

# State of Maryland

## Commission on Civil Rights

*"Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination."*



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### Maryland Commission on Civil Rights Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget Response to Department of Legislative Services Budget Analysis

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee  
Health & Human Services Subcommittee  
Senator Melony Griffith, Chairperson  
February 14, 2020

House Appropriations Committee  
Health & Social Services Subcommittee  
Delegate Kirill Reznik, Chairperson  
February 26, 2020

To the Members of the House and Senate Health & Human Services subcommittees:

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Department of Legislative Services Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Analysis. We would like to thank our assigned analyst, Mr. Samuel Quist, for his thorough analysis. While the current budget realities and resulting spending plan present challenges, we believe it is responsible.

The recommended spending plan will preserve the opportunity for the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) to meet its production standards because no currently filled staff reductions will occur. In fact, productivity continues to increase as a result of targeted staff training coupled with the gained experience of recent Civil Rights Officer (investigator) hires. In addition, our recently instituted processing efficiencies are yielding positive results on the number of days to complete case closures.

In FY 2017, Intake trended sharply upward over previous years due to a number of systemic complaints that were transferred to MCCR from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). While there has been a steady decrease in the number of Intakes, as detailed in our Annual Report, the FY 2019 numbers are more aligned with agency expectations based on previous years. Our strong Intake numbers are the direct result to the relationship-building and collaboration efforts by our Education & Outreach Unit (E&O). Of particular note, in FY 2019 E&O held 133 events, trained 3,679 individuals, and provided outreach to

approximately 8,163 individuals at functions and programs with state agencies, business, and organizations throughout the state.

While we have not had significant reductions in staffing over the past few years, please note that any reductions in full staffing levels will have a debilitating impact on the service delivery of the agency. At our current staffing levels, MCCR is continually challenged at meeting our federal contracts and obligations with the EEOC and U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. Despite our successes, the number of cases assigned to staff creates little margin for error and overwhelms our investigators who go above and beyond what is expected of them in order to carry out the mission of the agency. Even a singular reduction would threaten this balance and jeopardize the agency's sustainability in maintaining its relationship with our federal partners.

In closing, MCCR respectfully requests the Subcommittees' support in concurring with the Governor's allowance for MCCR in his FY 2021 budget.

*Background: The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (formerly the Maryland Commission on Human Relations) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and physical and mental disability.*