

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

MICHIGAN COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

INTRODUCTION

This report, issued in July 1999, contains the results of our performance audit* of the Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs, 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 195, P.A. 1972 (Sections 16.711 - 16.720 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*), established the Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs 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*.

The Commission's responsibility is to investigate problems common to Indian residents of Michigan and to assist tribal governments, Indian organizations, and individuals with problems involving education, employment, civil rights, health, housing, treaty rights, and any other right or service due the Indians of Michigan. The Commission's mission* is to promote increased self-sufficiency and independence of Indian people and to effectuate positive change for the Native American community Statewide.

Act 174, P.A. 1976, as amended (Sections 390.1251 - 390.1253 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*), established the Indian Tuition Waiver (ITW) Program, which provided for the waiver of tuition for State resident North American Indians at Michigan public community colleges, public universities, and certain federal tribally controlled community colleges.

Effective with fiscal year 1996-97, the Commission ceased to administer the ITW Program. The responsibility to administer the ITW Program was transferred to the public universities and community colleges as the ITW Program's appropriation was allocated among and provided directly to each public university and community college as part of its annual operations appropriation.

For fiscal year 1997-98, Commission expenditures totaled approximately \$198,450. The Commission had two full-time permanent employees as of November 30, 1998.

**AUDIT OBJECTIVE
AND CONCLUSION**

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness of the Commission in investigating problems common to Indian residents of Michigan and in assisting tribal governments, Indian organizations, and individuals with problems

involving education, employment, civil rights, health, housing, treaty rights, and any other right or service due Indians in Michigan.

Conclusion: Our assessment disclosed that the Commission actively worked toward fulfilling its responsibilities in investigating problems common to Indian residents of Michigan and in assisting tribal governments, Indian organizations, and individuals with problems involving education, employment, civil rights, health, housing, treaty rights, and any other right or service due Indians in Michigan. 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 Commission on Indian Affairs. 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 November 30, 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 complied with 4 of the 5 prior audit recommendations that were included within the scope of our current audit. One recommendation was rewritten for inclusion in this audit report.