

Ohio Civil Rights Commission

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- GRF funding bump to slow depletion of federal funds reserve
- Series of budget reductions means three out of every ten staff positions eliminated over last five years or so

OVERVIEW

Duties and Responsibilities

The Ohio Civil Rights Commission is charged with enforcing Chapter 4112. of the Revised Code, which prohibits discrimination in the following areas: (1) employment on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, ancestry, or disability, (2) places of public accommodation on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, ancestry, or disability, (3) housing on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, or familial status, (4) granting of credit on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, ancestry, disability, or marital status, and (6) higher education on the basis of disability.

The Commission was established in 1959 with the enactment of Am. S.B. 10 of the 103rd General Assembly. The Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints five members to the Commission, not more than three of whom can be of the same political party, and at least one member of whom must be at least 60 years of age.

The Commission receives approximately 5,000 official charges of discrimination each year, and thousands of inquiries from the public with questions and/or concerns regarding discrimination. State law mandates that investigations must be completed within one year.

Agency in Brief

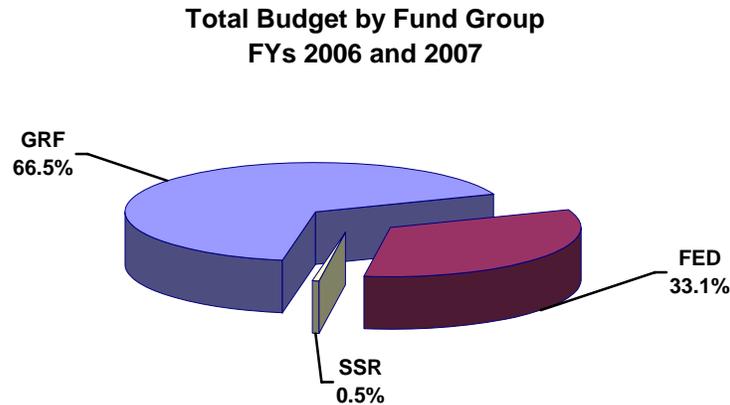
The following table selectively summarizes Commission appropriations and staffing information.

Commission In Brief					
Number of Employees*	Total Appropriations-All Funds		GRF Appropriations		Appropriation Bill(s)
	2006	2007	2006	2007	
138	\$11.06 million	\$11.08 million	\$7.25 million	\$7.47 million	Am. Sub. H.B. 66

*Employee count obtained from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) payroll reports as of June 2005.

Expense by Fund Group Summary

The pie chart immediately below shows the total appropriations (FYs 2006 and 2007) by fund group. This information is shown for the GRF and for all funds.



Historically, it has been the case that revenues generated through work-sharing agreements between the Commission and both the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have covered roughly one-third of the Commission's annual operating expenses. The EEOC contract is for a fixed dollar amount, subject to modification by EEOC. The HUD contract is variable depending upon the number of eligible cases processed the previous year. From the Commission's perspective, both sources of federal funding are somewhat unpredictable.

Staffing Levels

As a result of budget reductions and various related actions taken to reduce costs, the Commission has cut its number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff from approximately 200 in FY 2000 to around 140 in FY 2005. The Commission has made those staff reductions through a variety of mechanisms, including abolishing positions, implementing an early retirement incentive plan, downsizing by attrition, and ending the practice of using college interns. Based on the enacted budget for FYs 2006 and 2007, the Commission will be able to employ an annual workforce of around 145 or so FTEs.

Vetoed Provisions

The Commission is not directly affected by any of the items contained in Am. Sub. H.B. 66 that were vetoed by the Governor.

ANALYSIS OF THE ENACTED BUDGET

The Commission is a single-program series agency with two major activities or programs, both of which are discussed in more detail below.

Program Series 1

Protection of Civil Rights

Purpose: To protect the civil rights of Ohio's citizens as well as take a proactive approach through educating, training, and disseminating publications informing the public of their rights.

The following table shows the line items that are used to fund the Protection of Civil Rights program series, as well as the enacted funding levels.

Fund	ALI	Title	FY 2006	FY 2007
General Revenue Fund				
GRF	876-321	Operating Expenses	\$7,253,075	\$7,470,667
General Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$7,253,075	\$7,470,667
Federal Special Revenue Fund				
334	876-601	Investigations	\$3,760,000	\$3,560,000
Federal Special Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$3,760,000	\$3,560,000
State Special Revenue Services Fund				
217	876-604	Operations Support	\$50,951	\$50,951
State Special Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$50,951	\$50,951
Total Funding: Protection of Civil Rights			\$11,064,026	\$11,081,618

This analysis focuses on the following specific programs within the Protection of Civil Rights program series:

- **Investigation and Enforcement**
- **Public Affairs and Community Service**

Investigation and Enforcement

Program Description: This program: (1) processes approximately 5,000 discrimination charges annually, which includes charge intake, field investigation, conciliation/settlement, case recommendations, public hearings, compliance reviews, and enforcement, and (2) pays approximately \$400,000 per year to the Office of the Attorney General for the services of the equivalent of 5.5 full-time attorneys to prosecute discrimination cases.

Funding Sources: (1) GRF, (2) federal reimbursement payments, and (3) payment for the provision of various goods and services, including copies of Commission documents.

Implication of the Enacted Budget: The Investigation and Enforcement program is fully funded by the enacted budget, which includes additional GRF moneys to compensate for the fact that the Commission has depleted its federal funding reserve. It still may be possible that the Commission will lose additional personnel due to budgetary constraints, but at the time of this writing, it is hoped that any such cuts would occur through attrition.

Public Affairs and Community Service

Program Description: This program provides technical assistance and other community service programs to inform the public about Ohio laws against discrimination.

Funding Source: Federal funds designated specifically for technical assistance and community service programs

Implication of the Enacted Budget: The enacted budget fully funded this program, which should allow the Commission to maintain current service levels.