

U.S.COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS: THE CONSCIENCE OF A NATION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

First created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957,¹ the United States Commission on Civil Rights (the "Commission") was reauthorized by the United States Commission on Civil Rights Acts of 1983 and 1991,² and the Civil Rights Commission Amendments Act of 1994.³ Established as an independent, bipartisan, fact-finding federal agency, the Commission has played a vital role in advancing civil rights through objective and comprehensive investigation, research, and analysis on issues of fundamental concern to the federal government and the public. The investigations and reports produced by the Commission, and their findings and recommendations, assist the continued efforts of this Nation to strengthen civil rights protections for all. In fact, many of the Commission's reports, from the first one in 1959 on the protection of voting rights, have led to landmark pieces of legislation that have improved the lives of millions of Americans. Its third report, issued in 1961, formed the intellectual and factual basis for the provisions of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Commission's work in uncovering the disenfranchisement of blacks in the South formed the basis of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and Congress relied on a 1983 Commission report in enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Throughout its history, the Commission informed the President, Congress, and the public of serious civil rights challenges before and as they develop.

Over the life of the Commission Congress has expanded its jurisdictional authority. The Commission's reach extends beyond studying and investigating deprivations of rights by reason of race, color, religion or national origin to include deprivations by reason of sex, age, and disability. In addition, the Commission also examines discrimination in the administration of justice. The expansion of the Commission's jurisdiction is indicative of the view of Congress and the public regarding the important role the Commission has played in the Nation's civil rights enforcement.

Despite advancement toward the Nation's goal of reducing discriminatory conduct, the Commission must remain vigilant to protect and build upon the important gains achieved over the years. The Commission performs an important role in identifying and assessing civil rights trends and evaluating federal agency civil rights enforcement programs. In doing so, the Commission's mission is to ensure that we as a Nation keep our commitments to civil rights for all Americans.

¹ Civil Rights Act of 1957, Pub. L. No. 85-315, § 101, 71 Stat. 634 (1957).

² United States Commission on Civil Rights Act of 1983, Pub. L. No. 98-183, 97 Stat. 1301 (1983); United States Commission on Civil Rights Act of 1991, Pub. L. No. 102-167, ___ Stat. ___ (1991).

³ Civil Rights Commission Amendments Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-419, 108 Stat. 4338 (1994) (codified at 42 U.S.C.S. § 1975 (2005)).

THE MISSION

The mission of the Commission is to inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of federal civil rights laws through quality research, objective findings, and sound recommendations for action. As the only independent agency in the federal government exclusively concerned with the full range of issues related to civil rights, the Commission is mandated to keep the President, Congress and the public informed regarding all civil rights issues, including discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or in the administration of justice.

The Commission addresses discrimination through monitoring and studying civil rights developments, evaluating civil rights enforcement, and investigating and studying allegations of discrimination. Additionally, its mission includes investigating allegations of denials of the right to vote and deprivations resulting from a pattern or practice of fraud, and appraising federal laws and policies to assess whether there is discrimination in their enactment or in their enforcement. Its national and regional offices carry out the work of the Commission through a staff of civil rights analysts, social scientists, attorneys, and other personnel.

The Commission, through its national and regional offices, serves as a resource for federal, state, and local policy-makers, academic researchers, and others seeking the Commission's expertise on civil rights matters. The regional offices support and coordinate the activities of the Commission's 51 State Advisory Committees (SACs). The advisory committees, along with the regional offices, monitor local civil rights related activities, consult with representatives of state and local governments, and meet with private organizations to advance their fact-finding functions. Through both its national and regional offices, the Commission also serves as a portal to the government for individuals with discrimination complaints and civil rights questions.

The Commission has six statutory mandates: (1) investigate charges of citizens being deprived of voting rights because of color, race, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin; (2) collect and study information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection under the law or in the administration of justice; (3) monitor and appraise federal laws, policies and agencies to assess their civil rights enforcement efforts; (4) serve as a national clearinghouse for civil rights information; (5) prepare public service announcements and advertising campaigns to discourage discrimination and denials of equal protection of the laws; and (6) issue reports with findings and recommendations to the President and Congress.

The Commission seeks to achieve this mandate in a manner that both recognizes the full range of civil rights issues facing Americans today and is also responsive to the emergence of new issues and challenges in the future. The Nation is experiencing massive immigration and within fifty years there will be no racial majority. America's

aging population will pose significant challenges, including an aging but active workforce that may require legal protection. Disabled individuals still face barriers in some areas governed by federal civil rights laws. And, of course, the Commission must also investigate allegations of voting fraud and disfranchisement. The Commission will continue to identify emerging civil rights issues and potential remedies.

What are the thorniest challenges facing enforcement agencies in safeguarding civil rights in an era of dwindling resources? What are the most promising enforcement strategies for identifying discriminatory conduct. What are the root causes of disparities in health, education, housing and wealth and are they caused by present day discrimination? If not, how does our Nation come to terms with those disparities in light of the fact that some of these disparities have their roots in historic discrimination? The Commission does not purport to have the answers, but will lead by supporting a national conversation about these questions.

The Commission is also committed to serving as a model of management excellence, integrity, efficiency and accountability. In light of the importance of the mission that the Commission serves, the American people deserve no less from this agency.

THE STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

The Commission has eight Commission members. The President appoints four Commissioners and Congress appoints four. Each member serves a six-year term. The responsibilities of the Commissioners include, for example, establishing Commission policy on civil rights issues, adopting program plans, goals and priorities, and approving national office project proposals. The Staff Director is the administrative head of the agency and is appointed by the President with the concurrence of a majority of the Commissioners. As such, the Staff Director's duties include disseminating the policies established by the Commissioners to staff, recommending program plans, evaluating program results, supervising and coordinating the work of Commission offices, and serving as liaison with the Executive Office of the President, the Congress, and other federal agencies.

In addition to the Office of the Staff Director, the Commission has six operational units or offices in its national office:

- a. Office of General Counsel: The Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides the legal expertise and advice required to conduct hearings and briefings, and ensures the legal integrity of Commission products. As one of the Commission's program offices, this office also prepares project concepts, proposals, and carries out hearings and briefings on current and emerging civil rights issues. The General Counsel is the agency's chief legal advisor on a range of legal issues and the office represents the agency in administrative hearings and other matters.
- b. Office of Civil Rights Evaluation: The Office of Civil Rights Evaluation (OCRE) provides the subject matter, and analytical expertise required to research and write social scientific evaluations of civil rights issues. Consistent with agency resources, the office monitors the activities of numerous federal agencies as well as national and regional civil rights trends. Based on information gathered through monitoring and other sources, this office develops project proposals, carries out projects, and responds to inquiries from the public and the Commissioners. It also conducts briefings on issues of current interest and emerging issues, and receives, researches, analyzes, and refers civil rights complaints to the appropriate federal, state or local agency.
- c. Office of Management: The Office of Management (OM) provides administrative support, as well as library, budget and finance, information technology, and human resources support services for the Commission. This office, through the Administrative Services and Clearinghouse Division (ASCD), which includes the Commission's civil rights library, also manages the Commission's information resources. This involves,

among other responsibilities, publishing approved Commission reports, responding to requests from the public for copies of Commission publications, and generally serving as a clearinghouse for information on civil rights issues.

- d. Congressional Affairs Unit: The Congressional Affairs Unit (CAU) serves as the liaison with Congress, responding to requests for specific information and ensuring the distribution of the Commission's studies and reports to all members. CAU monitors the legislative activities of Congress and provides support in the conceptualization and production of studies and reports with information gathered via their monitoring activities. Due to budget challenges, CAU is not currently staffed.
- e. Public Affairs Unit: The Public Affairs Unit (PAU) serves as the public voice of the Commission and ensures that the American public knows the activities and the publications of the Commission. PAU coordinates and carries out such activities as briefing reporters and the Commissioners on civil rights issues, holding press conferences, issuing press releases, arranging interviews with the Commissioners, and monitoring press activity regarding the Commission and civil rights issues. PAU deals directly with the public in responding to inquiries and by attending meetings of civil rights organizations as speakers. Due to budget challenges, PAU is not currently staffed.
- f. Regional Programs Coordination Unit: The Regional Programs Coordination Unit (RPCU) ensures that individual regional programs are sufficiently coordinated across regions and within headquarters. RPCU ensures that headquarters provides support and guidance, where appropriate, to the regional offices and the state advisory committees. RPCU, through its writer-editor, also provides support in the finalization and publication of headquarters-developed and regional reports and studies, as well as in the announcement of hearings. Due to budget challenges, currently there is no permanent staff assigned to RPCU, however, there is an acting chief of RPCU.

The six regional Commission offices are each staffed by a director, and one or more civil rights analysts and/or other administrative personnel. The Commission's regional offices have a total of 23 positions with 13 vacancies (including two regional directors). As a result of budgetary challenges, 50.2 % of these positions are currently vacant. The regional offices coordinate the Commission's operations in their regions and assist the SACs in their fact-finding activities.

Between 1995 and 2001, Congress continuously funded the Commission below the President's request. After adjusting for inflation, the Commission's budget steadily declined from \$8.8 million in 1995 to \$7.7 million in 2001. Each year between 2002 and 2005, the Commission's budget remained flat and inflation continuously eroded its

purchasing power. Although the Commission received funding of \$9,096,000 each year between 2002 and 2005, the worth of its budget in 1994 dollars has actually decreased from \$7.8 million in 2002 to \$7.2 million 2005. In 2006, the Commission's budget of \$8,932,439 was somewhat smaller than its 2005 budget and, once inflation was taken into account, the Commission's buying power was roughly equivalent to \$6.8 million. For 2007, the Commission is funded via a year-long continuing resolution. The funding amount of \$8,932,439 is identical to the FY 2006 appropriation in actual dollars but is a cut in real funding. After adjusting for inflation, the Commission's 2007 budget will be worth \$6.6 million in 1994 dollar buying power.

The stagnant and flat budget during the past decade has resulted in a smaller Commission with many unfilled positions. As of FY 2006, the Commission had 76 allotted FTEs; however, there were only 47 onboard FTEs. At the end of FY 2006, the Commission had 29 vacant positions. As a result of declining staff and a flat budget, the Commission no longer has staff assigned to CAU, PAU, or RPCU.

THE COMMISSION: AN AGENCY COMMITTED TO IMPROVED MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Under the direction of new leadership since December 2004, the Commission continues to make significant progress toward resolving profound management and financial challenges that developed over a period of many years. The inherited problems are rooted in neglect, mismanagement, and financial pressures resulting from a stagnant budget. Improvement in the policies and procedures governing financial and program management at the Commission began in fiscal year 2005 (FY05) and continue through FY07. Early results have been promising as the Commission received unqualified opinions on its FY 2006 audit statements for the first time in many years. Additional positive results are eagerly expected as the fruit of the Commission's labors continues to mature and ripen over time.

The Commission continues improving its financial and program management by developing and implementing policies and procedures, as well as monitoring and revising previously implemented reforms, designed to ensure that:

- non-salary related financial transactions are accurately documented, supported, and recorded;
- financial processes include appropriate segregation of duties to guard against waste, fraud and abuse;
- financial obligations are paid in a more timely manner to avoid penalties and interest payments;
- project costs are accurately tracked and reported monthly to inform agency decision-making about program costs and priorities;
- Commissioners have an enhanced formal role in program planning and project execution so that projects benefit from their diverse views and opinions; and
- state advisory committees are staffed with high quality members with a range of relevant skills and abilities to increase the quality of advisory committee work products; and
- strategic planning is completed to allow the agency to better link resources and outcomes with the agency's mission, goals, and objectives.

In FY05, and continuing through FY07, the Commission reformed aspects of the operation of its 51 advisory committees and national program planning. It adopted reforms correcting project planning weaknesses relating to Commissioner involvement in agency projects. As a result, there are now firmly established policies institutionalizing the role of Commissioners during the background and planning, discovery, and report drafting stages of projects. Furthermore, reforms to advisory committee membership selection criteria indicate the Commission's recognition of the importance of the existence of specific skills at the SAC level related to fact-finding. The Commission's

understanding of the need to provide more opportunities for advisory committee service and inject new energy and ideas resulted in the creation of advisory committee term limits. In FY06 and FY 2007, additional changes were made to enhance the quality of national office work products and the utilization of the Commission's regional program (including SACs) related to findings contained in a May 2006 GAO report. The findings relevant to the Commission's use of its SACs reflect that effective use of the advisory committees is hampered by:

- agency budgetary constraints that have reduced resources available for SAC activities;
- state advisory committees being unable to function due to expired charters;
- inadequate integration of state advisory committees into the mission of the Commission;
- ongoing budget constraints that limit the ability of the Commission to sufficiently fund its SACs;
- ongoing budget constraints that limit the ability of the Commission to provide sufficient human resources at the regional level to support SAC operations; and
- extended period of time state advisory committee reports are under national office review prior to release for publication.

The Commission took concrete steps to resolve the noted deficiencies by revising internal policies on national office program planning and execution, and retaining an Inspector General (IG) in July 2006 to review and propose revisions, as appropriate, to existing and proposed policies governing the objectivity, transparency and accountability in national office work products. The IG will also review and propose revisions, as appropriate, to the Commission's use of its advisory committees, its committee re-chartering process, and the timeliness of national office review of advisory committee reports. Prior to retaining the IG, the Commission developed a national office process and timeline for reviewing advisory committee reports that establishes a 65-days target and formalized the need to solicit SAC input during national program planning process. In FY 2007 the Commission will also implement the use of operating budgets for regional offices that include funding for SAC operations and activities. These reforms were reviewed with the IG and determined to be appropriate. Upon the completion of the work, the IG will submit a written report evaluating the sufficiency of agency policies and procedures related to GAO's recommendations.

In addition to enhancing its national office work product processes, and further integrating the work of its advisory committees into the work of the national office, the agency continues to reform its human capital management system and its ethics program. The Commission's leadership continues to emphasize the importance of an excellent agency ethics program and ethical conduct by agency employees. Through its designated agency ethics official (DAEO), the Commission is implementing several ethics reforms, including:

- providing additional training and classes to Commission staff through the agency's ethics officer;

- improving the ethics officer's monitoring of the operation of the agency's ethics program and taking appropriate remedial action;
- updating Commission ethics policies and procedures;
- keeping, when appropriate, records of advice that is rendered on ethics and standards of conduct matters, including post-employment and conflict of interest matters; and
- submitting in a timely manner to OGE semiannual reports of certain travel payments accepted, including negative reports.

Beginning in FY05, the Commission assessed its human capital management system to determine what changes were required to improve the operation of the Human Resources (HR) Division, and support ongoing agency reform efforts and the *President's Management Agenda* (PMI). Included in this review were the agency's internal policies, current delegations of authorities, and the performance management system for supervisors and managers. The results are the creation of a draft Strategic Human Capital Plan and a Human Capital Accountability System to increase workforce accountability and improve the management of human capital, the collection of employee feedback that was incorporated into the draft Human Capital Accountability System, and an employee skills assessment. In FY06, the Commission developed in-housing training materials for managers and supervisors on knowledge sharing and workforce planning. These review and reform efforts were further assisted in late FY06 by OPM recommendations regarding five areas of the Commission's HR operations:

- strategic alignment,
- leadership/knowledge management,
- results-oriented performance culture,
- talent management, and
- accountability for results-supporting mission accomplishment, effectiveness, and efficiency, and agency priorities.

OPM's findings are generally consistent with the Commission's previous determination that focused attention in many of these areas is still needed. The Human Resources Division, recently under new leadership, is therefore working to develop and execute appropriate corrective measures that will allow it to:

- execute human capital management priorities, including evaluating the immediate need for positions and their broader organizational role on a strategic workforce planning basis rather than on a case-by-case basis;
- execute leadership and knowledge management system, including prioritizing available funding to meet mission-critical and leadership succession training needs;
- increase its capacity to attract quality people with the appropriate competencies in mission-critical activities to the agency;
- collect and use of data to inform human capital management; and
- improve the execution of its Delegated Examining Unit (DEU) authority.

Monitoring, and necessary revisions, will continue into FY08. Moreover, the Commission will monitor and evaluate, and revise as appropriate, previously implemented policies and procedures to ensure that these reforms are achieving their intended results. The agency has already implemented many of the recommendations made by its financial management consulting and this has directly impacted the receipt of unqualified opinions in the FY06 financial audit.

**THE RESOURCES
FISCAL YEAR 2008**

FY 2008 Budget Estimate

The FY08 budget estimate for the Commission is \$8,800,000. This estimate will support 50 on-board full time permanent positions, including four out of eight Commissioner Assistants.

	FY2007 Request (Enacted)	FY2008 Request (estimated)
On-Board and New Salaries	\$4,216,389	\$4065,577
Commissioner Salaries	\$651,899	\$694,851
Benefits	\$1,162,493	\$1,318,190
Travel	\$135,600	\$125,600
Transportation of Things	\$32,752	\$32,752
GSA Office Space Rental	\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000
Other Rentals	\$2,498	\$2,498
Communications	\$216,347	\$173,595
Printing	\$139,294	\$124,294
Other Services	\$961,375	\$879,054
Supplies	\$84,062	\$77,246
Equipment	\$30,291	\$6,344
TOTAL	\$8,933,000	\$8800,000
Obligations		

FY 2008 Budget Estimate: National Office Briefings and Related Reports

During FY08, the Commission will conduct eight major civil rights projects that will include briefings and related reports. These projects will continue the progress the Commission has recently made on moving the agency from a position of being a marginal voice in the Nation's civil rights debate to a position of being a respected and credible voice on contemporary civil rights issues. The eight civil rights projects supported in FY08 by OGC and OCRE are listed below.

1. The Patriot Act as related to Anti-Arab/Anti-Muslim Discrimination (OGC)
2. Religious Discrimination in K-12 Schools (OGC)
3. Corporate Diversity (OGC)
4. Religious Discrimination and Prisoner Rights (OGC and OCRE)
5. Racial Profiling: US Department of Justice Remedies (OCRE)
6. Title IX in College Athletics: Is Cheerleading a Sport? (OCRE)
7. Review of the Community Reinvestment Act (OCRE)
8. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative (OCRE)

These projects reflect a consideration of several of the administration's civil rights priorities, and issues of interest to the Nation. The President, in his FY07 budget address, noted that the administration continues to believe that faith-based organizations should play a significant role in addressing many of this country's social concerns. To that end, the President's Budget included \$322 million in targeted Faith-based and Community Initiatives. The Commission, through its faith-based project, will study and propose ways to eliminate roadblocks to faith-based programs. The results of the Community Reinvestment Act project will prove useful in examining, for example, the extent to which increased competition in the mortgage market may have contributed to the growth in sub-prime mortgage lending by specialty lenders, which soon brought larger lenders into the sub-prime market as well. With more low-income and minority buyers entering the housing market, this project may also provide information relevant to the federal government's efforts to increase homeownership among these sub-groups. The recommendations from this effort will inform the thinking of policy makers as the administration moves forward with its goal of creating an ownership society. In March 2006, the Department of Education issued a report on its 2005 Title IX Clarification at the request of the Senate Appropriations Committee. This report will continue to be studied and debated; the Commission's FY08 project on Title IX will contribute, in a constructive and thoughtful way, to that debate.

During FY08, OGC and OCRE, the two headquarters offices primarily responsible for conducting fact-finding, account for approximately 15.4 percent of the Commission's total budget. For FY08, the budget estimate for OGC is \$527,253. Of this amount, \$174,176 is for salaries and benefits (also referred to as "labor") related solely to completing four briefings, related reports, and the remaining costs associated with these

program activities. OGC will also assign \$71,869 of its labor costs to the generation and production of the FY 2008 statutory report. In total, \$246,045 or 61% of the salaries and benefits of OGC will be allotted to national office reports. Remaining OGC salaries and benefits is attributed to all costs associated with other office functions such as the activities of the General Counsel and legal sufficiency reviews by the Attorney-Advisors.

The estimated FY08 operating budget for OCRE is \$828,779 which includes \$375,052 for labor associated solely with the completion of five briefings and related reports. Additionally, OCRE is expected to incur \$173,816 in labor cost associated with generation and production of the FY 2008 Statutory Report. The balance is attributed to all costs associated with other office functions such as the complaint referral service, civil rights monitoring, and public affairs-related activities in the absence of a staffed Public Affairs Unit.

The below table summarizes the cost estimates for the eight Commissioner-approved briefings that will be conducted by OGC and the OCRE.

	OGC	OCRE
Labor	174,176	375,052
Travel	6,335	7,280
Printing	19,500	32,593
Other		
Services	38,901	66,301
Supplies	5,000	2,207
Equipment	600	0
Total	244,512	483,433

FY 2008 Budget Estimate: Annual Statutory Report

Pursuant to its authorizing statute, the Commission is required to produce, and submit to the President and Congress, at least one report annually that monitors federal civil rights enforcement efforts. In FY08, the statutory report will be on religious discrimination and prisoner rights and will be based on national and regional research, data collection and fact-finding. The annual statutory report will use interrogatories and other specific fact-finding tools to examine federal and some state laws and regulations, to explore the role of prison administrators in conducting or allowing various religious services and to examine the extent and severity of religious discrimination in federal and state prisons throughout the United States employing both qualitative and quantitative research data for the years 1990 through 2004. It will also incorporate, as appropriate, material otherwise made available to the Commission. **Estimated Cost: \$349,597.**

FY08 STATUTORY REPORT		
	OGC	OCRE
Labor	71,869	173,816
Travel	2,555	2,555
Printing	13,500	15,493
Other Services	34,501	29,901
Supplies	4,200	1,207
Total	126,625	222,972

FY 2008 Budget Estimate: Regional Operations

The Commission supports six regional offices and 51 State Advisory Committees. During FY08, it is projected that the Commission’s regional operations (including RPCU, the six regional offices, and the SACs) will conduct 32 SAC planning meetings and 6 briefings, forums, and other fact-finding activities. To support these activities, modest travel, transcription services, and rentals cost will be incurred. **Estimated Cost: \$2,072,377.**

Line Item Budget Justification for the Regional Operations
(for each regional office and the regional programs coordination unit)

	RPCU	ERO	CRO	WRO	SRO	RMRO	MWRO
Labor		350,684	169,922	188,505	137,688	362,325	361,933
Travel	15,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
SLUC	0	82,732	38,260	60,913	90,975	40,890	67,991
Communications	6,500	0	2,100	2,100	2,100	2,100	2,100
Printing	42,368	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Services	0	0	7,687	6,332	8,638	1,818	1,016
Supplies	0	0	2,100	2,100	1,229	2,172	2,100
Total	63,868	435,416	220,069	261,950	241,630	412,305	437,140

FY 2008 Budget Estimate: Administrative and Central Operating Expenses

The Commission is including a schedule that presents a combined picture of the budget estimate broken down by office. In addition to salaries and benefits, the more significant estimates on this schedule are contained in the heading labeled “CENTRAL”. CENTRAL is the account to which charges that are not attributable to any one specific office or division are attributed, and it should not to be confused with Central Regional Office. Included as “CENTRAL” expenses, for example, are telecommunications (telephone), postage, Government Printing Office charges for headquarters graphic

designs and printing, office space rental at headquarters, and some other common agency expenses and agreements. **Estimated Cost: \$2,258,206.**

**FISCAL YEAR 2008
PERFORMANCE PLAN**

The Commission has six statutory mandates: (1) investigate charges of citizens being deprived of voting rights because of color, race, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin; (2) collect and study information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection under the law or in the administration of justice; (3) monitor and appraise federal laws, policies and agencies to assess their civil rights enforcement efforts; (4) serve as a national clearinghouse for civil rights information; (5) prepare public service announcements and advertising campaigns to discourage discrimination and denials of equal protection of the laws; and (6) issue reports with findings and recommendations to the President and Congress. These goals formed the foundation for the GPRA performance plan in previous Commission budget submissions.

In December 2006 the Commission adopted a draft Strategic Plan that was revised based on congressional consultation and other stakeholder input. As reflected in the draft plan, the mission of the Commission is to inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of Federal civil rights laws through quality research, objective findings and sound recommendations with the means necessary to achieve the mission. During fiscal years 2007 through 2012, the Commission proposes to execute this mission by:

- Supporting a national conversation on current civil rights issues that identifies the priorities for policy makers;
- Enhancing the ability of federal agencies to raise public awareness and efficiently and effectively execute their civil rights enforcement responsibilities;
- Serving as an authoritative national clearinghouse and repository of civil rights data and information; and
- Normalizing the Commission's financial and operational controls, and modernizing its information technology, management and dissemination.

Strategic Goal 1

Support a national conversation on current civil rights issues that identifies the priorities for policy makers.

Objectives:

1. Reinvigorate the Commission's State Advisory Committees (SACs).
2. Energize the Commission's SACs by enhancing their institutional role in program planning and increasing their productivity.
3. Commission a 50-state report, requesting the Commission's individual SACs to identify civil rights priorities facing their states/regions.
4. Convene a national conference in FY2009 to elicit varied, multidisciplinary and bipartisan perspectives on civil rights in the 21 st century.

Planned FY08 Projects and Activities Associated with Strategic Goal 1:

- Examine three current topics that are of interest to the public and policy-makers.
 - Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
 - Community Reinvestment Act
 - Patriot Act and Anti-Arab/Anti-Muslim Discrimination
- Undertake planning and preliminary preparations for a national conference in FY2009 on civil rights in the 21st century.

Proposed FY08 Strategies:

- Examine various federal and state laws and regulations that are applicable to the various briefings and reports.
- Plan briefings that include presenters with varied and opposing views and perspectives.
- Use interrogatories and requests for documents to obtain relevant information from federal agencies.
- Provide an "open record" period so that additional information may be submitted following a briefing(s) that would round-out the official record of the proceeding(s).
- Use public briefings, and related press releases and advisories, to raise public awareness of civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination and current civil rights issues.

Strategic Goal 2 <i>Enhance the ability of federal agencies to raise public awareness and efficiently and effectively execute their civil rights enforcement responsibilities.</i>
Objectives:
1. Study the role and effectiveness of the different federal enforcement agencies and make recommendations as to how those agencies might enhance their effectiveness.
2. Partner with other federal civil rights agencies to raise public awareness of civil rights laws.
3. Partner with other civil rights agencies to collect and analyze data on various civil rights topics.
4. Partner with other civil rights agencies in studying the effectiveness of current civil rights laws, in developing reasonable interpretations of unclear laws, and in making recommendations for updates or

changes to current law.

5. Promote public awareness of current civil rights laws, remedies and enforcement agencies.

Planned FY08 Projects and Activities Associated with Strategic Goal 2:

- Publish the annual statutory report on federal agency civil rights enforcement.
 - Religious Discrimination and Prisoner Rights
- Conduct two briefings and issue related briefing reports.
 - Religious Discrimination and Prisoner Rights
 - Racial Profiling: US Department of Justice Remedies

Proposed FY08 Strategies:

- Examine various federal and state laws and regulations that are applicable to the various briefings and reports.
- Plan briefings that include presenters with varied and opposing views and perspectives.
- Use interrogatories and requests for documents to obtain relevant information from federal agencies.
- Provide an “open record” period so that additional information may be submitted following a briefing(s) that would round-out the official record of the proceeding(s).
- Use public briefings, and related press releases and advisories, to raise public awareness of civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination and current civil rights issues.

Strategic Goal 3

Serve as an authoritative national clearinghouse and repository of civil rights data and information.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen the quality and objectivity of the Commission’s reports.
2. Collect and analyze data on disparities among racial and ethnic groups, between the sexes, between the disabled and those who are not disabled, and among other protected classes.
3. Issue reports that assess the credibility of discrimination allegations and, where discrimination is found to be present, illuminate the causes of such discrimination, and make recommendations for policy changes that will address the problem.
4. Conduct original research.

Planned FY08 Projects and Activities Associated with Strategic Goal 3:

- Conduct three briefings and issue briefing reports.
 - Religious Discrimination in K-12 Schools
 - Title IX in College Athletics: Is Cheerleading a Sport?
 - Corporate Diversity

- Conduct project follow-up as determined necessary and within existing resources.
- Fully implement adopted GAO recommendations regarding national office report quality and utilization of the state advisory committees.

Proposed FY08 Strategies:

- Examine various federal and state laws and regulations that are applicable to the various briefings and reports.
- Plan briefings that include presenters with varied and opposing views and perspectives.
- Use interrogatories and requests for documents to obtain relevant information from federal agencies.
- Provide an “open record” period so that additional information may be submitted following a briefing(s) that would round-out the official record of the proceeding(s).
- Use public briefings, and related press releases and advisories, to raise public awareness of civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination and current civil rights issues.
- Review GAO report and recommendations, evaluate and monitor implemented corrective actions, and revise actions as determined necessary to achieve desired results.
- Use designated senior agency managers to evaluate and monitor internal controls and operations, and propose appropriate corrective measures.

Strategic Goal 4

Normalize the Commission’s financial and operational controls, and modernize its information technology management and dissemination.

Objectives:

1. Adhere to integrated budgeting, planning, and performance management.
2. Effective financial management; demonstrated financial accountability; streamline and/or reorganize the Commission’s structure to efficiently execute its mission and make efficient use of its appropriations.
3. Continued implementation of GAO recommendations.
4. Modernize information technology management and infrastructure to enhance program efficiency and obtain structural cost savings.

Planned FY08 Projects and Activities Associated with Strategic Goal 4:

- Fully comply with OMB Circular A-11 on performance budget preparation.
- Fully implement recommendations made by OPM and GAO related to human capital management systems.
- Obtain the input of the regional offices and state advisory committees in preparation for the annual program planning process.
- Resolve outstanding financial audit weaknesses (if any) in preparation for a clean financial audit in FY09.

Proposed FY08 Strategies:

- Expand the collection of financial and performance data to improve budget integration and provide accountability for performance at the office and/or division levels.
- Ensure that office and division heads understand and comply with Administrative Instructions requiring that proposed program activities be linked to the Commission's five-year strategic plan in order to be proposed for funding.
- Require that office and division heads develop an annual performance plan and measures that are linked to the Commission's five-year strategic plan.
- Resolve financial audit weaknesses (if any).
- Implement internal control and financial management changes, as necessary, to receive a clean financial audit in FY09.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of existing human capital management systems to ensure that support the President Management and the Commission's strategic goals and objectives.
- Formalize the role of regional operations in the program planning process.

Factors Influencing the Commission's Ability to Accomplish Its Strategic Goals

Several factors may have an effect on achieving Commission goals including emerging issues, reauthorization, funding, internal reform efforts, and staffing levels. Emerging issues, or unanticipated issues, may arise that require a shift in Commission program and spending priorities. Examples of past emerging issues include the 2004 and 2000 elections and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Though the Commission's authorizing statute expired in 1996 the Commission continues to receive an annual appropriation. The Commission will make adjustments to its strategic plan should its oversight committee pass new authorizing legislation changing the Commission's structure, operation, mandate, and funding.

Though attrition has historically allowed the Commission to avoid staff cutbacks, fewer staff members are doing increasingly more work. In September 1996, the Commission had 93 full-time staff members, including commissioner assistants. The two primary national program offices, the Office of Civil Rights Evaluation (OCRE) and the Office of General Counsel (OGC), account for 27 of these positions.