

**UNITED STATES
COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS**



**REQUEST FOR CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATION
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026**

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USCCR BUDGET REQUEST FOR SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Congressional Appropriation Request for FY 2026.....	\$13,000,000
Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act for FY 2025.....	\$14,350,000
Congressional Appropriation for FY 2024.....	\$14,350,000

APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

FEDERAL FUNDS

Salaries and Expenses

For necessary expenses of the Commission on Civil Rights, including hire of passenger motor vehicles, \$13,000,000 [\$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, \$1,800,000 [\$2,000,000] shall be used to separately fund the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys.

FY 2026 U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS BUDGET REQUEST

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights budget request of \$13,000,000 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 2026 U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

This request includes \$11.2 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 2026 COMMISSION OF THE SOCIAL STATUS OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

This request includes \$1.8 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 2026 Appropriation Request is \$13 million, which will support 50 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. This request will provide \$11.2 million for the USCCR and \$1.8 million for the CSSBMB. It will support 43 FTE for the USCCR and 7 FTE for the CSSBMB.

REVIEW OF THE AGENCY'S FY 2026 FUNDING REQUEST

A. Budget Request by Object Class

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

	FY 2026 Appropriation Request	FY 2025 Appropriation	Difference
10 Personnel Compensation & Benefits	\$8,836,000	\$9,781,000	(\$945,000)
21 Travel & Transportation of Persons	\$85,000	\$125,000	(\$40,000)
23 Rent, Communications, and Utilities	\$1,666,000	\$1,741,000	(\$75,000)
24 Printing and Reproduction	\$116,000	\$104,000	\$12,000
25 Other Contractual Services	\$2,270,000	\$2,565,000	(\$295,000)
26 Supplies and Materials	\$27,000	\$34,000	(\$7,000)
31 Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Appropriation	\$13,000,000	\$14,350,000	(\$1,350,000)

B. Description of Budget Increases and Decreases

The following is a description of the budget increases and decreases from the Commission's FY 2025 Appropriation.

Increases to Maintain Current Services:

Personnel Compensation and Benefits - \$45,000/ 0 FTE

This increase will cover the annualization of the FY 2025 pay raise.

Program Increases

Printing – \$12,000

This increase will pay for the costs associated with Federal Register notices of meetings and graphic design for our reports.

Program Decreases

Personnel Compensation and Benefits – (\$990,000/ 5 FTE

Reduction on four USCCR and one CSSBMB staff.

Travel – (\$40,000)

Reduction in non-essential travel

Rent, Communications, and Utilities – (\$75,000)

Reduction in communication costs due to full transition to the Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions contract vehicle for enterprise telecommunications and networking services.

Other Contractual Services – (\$295,000)

Reduction in other contractual services from commercial and federal service providers.

Supplies – (\$7,000)

Reduction in supply costs.

C. Budget Request by Organization

The Commission's FY 2026 budget request supports several major organizational components. The following table provides a summary of the Commission's budget request by these components:

	FY 2026 Appropriation Request	Percent Of Request	FY 2025 Appropriation	Percent Of Request	Difference
National Program Offices	\$1,762,000	13.6%	\$1,807,000	12.6%	(\$45,000)
Regional Program Offices	\$1,923,000	14.8%	\$2,619,000	18.3%	(\$696,000)
Commissioners and Commissioner Assistants	\$2,096,000	16.1%	\$2,049,000	14.3%	\$47,000
Office of Staff Director	\$453,000	3.5%	\$308,000	2.1%	\$145,000
Robert S. Rankin Civil Rights Library	\$60,000	0.5%	\$139,000	1.0%	(\$79,000)
Operations & Administrative	\$4,906,000	37.7%	\$5,428,000	37.8%	(\$522,000)
CSSBMB	<u>\$1,800,000</u>	13.8%	<u>\$2,000,000</u>	13.9%	<u>(\$200,000)</u>
Total Appropriation	\$13,000,000	100%	\$14,350,000	100%	(\$1,350,000)

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 1,762,000 and supports 9 FTE. The National Program Offices’ budget is 13.6 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 addition, 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 2026 is \$1,923,000 and supports 10 FTE. The Regional Program Office’s budget is 14.8 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 2026 Commissioners and Commissioner Assistants’ budget is \$2,096,000 and supports 10 FTE. The Commission and Assistants’ budget is 16.1 percent of the Commission’s total budget request.

The Office of the Staff Director’s request covers the salary, benefits, and travel for Staff Director and their staff. The FY 2026 Office of Staff Director budget is \$453,000 and supports 3 FTE. The Office of Staff Director’s budget is 5.1 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 2026 budget request for the Library is \$60,000. The Library’s budget is .5 percent of the Commission’s total budget request.

The Operations and Administrative budget request includes rent, communications, information technology, human resources, financial management, and other functions necessary to maintain a federal agency's operations. The FY 2026 budget request for the Operations and Administrative budget is \$4,906,000 and supports 11 FTE. Thus, the Operations and Administrative budget is 37.7 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 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 2026 budget request for CSSBMB is \$1.8 million and supports 7 FTE. The CSSBMB budget is 13.8 percent of the total budget request.

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

This section highlights the Commission's FY 2024 program accomplishments and activities.

A. Public Briefings

Racial Disparities in Violent Crime Victimization in the United States

On November 17, 2024, the Commission held an in-person public briefing on the on racial and ethnic disparities in violent crime victimization in the United States. The Commission's investigation examined the federal government's role in collecting data and addressing racial disparities in violent victimization as an important dimension of the fair administration of justice. At this public briefing, Commissioners heard from subject matter experts such as government officials, academics, community advocates, and impacted persons.

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/2023/11-17-racial-disparities-violent-crime-victimization-united-states>

Civil Rights Implications of the Federal Use of Facial Recognition Technology

On March 8, 2024, the Commission held an in-person public briefing on the civil rights implications of Facial Recognition Technology (FRT). The Commission's investigation examined how FRT is developed, how it is being utilized by federal agencies, emerging civil rights concerns, and safeguards the federal government is implementing to mitigate potential civil rights issues. Specifically, the Commission reviewed the utilization of FRT technology by three cabinet agencies: U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Commissioners heard from subject matter experts such as government officials, academics, researchers, software developers, and legal experts.

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/2024/03-08-civil-rights-implications-federal-use-facial-recognition-technology>

The Federal Role in Enforcing Religious Freedoms in Prison

On May 17, 2024, the Commission held an in-person public briefing on whether prisoners' religious freedom rights are being protected and enforced in accordance with constitutional and statutory provisions. This is an update to the Commission's 2008 statutory enforcement report, *Enforcing Religious Freedom in Prison*. Specifically, the Commission reviewed the constitutional and federal statutory provisions of the First Amendment, the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act of 1980 (CRIPA), the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1990 (RFRA), the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA), and the Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA). Commissioners heard from subject matter experts such as government officials, religious leaders, academics, prisoners' rights advocates, religious liberty organizations, and legal experts.

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/2024/05-17-federal-role-enforcing-religious-freedoms-prison>

B. Commission Reports

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

The Civil Rights Implications of the Federal Use of Facial Recognition Technology

In response to the federal government's increasing use of facial recognition technology (FRT), the Commission examined three federal departments' use of the technology: the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Commission's investigation included testimony from subject matter experts, including government officials, academics, researchers, software developers, and legal experts. The Commission also received several public comments, as well as interrogatory responses from the DOJ, DHS, and HUD. Finally, the Commission made a first-of-its-kind site visit to DHS' Maryland Test Facility (MdTF) to learn about industry-leading developments in the testing of FRT and other biometric artificial intelligence (AI).

The Commission majority approved key findings including the following: FRT is used by DOJ, DHS, and HUD, as well as their funding recipients, in several programs across the FBI, TSA, CBP, and public housing agencies (PHAs). There are currently no federal laws or regulations that

expressly authorize or limit FRT use by the federal government, and as of July 2024, there is no official, standardized policy published for federal FRT use.

While DOJ and DHS recently adopted interim FRT policies, HUD does not track FRT use. For the DOJ, there is no comprehensive data available regarding the accuracy of the FRT that is used by law enforcement in its real-world application. Within DHS, CBP has implemented facial biometrics into the entry processes at all international airports and into the exit processes at 53 airports, as well as expanded facial biometrics at 40 seaports and all pedestrian lanes at the southwest and northern Border ports of entry. HUD is proliferating FRT use largely through its grant programs for PHAs, putting FRT in the hands of grantees with no regulation or oversight. If HUD is providing funds for FRT—which is known to have higher misidentification rates for minorities—in housing where tenants are disproportionately female and people of color, issues relating to access, eviction, and other punishments could lead to Title VI violations.

With respect to FRT accuracy and bias, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) testing is voluntary and represents laboratory—not real-world—results. Thus, NIST cannot say that its evaluated programs are accurately representative of the performance of all FRT deployed throughout the country. Algorithmic accuracy rates can vary widely among developers, but even with the highest-performing algorithms, tests have shown there are likely to be false positives for certain demographic groups, specifically Black people (particularly Black women), people of East Asian descent, women, and older adults. A promising FRT testing model does exist: DHS, through its Science and Technology Directorate, funds FRT research, testing, and evaluation at MdTF, which specializes in “scenario testing” of the entire FRT system as it is intended to be deployed. DHS is the only agency known to be testing FRT in this way.

The Commission majority voted for key recommendations including the following: Congress should direct and empower NIST to develop an operational testing protocol that agencies can use to assess how effective, equitable, and accurate their FRT systems are when actually deployed. They should also condition the receipt of federal funds by grantees on the adoption of national training standards for individuals who review and analyze the results returned by FRT. Furthermore, Congress should provide a statutory mechanism for legal redress by individuals harmed by misuse or abuse of FRT.

As Chief AI Officers (CAIOs) become established across agencies, they should develop and incentivize the adoption of national training standards for individuals who review and analyze the results returned by FRT algorithms. For FRT that is rights-impacting, CAIOs should enable 1) the assessment of FRT in a real-world context 2) mitigate disparities that lead to, or perpetuate, unlawful discrimination or harmful bias, and 3) consult affected communities for feedback to inform agency decision-making regarding FRT. CAIOs should also consult DHS’ MdTF as a template for real-world FRT testing to ensure it will work in its intended contexts.

Any agency using FRT should have a publicly available use policy. If agencies do use FRT, they should audit their use to ensure it complies with government policy. FRT vendors providing the federal government with solutions should provide users with ongoing training, technical support, and software updates to ensure their systems can maintain high accuracy across demographic groups in real-world deployment contexts. Furthermore, agencies should ensure their CAIOs work

in close coordination with existing responsible officials and organizations within their organizations, including Civil Rights and General Counsel offices, to advise and update agency FRT guidance, implementation, and oversight. Federal grantees using FRT should provide verified results with respect to accuracy and performance across demographics from NIST's FRT Evaluation or similar government-validated third-party test.

The report is available at the following website: https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-09/civil-rights-implications-of-frt_0.pdf

Federal Efforts in Examining Racial and Ethnic Disparities among Victims of Violent Crime

This report emerges from the Commission's commitment to addressing the deep-seated inequities that persist within our criminal legal system, particularly as they impact underserved communities. The COVID-19 pandemic not only brought new challenges but magnified existing ones, making the need for this report all the more urgent.

Our investigation reveals that the disparities in crime victimization are not merely statistical anomalies but are driven by systemic issues that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. For instance, young, Black men continue to face a disproportionately high risk of homicide, a disparity that underscores the need for targeted interventions.

The report shows that crime tends to concentrate in "hot spots," or areas where disadvantaged populations are overrepresented. The pandemic saw a surge in gun violence, including homicides, which disproportionately impacted persons of color residing in racially segregated neighborhoods. Although overall crime rates have begun to recede, the impact of these violent incidents continues to resonate within these communities.

Our report also highlights significant disparities in access to victim services. Some victims, particularly Black victims, may receive less compensation due to pervasive racial, ethnic, or gender stereotypes. These disparities are especially concerning in the administration of programs like the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund, where biases can influence the allocation of resources.

To address these challenges, our report emphasizes the necessity of a holistic approach to our criminal legal system—one that not only enforces laws but also addresses the underlying factors contributing to crime. This includes early intervention and support for young people to prevent them from entering the criminal system later in life. It is also essential to challenge the narrative that victims must be deemed "innocent" to receive financial relief from social services and victim compensation programs.

Building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve is crucial, particularly in over-policed neighborhoods. Our report shows that efforts to reduce crime in these areas must be coupled with initiatives to rebuild community trust. Additionally, enhancing victim services to be more trauma-informed, culturally, and linguistically specific could ensure that all victims receive the support they need.

Improving data collection on crime victimization is also critical. By capturing more granular data on race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender, law enforcement agencies can gain a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by these communities and devise more effective strategies to address them.

While these observations and suggestions were not formally adopted by the majority of the Commission, they reflect important insights gained through our investigation into the disparities in crime victimization. The contents of this report provide a roadmap to create a more equitable and just society, where safety, equity, and dignity are not just aspirations but realities for everyone.

As we work to heal our communities, it is clear that this process requires more than just policy changes; it demands a commitment to understanding, empathy, and action. Behind each statistic is a human life, a family affected, and a community in pain. By addressing these challenges with compassion and determination, we can pave the way for a better post-pandemic society for all our communities.

The report is available at the following website: <https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-09/federal-efforts-in-examining-racial-and-ethnic-disparities-among-victims-of-violent-crime.pdf>

C. State Advisory Committees Reports, Memoranda, and Statements

The Right to Criminal Legal Defense in Maine

The Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report regarding indigent legal services in Maine. The contents of the report are primarily based on testimony the Committee heard during public meetings held via videoconference on October 20, 2022; November 15, 2022; and December 15, 2022. The Committee also includes related testimony submitted in writing during the relevant period of public comment. The report begins with a brief background of the issues to be considered by the Committee. It then presents primary findings as they emerged from this testimony, as well as recommendations for addressing areas of civil rights concerns. The report is intended to focus on civil rights concerns regarding the right to legal defense for indigent persons.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website: https://www.usccr.gov/files/2023-11/maine-advisory-committee-report_indigent-legal-services.pdf

Seize the Day: Eliminate Civil Forfeiture in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report regarding Civil Forfeiture in Massachusetts. The contents of the report are primarily based on testimony the Committee heard during four briefings and a systematic analysis of a geographically weighted sample of cases of civil asset forfeiture filed across all eleven counties in Massachusetts between January 2019 and June 2022. The Committee reports that civil asset forfeiture does not further the goal of disrupting criminal enterprises and instead contributes to systematic violations of the civil rights of citizens of the Commonwealth.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:
<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-01/ma-sac-civil-asset-forfeiture-report-2024.pdf>

Teacher and Professional Staff Shortages and Equity in Education in Nevada

The Nevada Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report on the shortages of teachers and other education professionals in Nevada schools and equity in education. The Committee heard testimony via videoconference on April 6, 2023; and April 13, 2023; and May 26, 2023. The report results from a review of testimony at these meetings, combined with recorded testimony presented before the 2022-23 Nevada legislative session submitted during this timeframe. The focus of the Committee's inquiry was to examine whether shortages of teachers and other education professionals create inequities in the areas of access, quality of teaching, student learning, and student discipline. In addition, the Committee examined whether long-term substitute teachers and education professionals have access to sufficient training.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:
<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-01/teacher-and-professional-staff-shortages-and-equity-in-education-report.pdf>

The Insular Cases and the Doctrine of the Unincorporated Territory and its Effects on the Civil Rights of the Residents of Puerto Rico

The Puerto Rico Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a memorandum as part of its study on the effects of the Insular Cases and the Non-Incorporation Doctrine on the civil rights of the residents of Puerto Rico. This memorandum is the first in a series that the Committee will develop over the course of its project, culminating in a final report. With a focus on a general overview of the topic, the Committee highlights a series of findings and recommendations identified in testimony received from subject matter experts and community representatives who spoke from historical, academic, and legal perspectives, as well as lived experiences. The testimony captured a wide breadth of information, from the historical context of the Insular Cases and the relationship between Puerto Rico and the federal government, to the effect on the quality of life of people impacted by the lack of full access to federal public programs, such as older adults, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:
English: https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-02/english_pr-ac_memo-1.pdf
Spanish: https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-02/spanish_pr-ac_memo-1.pdf

Mental Healthcare in the Texas Juvenile Justice System

The Texas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report on Mental Health Care in the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD). The report was issued after a series of public hearings where the Committee heard from individuals, organizations, and professionals with specific knowledge of and experience with the conditions and challenges within TJJD. Most youth in the Texas Juvenile Justice System have clear mental health needs. Not only are these needs not being adequately addressed, but being in state-run facilities may further traumatize the

youth and exacerbate mental health needs. Facility understaffing and under-resourcing has long been a challenge and was exacerbated by the pandemic. And while understaffing is improving, in part due to pay increases, it is still too low.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:
<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-02/report-on-mental-healthcare-in-the-tjtd.pdf>

The Status of Civil Rights in the U.S. Virgin Islands

The U.S. Virgin Islands Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report on the current political and legal status of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the inequality suffered by the U.S. Citizens who reside there. It also contains an examination of the break in the long tradition of granting statehood to territories, and the reality of 21st century colonialism in the territories. The report was issued after a series of public meetings and a collection of testimony provided by expert panelists. Primary concerns identified in the report include the lack of civil rights protections based on the selective application of the Constitution by a Congress that does not have to answer to the U.S. Citizens living in the Territories, who have no voting representation in the House of Representatives and no representation in the Senate. These U.S. Citizens lack the right to vote in the Presidential election, are denied access to critical government assistance programs, and even military veterans living in the Islands suffer from a lack of adequate healthcare by an under-funded Veterans Administration system.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:
<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-02/usvi-information-brief.pdf>

Physical Barriers to Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities in Washington

The Washington Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report on accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The report was issued after a series of public hearings where the Committee heard from individuals, organizations, and professionals with specific knowledge of and experience with accessibility in Washington. The Committee found that even though the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been in existence for decades, localities are not fully complying with accessibility standards in public spaces. Washington has laws that protect against discrimination in public spaces and accommodations and the “full enjoyment” of these facilities. But lack of accessibility and compliance remains a critical civil rights issue that affects over 1.2 million disabled Washington citizens with a mobility-type disability.

The report, memorandum or statement is available at the following website:
<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-03/wa-report-on-physical-accessibility.pdf>

Examining the New York Child Welfare System and Its Impact on Black Children and Families

The New York Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report on accessibility for individuals with disabilities. the New York Child Welfare System and Its Impact

on Black Children and Families. The report was issued after a series of web briefings, a public forum, and periods of public comment. The Committee heard testimony and received written statements from individuals impacted by the child welfare system, researchers, academics, advocates, legal scholars, and government officials. In the report, the Committee details twenty-nine findings that highlight disparate involvement of Black families in mandatory reporting, investigative, and removal practices that result in substantial immediate and long-term harms for Black families and their communities.

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

https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-05/ny-child-welfare-system-sac-report_0.pdf

Examining Fair Housing and Equal Access to Housing Opportunities in Minnesota

The Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report on Fair Housing and Equal Access to Housing Opportunities in Minnesota. The report was issued after a series of web held in the fall of 2023 to the winter of 2024. The Committee heard testimony and received written statements from individuals responding to the Committee's inquiry concerning housing affordability and equitable access to housing. The report puts forward eighteen recommendations directed to the Commission and asks for corrective actions from stakeholders including the U.S. Congress, the Federal Trade Commission, The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Minnesota Governor, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Minnesota Legislature, and Minnesota Attorney General's Office.

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

https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-07/mn-sac-access-to-affordable-housing-report_0.pdf

Civil and Voting Rights in Tennessee

The Tennessee Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report on voting rights in Tennessee. The report was issued after a series of public hearings where the Committee heard from individuals, organizations, and professionals with specific knowledge of, and experience with, the conditions surrounding voting rights, and the unique challenges faced in 2020. The Committee explored the topic of voting rights through two main themes: the civil rights effects on voting after the passage of Senate Bill 8005 and access to voting during the Covid-19 pandemic. The two inquiries are linked by their real and perceived impact on the legitimacy of the political process within the state of Tennessee. The report includes findings and actionable recommendations directed to both the Commission and key stakeholders in Tennessee.

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

https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-07/tn-report_voting-rights_2024.pdf

Educational Adequacy & Disparities for Native American Students in New Mexico

The New Mexico Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report on educational adequacy for Native American students in New Mexico. The report was issued after a series of public hearings where the Committee heard from individuals, organizations, and professionals with specific knowledge of and experience with education in New Mexico. The Committee provides several recommendations for the New Mexico Legislature, the Governor of

New Mexico, the New Mexico Public Education Department, and the respective school districts that the Committee believes would address many of these problems and vastly improve the outcomes for the Native American youth in New Mexico.

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

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2024-08/educational-adequacy-for-native-american-students.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 when 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 2025 Performance Targets	FY 2026 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 when their topics align.	Headquarters issued report will include Advisory Committee's reports we their topics align.

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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.

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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 recommendations 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

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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 2025 Performance Targets	FY 2026 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

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Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2025 Performance Targets	FY 2026 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 2025 Performance Targets	FY 2026 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.

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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

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Objective	Strategy	Performance Measures	FY 2025 Performance Targets	FY 2026 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.