submitted to the Commission from invited experts and members of the public, can be viewed on our website here:

<https://www.usccr.gov/meetings/2021/10-21-civil-rights-implications-disaster-relief-hurricane-harvey-texas>

Civil Rights Implications of Disaster Relief: Hurricane Harvey in Puerto Rico

On December 10, 2021, the Commission held a public briefing on the civil rights implications of the federal response and impact of Hurricane María in Puerto Rico. At this public briefing, the Commissioners heard from subject matter experts such as government officials, volunteer organizations, non-governmental advocates, and academics from Puerto Rico. The briefing focused on the challenges faced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal agencies in providing disaster and recovery aid. While highlighting lessons learned and developing best practices in order to address civil rights commitments when it comes to natural disaster response in Puerto Rico.

Video of the briefing, including the expert panels and open comment period, along with written statements submitted to the Commission from invited experts and members of the public, can be viewed on our website here:

<https://www.usccr.gov/meetings/2021/12-10-civil-rights-implications-disaster-relief-hurricane-maria>

B. Commission Reports

The Commission issued the following report to inform Commission stakeholders on policy recommendations:

The Civil Rights Implications of Cash Bail

This report examines current approaches towards reform in the pre-trial and bail system within our criminal justice system. The Commission held a virtual briefing on February 26, 2021 and collected testimony from multiple panels examining the foundations and current state of the cash bail system, as well as a number of reforms at the state and local level meant to address current challenges. Panelists included members of state judiciaries, state and local law enforcement, public policy experts, bill reform advocates, civil rights and criminal justice scholars, and legal experts.

Overall, the report shows that there was a 433 percent increase in the number of individuals that have been detained pre-trial between 1970 and 2015, with pretrial detainees representing a larger

proportion of the total incarcerated population in that same amount of time. Of those held prior to trial, there were stark disparities with regards to race (i.e., Black and Latinx individuals have higher rates of pretrial detention and have financial conditions of release imposed much more often than other demographic groups) and gender (i.e., males are less likely to be granted non-financial release and consistently have higher bails set than women); additionally, disparities exist between individuals of differing socioeconomic status, and data show that more than 60 percent of inmates are detained prior to trial due to an inability to afford posting bail. Moreover, pretrial detention presents a number of negative consequences for the detainee population, including an increased likelihood of being convicted, lack of access to housing, detrimental effects on employment status, and increased recidivism. State and local jurisdictions have taken a number of steps to address these concerns, such as applying the use of risk assessment tools, wider collection of demographic data, implementing diversion programs, utilizing “compassionate release” policies, and other measures that are emphasized in the report.

In terms of recommendations for a federal response, a number of panelists suggested improved funding to the criminal justice system such as re-examining the grant making strategy of the Department of Justice (DOJ), or potentially expanding grant programs available to local and state jurisdictions, while others suggested that the DOJ could provide its expertise in a “monitoring and compliance role” to curb some of the abuses at the pre-trial level apparent in local jurisdictions. Other measures, such as the DOJ asking states to expand mandatory release and the federal government working with Congress to pass cash bail-free legislation were also suggested by stakeholders on the panels regarding a federal response to cash bail reform.

The report is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-01/USCCR-Bail-Reform-Report-01-20-22.pdf>

Civil Rights and Protections During the Federal Response to Hurricanes Harvey and María

This report examines the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) compliance with federal civil rights laws and policies in connection with responses in Texas and Puerto Rico following Hurricanes Harvey and María. Additionally, the analysis showed a comparison of federal responses to the two disasters. The Commission has not previously assessed the civil rights implications of disaster response in its 65 years of existence. As part of the examination, the Commission held three briefings, with testimony from federal officials such as FEMA’s Office of Response and Recovery, Inspectors General from the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the President of the Emergency Management Association of Texas, the Texas General Land Office, the Secretary of State of Puerto Rico, and the former Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Commission also heard from advocacy leaders, legal experts, and researchers in the field, and met with severely impacted community groups and stakeholders (see Appendices A-C for full panelist lists and briefing transcripts).

This report examines many factors, such as barriers to providing aid, FEMA's coordinating role in disaster recovery efforts, consideration of local factors impacting damage assessments and delivering resources, and efforts by federal agencies to comply with the Stafford Act and other civil rights obligations. In addition to FEMA, the report also assesses aid provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Small Business Administration for compliance with federal civil rights law and policy.

Across all Commission briefings, experts testified that there was a need for transparent and clear guidelines to apply for aid, additionally panelists recommended a more streamlined portal for the intake of all federal disaster assistance that would make the application experience less stressful and repetitive. Experts urged that such a cross sharing platform would expedite survivor data and information sharing across all responding agencies on the federal, state, and local level based on FEMA's needs assessment at the first point of entry. The Commission also heard from survivors and experts who testified that the lack of electricity and internet had significant impacts on their ability to access assistance and federal relief programs. The aid application process was complicated by the lack of electricity and internet access. This was especially true in Puerto Rico, where rolling power outages affect significant portions of the Island over four years later. Panelists suggested the federal government should adopt a flexible policy to provide aid to those in need, including providing access to technology to address the digital divide, and adopting a paper application process when survivors are without electricity or telecommunications access.

Language access was also a significant issue for survivors of both storms. After Harvey, there were many instances of information about shelter locations being provided only in English. In Puerto Rico, FEMA did not have enough Spanish-speaking employees to accommodate the Island, leading to delays in aid and assistance. Even after documents had been translated into Spanish, they were often inaccurate and confusing. Additionally, sign linguists sent to Puerto Rico often only knew ASL - English, rather than the Spanish variant used generally through the island. Witnesses and panelists consistently testified that Spanish-speaking Puerto Ricans received disproportionately lower amounts of assistance for María recovery than English speaking mainland Americans received. Given that Puerto Rico's residents are almost entirely Latinx, the territory's official languages include Spanish, and many Puerto Ricans speak limited English. Testimony shows that FEMA's lower levels of assistance to María survivors failed to comply with the principles underlying Title VI and 44 CFR § 7.5, which prohibits disparate treatment based on race, national origin, and linguistic characteristics in clear violation of federal court precedent and EEOC Guidance.

Many disaster survivors also recommended the need for increased collaboration across federal agencies, local governments, and aid organizations. Disaster recovery experts assert that this type of public engagement with stakeholders should begin with emergency planning and response and continue through the closeout of recovery and mitigation programs. The suggestion to focus on

local collaboration included that hiring efforts of disaster relief contractors also be a local effort. Relying on out-of-town contractors creates missed opportunities to provide employment, job training, and contracting opportunities to low-income local workers and small- and minority-controlled businesses, which are often in severe need of work due to the disruption to local business following a disaster.

Finally, it was recommended that the recovery and mitigation process should focus on survivors with the greatest needs, particularly people of color, low-income people, people with disabilities, immigrants, LGBTQ communities, and other marginalized individuals, to provide sufficient staff fluent in the various languages found in the affected areas (in Puerto Rico, it was particularly focused on Spanish). Additionally, FEMA should provide disability training to all shelter personnel and provide American Sign Language (ASL). Experts also stressed the need for FEMA to increase the cultural competency of existing staff and management.

The report is available at the following website: <https://www.usccr.gov/reports/2022/civil-rights-and-protections-during-federal-response-hurricanes-harvey-and-maria>

C. State Advisory Committees Reports, Memoranda, and Statements

Criminal Records: Civil Rights Impact on Access to Occupational Licenses-Employment in New Jersey

The New Jersey Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report about its examination of the substantial barriers that prevent formerly incarcerated individuals from accessing occupational licenses. With the assistance of national and New Jersey experts, the Committee conducted five virtual panel briefings in 2020 and 2021. Members learned, that although all formerly incarcerated people are not prevented from obtaining occupational licenses, too many are unable to (a) complete the extensive training necessary to obtain a license, (b) pay the exorbitant cost of training and fees, and (c) navigate the complexities of broad licensing statutes, which too often are arbitrarily applied. Moreover, far too many people of color are caught in the web of the criminal justice system and lack the opportunities necessary and the support required to successfully reintegrate into society.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website: <https://www.usccr.gov/files/2021-10/new-jersey-licensing-report.pdf>

Hate Crimes Against Asian American Pacific Islander Communities in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report on anti-Asian racism in the Commonwealth and the rise in attacks on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) during and prior to the pandemic. The report concluded that anti-AAPI violence

today continues nearly two centuries of bigotry and marginalization, reflecting historic efforts “to eliminate Asian-Americans as part of the [US] American family. David Harris, chair of the Massachusetts Advisory Committee said, “The Advisory Committee has been concerned about the racism that infects our Commonwealth and felt the need to document its heightened manifestation against the AAPI community during the pandemic.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2021-10/ma-sac-aapi-hate-crimes.pdf>

Civil Rights Impacts of Civil and Criminal Asset Forfeitures in New Jersey

The New Jersey Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report about its examination of asset forfeitures in New Jersey. The Committee conducted three virtual panel presentations by national and state experts in September and November 2020. Committee members received testimony from individuals impacted by asset forfeiture, as well as advocates, attorneys, scholars, and government officials. The Committee believes that numerous issues plague asset forfeiture practices, which combine to create a system that is ripe for abuse by law enforcement and result in individuals, mainly from communities of color and low-income communities, having their assets seized and forfeited by the government, often wrongfully. The revenue incentive for law enforcement makes bolstering their budget a top priority, often at the expense of fairness, and even, as set forth above, public safety. And, although bills signed into law in January 2020 provide some additional oversight of asset forfeiture, they do not fundamentally change the practice.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2021-10/combined-nj-forfeiture-report.pdf>

The Impact of Remote Learning on Education Equity in Nevada

The Nevada Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report following a series of web hearings to understand the impact of remote learning and equity in education, especially among students in K through 16 schools with disabilities and students of color, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee heard from the Nevada State Board of Education, Nevada System of Higher Education, Nevada K-12 administrators, the legal community, educators in various institutions in urban and rural environments, behavioral health professionals, parents, and students. In this report, the Committee received testimony from speakers in the following areas: difficulties with technology literacy and professional development for educators, increasing behavioral health needs, learning loss, access for students with disabilities and English language learners, the role of public/private partnerships, the lack of childcare, and questions about future options to choose distance learning.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2021-11/nv-sac-remote-learning-and-equity-in-education-report.pdf>

Maine Advisory Committee Urges Using General Assistance Funds for Internet Access for K-12 Students, Work Search, and Telehealth During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued an Advisory Memorandum on digital equity and inclusion in Maine. In a series of five briefings in 2020, the Committee examined key aspects of digital equity: whether Mainers have adequate access to affordable broadband, devices, and digital literacy training, and the intersection of digital equity and civil rights in the educational setting, issues brought into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee's comprehensive report will be issued in the fall of 2021. The Committee urges Governor Mills, the Maine Legislature, and all municipal overseers of their respective General Assistance programs to immediately allow digital and internet access as a basic necessity, as described in this Statement of Concern.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2021-11/statement-of-concern-on-digital-equity.pdf>

Locked Up for Being Poor: The Need for Bail Reform in Kentucky

The Kentucky Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report examined the pretrial detention and bail process in Kentucky. The Committee's work focused on the impacts and uses of cash bail—that is, the money an individual must pay to secure their release from detention pretrial—in the state. As part of the inquiry, the Committee heard testimony on this topic from a diverse group of panelists during public meetings. The use of cash bail is prevalent in Kentucky courts, posing significant challenges to low-income defendants. Unnecessary pretrial detention of low- to moderate-risk individuals charged with nonviolent has significant consequences for individual detainees and the community. Detention based solely on the detainee's inability to pay bail can have extraordinary consequences, including the loss of wages, employment, and housing, as well as jeopardizing child custody.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2021-11/kentucky-bail-report.pdf>

Barriers to Accountability for Law Enforcement Officers' Use of Excessive Force in Washington State

The Washington Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report on the excessive use of force by law enforcement officers. The report was issued after a series of public hearings at which scholars, representatives of law enforcement, legal experts and community advocates testified. The report focuses on improving accountability for use of

excessive force by law enforcement officers and highlights excessive force as a critical issue for ensuring that the civil rights of all Washington citizens are protected. Panelists were selected to provide diverse perspectives regarding the following issues: community impact from cases of excessive force; law enforcement policies and training; collective bargaining agreements; arbitration procedures following discipline for use of excessive force; and proposals for reform of policies and procedures addressing police discipline. Several common themes emerged from the hearings, including the need for comprehensive data collection, the importance of increased transparency for the handling of police discipline cases, the perception that current procedures did not adequately protect the public from the use of excessive force, and the need to prevent appropriate disciplinary procedures related to the use of force or discrimination from being obstructed as a result of collective bargaining.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-01/Washington-Advisory-Committees-Report-on-Barriers-to-Accountability-for-Law-Enforcement-Officers-Use-of-Excessive-Force.pdf>

Digital Equity as a Civil Right in Maine

The Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report calling digital equity in Maine an urgent civil rights issue. The Advisory Committee held a series of public briefings and invited government officials, advocates, scholars, and members of the public to provide testimony about digital equity. The Committee's report makes findings and recommendations on key aspects of digital equity – issues that were brought into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee's findings and recommendations include: current access to reliable broadband is insufficient in both urban and rural areas; there is a significant need for devices for immigrants, communities of color, individuals with disabilities, older adults, English language learners, and low-income households; and there is a significant lack of digital literacy training, an essential component of digital equity, in Maine.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-01/ME-SAC-Digital-Equity-Report.pdf>

Racial Discrimination and Eviction Policies and Enforcement in New York

The New York Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report on eviction policies and enforcement following a study that involved a series of panel discussions and periods of public comment. During this study, the Committee heard testimony and received written statements from individuals impacted by evictions, researchers, academics, advocates, legal scholars, and government officials. Through the testimony they received, the Committee identified significant themes and highlighted recommendations for the Commission's consideration. Significant themes identified include factors that impact evictions, chaotic housing court practices,

the need for legal representation in eviction proceedings, the need for eviction prevention efforts, and the need to strengthen and enforce current evictions-related laws in order to reduce the demonstrated disparate impact of evictions on communities of color nationally and in New York State, Albany, Buffalo, and New York City.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-03/New-York-Advisory-Committee-Evictions-Report-March-2022.pdf>

Zoning Practices in Connecticut

The Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released an interim advisory memorandum on zoning practices in Connecticut. In December, the Committee began an investigation into whether zoning practices in Connecticut perpetuate segregation in the state. The Committee issued this memorandum to draw the attention to HB 5204, which is being considered by the Connecticut General Assembly. HB 5204, “An Act Concerning a Needs Assessment and Fair Share Plans for Municipalities,” would require a statewide assessment of affordable housing needs by planning regions and municipalities. The Committee believes that HB 5204 advances the state in addressing the racial segregation of Connecticut’s communities. The requirement that all municipalities be responsible for their fair share of affordable housing would not only alleviate the responsibility currently being supported by Connecticut’s cities but may work toward ending the practices that perpetuate housing segregation.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-04/ct-sac-interim-memo-on-zoning.pdf>

Memo on Civil Asset Forfeiture in South Carolina

The South Carolina Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released an interim advisory memorandum on civil asset forfeiture in South Carolina. Due to the time sensitive nature of this concern, the Committee has deemed it appropriate to issue an interim memo to the Commission. There is currently a bill in the South Carolina General Assembly to address this topic, and the legislative session is slated to end in May. The Committee would like to draw the Commission’s attention to this concern before the Assembly adjourns. The Committee has held three virtual briefings on the topic and may hear additional testimony before issuing its final report to the Commission. The Committee recommends that the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights investigate the federal government’s use of asset forfeiture.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-05/sc-sac-asset-forfeiture-memo.pdf>

Massachusetts Advisory Committee Interim Memo on Civil Asset Forfeiture

The Massachusetts Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released an interim advisory memorandum on civil asset forfeiture in Massachusetts. There are two bills to reform civil forfeiture laws in Massachusetts currently pending before the Senate Ways & Means Committee. The Massachusetts Committee has deemed it appropriate to issue an interim memorandum to the Commission due to the time-sensitive nature of this pending legislation. The first bill is Massachusetts Senate Bill S.2105 “An Act relative to civil asset forfeiture data reporting.” The second bill is Massachusetts Senate Bill S.2671 “An Act relative to forfeiture reform.” The Committee supports both pieces of legislation as a first step in remedying the injustices of civil asset forfeiture.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-06/ma-sac-interim-memo-on-asset-forfeiture.pdf>

Civil Rights and Fair Housing in Illinois

The Illinois Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report regarding civil rights and fair housing in Illinois, and the potential disparate impact in access to housing on the basis of race, color, age, religion, or disability. This report details civil rights concerns relating to potential disparities regarding access to housing and discrimination based upon the race, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and age. It also addresses challenges to fair access to housing facing the previously incarcerated, Limited English Proficient individuals, individuals with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness. Primary concerns included examining fair housing and equal access to housing in Illinois. Specifically, the Committee examined the extent to which residents in the state have fair and equal access to housing without regard to race, color, disability status, national origin, age, religion, and/or sex. Findings were made from the testimony, and the Committee offers recommendations to the Commission for addressing these problems of state, regional, and national importance.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-06/il-fair-housing-report.pdf>

Water Affordability in Maryland

The Maryland Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a report on water affordability in Maryland. Access to clean affordable water is essential to life and is a fundamental human right, as the U.N. General Assembly recognized in 2010, but it is not guaranteed in Maryland or by federal law. In the state of Maryland, water is becoming increasingly unaffordable, and consequently, inaccessible. Rates are predicted to continue rising, perhaps unsustainably, given decreased local and state revenues. Shut-offs may increase while

infrastructure maintenance declines. Low-income communities and communities of color will be hardest hit. Despite these looming crises, Maryland has no uniform, statewide standards or programs governing water access and affordability. Some communities offer no assistance to low-income residents, some offer discounts to low-income seniors and people with disabilities, but any discounts are available only to owner-occupants. No state law or program mandates or provides water assistance to all residents who need it, whether they own or rent their homes.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-07/md-sac-water-affordability.pdf>

FY 2022-2026 STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Throughout our history, the Commission has worked towards fulfilling our Congressional mandate to serve as an independent, bipartisan, fact-finding federal agency charged with making recommendations on civil rights issues that affect our nation. The Commission solicited the views of Commissioners, staff members, Congress, and stakeholders to identify areas of strength and weakness within the Commission and its activities. The Commission used this input to facilitate the development of our strategic goals.

Strategic Goal A:

The Commission will function as a monitor of effective federal enforcement of civil rights laws and inform national civil rights laws and policy. Advisory Committees aid the Commission in this endeavor.

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures	Examples of Performance Targets
The Commission will assess the national state of important civil rights issues.	The Commission will determine civil rights issues of national significance on which to conduct informative briefings and/or hearings.	The Commission will develop proposals and investigative plans to conduct investigations into civil rights issues of national significance.	Two new projects
		The Commission will hold at least two briefings and/or hearings each year.	Two briefings and/or hearings

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures	Examples of Performance Targets
	The Commission will keep the Advisory Committees engaged with the Commission's investigative projects.	The Commission will keep Advisory Committees apprised of investigative priorities so that they can determine whether there is any beneficial overlap or alignment in their agenda setting.	Headquarters issued report will include Advisory Committee's reports we their topics align.
		The Staff Director or Chair will attend (telephonically or in-person) Advisory Committee briefings or meetings to maintain the connection between the Commission and Advisory Committees.	Two briefing or meetings
The Commission will publish reports, letters, and statements on important civil rights issues, following investigation and as informed by research, and distribute them to the President, Congress, and the American people.	The Commission will continuously monitor the state of civil rights and issues of national significance and use its expertise to report its policy recommendations.	The Commission will issue reports, including its annual statutory enforcement report, to inform its stakeholders of policy recommendations.	Two reports.
		The Commission will issue statements and letters on current civil rights events or issues of concern.	Five statements and/or letters.

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures	Examples of Performance Targets
The Commission's Advisory Committees as a group will hold briefings and meetings on civil rights concerns in their jurisdiction and issue publications on their concerns, providing recommendation for action on those issues.	The Commission will maintain all 56 Advisory Committees.	The Commission will promptly appoint members to each Advisory Committee after expiration.	90% currently appointed Advisory Committees
	The Commission's Advisory Committees will assess the state of civil rights, or a particular civil rights issue, in their jurisdiction.	Advisory Committees will develop proposals and investigative plans to conduct investigations into civil rights issues of significance in their jurisdiction.	Ten meetings
		Advisory Committees will hold briefings, public forums, or another mechanism.	Five fact-finding events
		Advisory Committees will publish reports, statements, memoranda, or other publications to provide policy recommendations to the Commission.	Five publications

Strategic Goal B:

The Commission will serve as a national clearinghouse to inform and raise awareness on civil rights issues amongst the public.

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures	Examples of Performance Targets
The Commission will keep the public apprised of historic and current civil rights issues.	The Commission will routinely post to social media to keep the public informed on civil rights historical events	Increased engagement with the Commission’s social media accounts as seen through analytic tracking	Increase in social media activity.
The Commission will keep the public and individual Advisory Committees apprised of both the Commission and Advisory Committees,’ investigations, fact-finding activities, reports, and other publications.	Use press outreach, social media, and newsletters to reach more individuals, improve participation at events, and increase awareness of Commission and Advisory Committees activities.	The Commission will regularly publicize Commission and Advisory Committee investigations, fact-finding activities, reports, and other publications.	Monthly newsletter, press releases, social media posts.
	Increase access to Commission briefings, hearings, and business meetings	The Commission will use technology, including live streaming, phone lines, and social media, to provide immediate public access to its meetings, briefings, publications, and other activities.	Two live streamed events
Elevate the public profile of the Commission as a national authority on civil rights issues	Expand the opportunities for the Chair or other designated spokesperson to speak directly to the public on civil rights issues	Ensure that the Chair or other designated spokesperson speaks directly to the public about civil rights	Two speaking engagements with national reach

Strategic Goal C:

The Commission will continue to strengthen the Commission’s financial and operational controls and advance the Commission’s mission through management excellence, efficiency, and accountability.

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures	Examples of Performance Targets
The Commission will strengthen its human resources, financial, budget, and performance policy, procedures, and reports.	Align the Commission’s budget submissions with the Agency’s strategic plan and annual performance plan.	Compliance with OMB Circular A-11.	Budget is compliant with OMB Circular A-11
	Monitor and report on the Commission’s progress in achieving its annual performance plan goals and objectives.	Submit a Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) that adheres to all relevant guidance.	PAR adheres to relevant guidance.
	Ensure the agency has a highly skilled and flexible workforce to carry out its mission.	Implementation of Commission’s Recruitment and Hiring Plan. and Office of Personnel Management’s program, strategies, and initiatives.	Implement the Commission’s and OPM’s hiring initiatives.

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures	Examples of Performance Targets
	Conduct and analyze Employee Satisfaction surveys and develop specific strategies to address issues.	Results of the Employee Satisfaction surveys	Increase response rate positively in one or more categories.
The Commission will strengthen its information technology infrastructure and security.	Comply with federal information security requirements	Conduct an annual FISMA Audit	FISMA Audit
	Leverage information technology to enhance the productivity and efficiency of the workforce.	Compliance with OMB Cloud Computing initiatives.	Compliance with Cloud Computer Initiatives
	Establish a modern and scalable network infrastructure.	Compliance with OMB memo M-21-07, "Completing the Transition to Internet Protocol Version 6 (IPv6)	No later than FY2023, all new networked Federal information systems will be IPv6-enabled at the time of deployment, and USCCR's intent is to phase out the use of IPv4 for all systems by FY2025 to the extent possible and practical.

DRAFT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN

Strategic Goal A - The Commission will function as a monitor of effective federal enforcement of civil rights laws and inform national civil rights laws and policy. Advisory Committees aid the Commission in this endeavor.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
The Commission will assess the national state of important civil rights issues.	The Commission will determine civil rights issues of national significance on which to conduct informative briefings and/or hearings.	The Commission will develop proposals and investigative plans to conduct investigations into civil rights issues of national significance.	Two new projects	Two new projects
The Commission will assess the national state of important civil rights issues.	The Commission will determine civil rights issues of national significance on which to conduct informative briefings and/or hearings.	The Commission will hold at least two briefings and/or hearings each year.	Two briefings and/or hearings	Two briefings and/or hearings
The Commission will assess the national state of important civil rights issues.	The Commission will keep the Advisory Committees engaged with the Commission’s investigative projects.	The Commission will keep Advisory Committees apprised of investigative priorities so that they can determine whether there is any beneficial overlap or alignment in their agenda setting.	Headquarters issued report will include Advisory Committee’s reports we their topics align.	Headquarters issued report will include Advisory Committee’s reports we their topics align.

Strategic Goal A - The Commission will function as a monitor of effective federal enforcement of civil rights laws and inform national civil rights laws and policy. Advisory Committees aid the Commission in this endeavor.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
The Commission will assess the national state of important civil rights issues.	The Commission will keep the Advisory Committees engaged with the Commission’s investigative projects.	The Staff Director or Chair will attend (telephonically or in-person) Advisory Committee briefings or meetings to maintain the connection between the Commission and Advisory Committees.	Two briefing or meetings	Two briefing or meetings
The Commission will publish reports, letters, and statements on important civil rights issues, following investigation and as informed by research, and distribute them to the President, Congress, and the American people.	The Commission will continuously monitor the state of civil rights and issues of national significance and use its expertise to report its policy recommendations.	The Commission will issue reports, including its annual statutory enforcement report, to inform its stakeholders of policy recommendations.	Two reports.	Two reports.

Strategic Goal A - The Commission will function as a monitor of effective federal enforcement of civil rights laws and inform national civil rights laws and policy. Advisory Committees aid the Commission in this endeavor.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
The Commission will publish reports, letters, and statements on important civil rights issues, following investigation and as informed by research, and distribute them to the President, Congress, and the American people.	The Commission will continuously monitor the state of civil rights and issues of national significance and use its expertise to report its policy recommendations.	The Commission will issue statements and letters on current civil rights events or issues of concern.	Five statements and/or letters.	Five statements and/or letters.
The Commission’s Advisory Committees as a group will hold briefings and meetings on civil rights concerns in their jurisdiction and issue publications on their concerns, providing recommendation for action on those issues.	The Commission will maintain all 56 Advisory Committees.	The Commission will promptly appoint members to each Advisory Committee after expiration.	90% currently appointed Advisory Committees	90% currently appointed Advisory Committees

Strategic Goal A - The Commission will function as a monitor of effective federal enforcement of civil rights laws and inform national civil rights laws and policy. Advisory Committees aid the Commission in this endeavor.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
The Commission’s Advisory Committees as a group will hold briefings and meetings on civil rights concerns in their jurisdiction and issue publications on their concerns, providing recommendation for action on those issues.	The Commission’s Advisory Committees will assess the state of civil rights, or a particular civil rights issue, in their jurisdiction.	Advisory Committees will develop proposals and investigative plans to conduct investigations into civil rights issues of significance in their jurisdiction.	Ten meetings	Ten meetings
The Commission’s Advisory Committees as a group will hold briefings and meetings on civil rights concerns in their jurisdiction and issue publications on their concerns, providing recommendation for action on those issues.	The Commission’s Advisory Committees will assess the state of civil rights, or a particular civil rights issue, in their jurisdiction.	Advisory Committees will hold briefings, public forums, or another mechanism.	Five fact-finding events	Five fact-finding events

Strategic Goal A - The Commission will function as a monitor of effective federal enforcement of civil rights laws and inform national civil rights laws and policy. Advisory Committees aid the Commission in this endeavor.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
The Commission’s Advisory Committees as a group will hold briefings and meetings on civil rights concerns in their jurisdiction and issue publications on their concerns, providing recommendation for action on those issues.	The Commission’s Advisory Committees will assess the state of civil rights, or a particular civil rights issue, in their jurisdiction.	Advisory Committees will publish reports, statements, memoranda, or other publications to provide policy recommendations to the Commission.	Five publications	Five publications

Strategic Goal B - The Commission will serve as a national clearinghouse to inform and raise awareness on civil rights issues amongst the public.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
The Commission will keep the public apprised of historic and current civil rights issues.	The Commission will routinely post to social media to keep the public informed on civil rights historical events	Increased engagement with the Commission’s social media accounts as seen through analytic tracking	Increase in social media activity.	Increase in social media activity.
The Commission will keep the public and individual Advisory Committees apprised of both the Commission and Advisory Committees,’ investigations, fact-finding activities, reports, and other publications.	Use press outreach, social media, and newsletters to reach more individuals, improve participation at events, and increase awareness of Commission and Advisory Committees activities.	The Commission will regularly publicize Commission and Advisory Committee investigations, fact-finding activities, reports, and other publications.	Monthly newsletter, press releases, social media posts.	Monthly newsletter, press releases, social media posts.
The Commission will keep the public and individual Advisory Committees apprised of both the Commission and Advisory Committees,’ investigations, fact-finding activities, reports, and other publications.	Increase access to Commission briefings, hearings, and business meetings	The Commission will use technology, including live streaming, phone lines, and social media, to provide immediate public access to its meetings, briefings, publications, and other activities.	Two live streamed events	Two live streamed events

Strategic Goal B - The Commission will serve as a national clearinghouse to inform and raise awareness on civil rights issues amongst the public.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
Elevate the public profile of the Commission as a national authority on civil rights issues	Expand the opportunities for the Chair or other designated spokesperson to speak directly to the public on civil rights issues	Ensure that the Chair or other designated spokesperson speaks directly to the public about civil rights	Two speaking engagements with national reach	Two speaking engagements with national reach

Strategic Goal C - The Commission will continue to strengthen the Commission’s financial and operational controls and advance the Commission’s mission through management excellence, efficiency, and accountability.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
The Commission will strengthen its human resources, financial, budget, and performance policy, procedures, and reports.	Align the Commission’s budget submissions with the Agency’s strategic plan and annual performance plan.	Compliance with OMB Circular A-11.	Budget is compliant with OMB Circular A-11	Budget is compliant with OMB Circular A-11
The Commission will strengthen its human resources, financial, budget, and performance policy, procedures, and reports.	Monitor and report on the Commission’s progress in achieving its annual performance plan goals and objectives.	Submit a Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) that adheres to all relevant guidance.	PAR adheres to relevant guidance.	PAR adheres to relevant guidance.
The Commission will strengthen its human resources, financial, budget, and performance policy, procedures, and reports.	Ensure the agency has a highly skilled and flexible workforce to carry out its mission.	Implementation of Commission’s Recruitment and Hiring Plan. and Office of Personnel Management’s program, strategies, and initiatives.	Implement the Commission’s and OPM’s hiring initiatives.	Implement the Commission’s and OPM’s hiring initiatives.

Strategic Goal C - The Commission will continue to strengthen the Commission’s financial and operational controls and advance the Commission’s mission through management excellence, efficiency, and accountability.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
The Commission will strengthen its human resources, financial, budget, and performance policy, procedures, and reports.	Conduct and analyze Employee Satisfaction surveys and develop specific strategies to address issues.	Results of the Employee Satisfaction surveys	Increase response rate positively in one or more categories.	Increase response rate positively in one or more categories.
The Commission will strengthen its information technology infrastructure and security.	Comply with federal information security requirements	Conduct an annual FISMA Audit	FISMA Audit	FISMA Audit
The Commission will strengthen its information technology infrastructure and security.	Leverage information technology to enhance the productivity and efficiency of the workforce.	Compliance with OMB Cloud Computing initiatives.	Compliance with Cloud Computer Initiatives	Compliance with Cloud Computer Initiatives

Strategic Goal C - The Commission will continue to strengthen the Commission’s financial and operational controls and advance the Commission’s mission through management excellence, efficiency, and accountability.

Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2023 Performance Targets	FY 2024 Performance Targets
The Commission will strengthen its information technology infrastructure and security.	Establish a modern and scalable network infrastructure.	Compliance with OMB memo M-21-07, "Completing the Transition to Internet Protocol Version 6 (IPv6)	All new networked Federal information systems will be IPv6-enabled at the time of deployment, and USCCR will begin phasing out the use of IPv4.	All new networked Federal information systems will be IPv6-enabled at the time of deployment, and USCCR will begin phasing out the use of IPv4.