

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

ENFORCEMENT BUREAU

INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of our performance audit of the Enforcement Bureau, Department of Civil Rights, for the period October 1, 1993 through February 28, 1995.

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

The Enforcement Bureau, Department of Civil Rights, investigates and resolves complaints alleging unlawful discrimination filed under the guarantees of Michigan's Civil Rights Laws, Acts 220 and 453, P.A. 1976, as amended. These laws prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, marital status, arrest record, and handicap. Persons who are aggrieved may file sworn complaints within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act.

The Bureau is comprised of three functional areas of complaint control, investigation, and administration. Staff, who work from three regional centers located in Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Lansing, averaged 114 full-time employees during fiscal year 1993-94.

During fiscal year 1993-94, a total of 4,467 complaints were filed and 4,303 complaints were closed by the Bureau. The Bureau had assumed jurisdiction and completed or will complete the investigations for these complaints.

**AUDIT OBJECTIVES,
CONCLUSIONS, AND
NOTEWORTHY
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness of the Bureau's processing of complaints alleging unlawful discrimination. Our assessment was primarily designed to evaluate the intake process, complaint control, investigation, and case load management.

Conclusion: We concluded that the Bureau was reasonably effective in carrying out its responsibilities related to complaint processing. However, our assessment disclosed reportable conditions relating to complaint case monitoring and resolution/fact finding conferences (Findings 1 and 2).

Noteworthy Accomplishments: During our audit period, the Department completed an internal study of the Department's case load management process. The study, which was accepted by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission in June 1993, was completed because of the Commission's desire to reduce case processing time and the case backlog. The Department is in the process of

implementing the recommendations from the study as resources become available.

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness of the Bureau's internal control structure over complaint processing activities.

Conclusion: We concluded that the internal control structure was reasonably effective, and our assessment did not disclose any material weaknesses. However, we noted reportable conditions related to reported case activity, investigation case files, production reports, production standard compliance, and the complaint information system (Findings 3 through 7).

Audit Objective: To assess the Bureau's compliance with selected State and federal laws and regulations related to the complaint processing activities.

Conclusion: Our assessment of the Bureau's compliance with selected laws and regulations did not disclose any material instances of noncompliance.

**AUDIT SCOPE
AND
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Enforcement Bureau for the period October 1, 1993 through February 28, 1995. 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.

To assess the effectiveness of the Bureau in carrying out its responsibilities related to processing complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, our methodology included interviewing Bureau personnel, reviewing management reports, and reviewing complaint investigation case files. We reviewed and compared complaint processing statistical data to identify any significant trends for complaints filed, closed, and in active status.

To assess the effectiveness of the internal control structure, we reviewed Bureau policies and procedures, reporting practices, statistical data, case production standards and reports, and the accuracy of the automated complaint information system.

To assess the Bureau's compliance with State and federal laws and regulations, we identified State and federal laws applicable to the complaint processing activities. We tested the Bureau's compliance with the applicable laws during our review of complaint investigation case files.

**AGENCY
RESPONSES**

Our audit report includes 7 findings and 7 corresponding recommendations. The Department's preliminary response indicated that it concurred with the recommendations and that it is in the process of implementing or will implement the recommendations as resources become available.