

PERFORMANCE AUDIT
OF THE
MICHIGAN WOMEN'S COMMISSION
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS
July 1999

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

MICHIGAN WOMEN'S COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

This report, issued in July 1999, contains the results of our performance audit* of the Michigan Women's Commission, Department of Civil Rights.

AUDIT PURPOSE

This performance audit was conducted as part of the constitutional responsibility of the Office of the Auditor General. Performance audits are conducted on a priority basis related to the potential for improving effectiveness* and efficiency* .

BACKGROUND

Act 1, P.A. 1968 (Sections 10.71 - 10.77 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*), established the Michigan Women's Commission within the Executive Office of the Governor.

Executive Order 1973-7 provided that the Commission would remain an independent unit within the Executive Office of the Governor; however, the budget, procurement, staffing, and related management functions of the Commission were transferred to the Department of Management and Budget. Subsequently, Executive Order 1991-29, effective December 16, 1991, transferred all the statutory authority, powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the Commission to the director of the

* See glossary on page 13 for definition.

Department of Civil Rights, by a type I transfer*, as defined by Section 16.103 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*.

Section 10.73 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws* provides that the Commission shall stimulate and encourage throughout the State the study and review of the status of women; strengthen home life by directing attention to critical problems confronting women as wives, mothers, homemakers, and workers; recommend methods of overcoming discrimination against women in public and private employment and civil and political rights; promote more effective methods for enabling women to develop their skills, to continue their education, and to be retrained; make surveys and appoint advisory committees in the fields of, but not limited to, education, social services, labor laws and employment policies, law enforcement, health, new and expanded services, legal rights, family relations, and volunteer services; and secure appropriate recognition of women's accomplishments and contributions to this State.

For fiscal year 1997-98, Commission expenditures totaled approximately \$225,000. The Commission had three full-time permanent employees as of December 31, 1998.

**AUDIT OBJECTIVE
AND CONCLUSION**

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness of the Commission in fulfilling its statutory requirements to direct attention to and recommend methods of overcoming critical problems confronting women and to recognize women's accomplishments and contributions in the State.

Conclusion: Our assessment disclosed that the Commission actively worked toward fulfilling its statutory

* See glossary on page 13 for definition

requirements to direct attention to and recommend methods of overcoming critical problems confronting women and to recognize women's accomplishments and contributions in the State. However, we noted a reportable condition* related to the continuous quality improvement process* (Finding 1).

**AUDIT SCOPE AND
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Michigan Women's Commission. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

Our methodology included the examination of records and program activities for the period October 1, 1995 through December 31, 1998. To assess the effectiveness of the Commission, we reviewed the enabling statute and other program documentation, interviewed Commission staff, and tested the Commission's compliance with the enabling statute, appropriations acts, and policies and procedures.

**AGENCY RESPONSES
AND PRIOR AUDIT
FOLLOW-UP**

Our audit report includes 1 finding and 1 recommendation. The Commission concurs with the recommendation.

The Commission had not complied with our prior audit recommendation. The recommendation was rewritten for inclusion in this audit report.

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Dr. Evelyn L. Crane, Chairperson
Civil Rights Commission
State of Michigan Plaza Building
Detroit, Michigan

and

Dr. Nanette Lee Reynolds, Director
Department of Civil Rights
Victor Center
Lansing, Michigan

and

Ms. Patti Garrett, Chairperson
Michigan Women's Commission
741 N. Cedar Street, Suite 102
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Dr. Crane, Dr. Reynolds, and Ms. Garrett:

This is our report on the performance audit of the Michigan Women's Commission, Department of Civil Rights.

This report contains our executive digest; description of agency; audit objective, scope, and methodology and agency response and prior audit follow-up; comment, finding, recommendation, and agency preliminary response; and a glossary of terms.

The agency preliminary response was taken from the agency's response subsequent to our audit fieldwork. The *Michigan Compiled Laws* and administrative procedures require that the audited agency develop a formal response within 60 days after release of the audit report.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us during this audit.

AUDITOR GENERAL

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Description of Agency

Act 1, P.A. 1968 (Sections 10.71 - 10.77 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*), established the Michigan Women's Commission within the Executive Office of the Governor.

Executive Order 1973-7 provided that the Commission would remain an independent unit within the Executive Office of the Governor; however, the budget, procurement, staffing, and related management functions of the Commission were transferred to the Department of Management and Budget. Subsequently, Executive Order 1991-29, effective December 16, 1991, transferred all the statutory authority, powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the Commission to the director of the Department of Civil Rights, by a type I transfer, as defined by Section 16.103 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*.

Section 10.73 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws* provides that the Commission shall stimulate and encourage throughout the State the study and review of the status of women; strengthen home life by directing attention to critical problems confronting women as wives, mothers, homemakers, and workers; recommend methods of overcoming discrimination against women in public and private employment and civil and political rights; promote more effective methods for enabling women to develop their skills, to continue their education, and to be retrained; make surveys and appoint advisory committees in the fields of, but not limited to, education, social services, labor laws and employment policies, law enforcement, health, new and expanded services, legal rights, family relations, and volunteer services; and secure appropriate recognition of women's accomplishments and contributions to this State.

The Commission consists of 15 members who are broadly representative of all fields of interest to women and four ex-officio members. The Governor appoints the Commission members, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for three-year terms.

The four ex-officio members are directors, or their representatives, of the Departments of Civil Service, Education, and Consumer and Industry Services and the Family Independence Agency. Commission members are paid per diem compensation and are reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

For fiscal year 1997-98, Commission expenditures totaled approximately \$225,000. The Commission had three full-time permanent employees as of December 31, 1998.

Audit Objective, Scope, and Methodology and Agency Response and Prior Audit Follow-Up

Audit Objective

The objective of our performance audit of the Michigan Women's Commission, Department of Civil Rights, was to assess the effectiveness of the Commission in fulfilling its statutory requirements to direct attention to and recommend methods of overcoming critical problems confronting women and to recognize women's accomplishments and contributions in the State.

Audit Scope

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Michigan Women's Commission. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

Audit Methodology

Our audit procedures were performed between September 1998 and February 1999 and included the examination of records and program activities for the period October 1, 1995 through December 31, 1998.

Our audit methodology included a review of the enabling statute. We interviewed Commission staff, examined Commission meeting minutes, and reviewed other program documentation to assess the effectiveness of the Commission in fulfilling its statutory requirements. Also, we tested the Commission's compliance with the enabling statute, appropriations acts, and policies and procedures.

Agency Response and Prior Audit Follow-Up

Our audit report includes 1 finding and 1 recommendation. The Commission concurs with the recommendation.

The agency preliminary response which follows the recommendation in our audit report was taken from the agency's written comments and oral discussion subsequent to our audit fieldwork. Section 18.1462 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws* and Department of

Management and Budget Administrative Guide procedure 1280.02 require the Department of Civil Rights to develop a formal response to our audit finding and recommendation within 60 days after release of the report.

The Commission had not complied with our prior audit recommendation. The recommendation was rewritten for inclusion in this audit report.

COMMENT, FINDING, RECOMMENDATION, AND AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMISSION

COMMENT

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness of the Michigan Women's Commission in fulfilling its statutory requirements to direct attention to and recommend methods of overcoming critical problems confronting women and to recognize women's accomplishments and contributions in the State.

Conclusion: Our assessment disclosed that the Commission actively worked toward fulfilling its statutory requirements to direct attention to and recommend methods of overcoming critical problems confronting women and to recognize women's accomplishments and contributions in the State. However, we noted a reportable condition related to the continuous quality improvement process.

FINDING

1. Continuous Quality Improvement Process

The Commission had not established a complete continuous quality improvement process to measure and report on the effectiveness of the Commission's programs and efforts to address issues related to women in the State.

A continuous quality improvement process should include: goals* and objectives* related to the program's mission*; performance standards* that describe the desired level of outcomes* based upon management expectations, peer group performance, and/or historical performance; performance indicators* to measure outcomes; a management information system to gather accurate performance data; a comparison of performance data to desired outcomes; a reporting of the comparison results to management; and proposals of program changes to improve effectiveness.

* See glossary on page 13 for definition.

The Commission operates from a strategic plan and annually establishes goals and objectives related to issues affecting women in the State. At year-end, the Commission prepares a report identifying the actions taken to meet those goals and objectives. Commission efforts also included establishing committees to study women's issues, providing information to women in the State related to health and education issues, and providing information regarding legislation affecting women in the State. However, the absence of a performance measurement system* limited the Commission's ability to determine if its programs and efforts were effective in addressing issues related to women in the State.

Developing performance measures would provide a basis to help the Commission measure, report, and propose changes to improve the effectiveness of the Commission's programs and efforts to address issues related to women in the State.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Commission establish a complete continuous quality improvement process to measure and report on the effectiveness of the Commission's programs and efforts to address issues related to women in the State.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

The Commission concurs with the recommendation. The Department of Civil Rights is beginning to develop and implement a continuous quality improvement process.

* See glossary on page 13 for definition.

Glossary of Terms

continuous quality improvement process	A process that consists of goals and objectives related to a program's mission; performance standards that describe the desired level of outcomes based upon management expectations, peer group performance, and/or historical performance; performance indicators to measure outcomes; a management information system to gather accurate performance data; a comparison of performance data to desired outcomes; a reporting of the comparison results to management; and proposals of program changes to improve effectiveness.
effectiveness	Program success in achieving mission and goals.
efficiency	Achieving the most outputs and outcomes practical for the amount of resources applied or minimizing the amount of resources required to attain a certain level of outputs or outcomes.
goals	The agency's intended outcomes or impacts for a program to accomplish its mission.
inputs	Resources (e.g., staff hours or expenditures) that a program consumes in producing outputs.
mission	The agency's main purpose or the reason the agency was established.
objectives	Specific outputs a program seeks to perform and/or inputs a program seeks to apply in its efforts to achieve its goals.
outcomes	The actual impacts of the program. Outcomes should positively impact the purpose for which the program was established.

outputs	The products or services produced by the program. The program assumes that producing its outputs will result in favorable program outcomes.
performance audit	An economy and efficiency audit or a program audit that is designed to provide an independent assessment of the performance of a governmental entity, program, activity, or function to improve public accountability and to facilitate decision making by parties responsible for overseeing or initiating corrective action.
performance indicators	Information of a quantitative or qualitative nature indicating program outcomes, outputs, or inputs. Performance indicators are typically used to assess achievement of goals and/or objectives.
performance measurement system	A system for capturing and processing data (including forms, procedures, information data bases, and reporting) to determine if the program is achieving its goals.
performance standards	A desired level of output or outcome as identified in statutes, regulations, contracts, management goals, industry practices, peer groups, or historical performance.
reportable condition	A matter coming to the auditor's attention that, in his/her judgment, should be communicated because it represents either an opportunity for improvement or a significant deficiency in management's ability to operate a program in an effective and efficient manner.
type I transfer	The transferring intact of an existing department, board, commission, or agency to a principal department established by the Executive Organization Act of 1965 (Act 380, P.A. 1965).