

PERFORMANCE AUDIT  
OF THE  
COMMISSION ON SPANISH-SPEAKING AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS

July 1999

## EXECUTIVE DIGEST

# COMMISSION ON SPANISH-SPEAKING AFFAIRS

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**INTRODUCTION** This report, issued in July 1999, contains the results of our performance audit\* of the Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs, Department of Civil Rights.

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**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\*.

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**BACKGROUND** Act 164, P.A. 1975 (Sections 18.301 - 18.307 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*), established the Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs in the Department of Management and Budget. Act 164 also established the Office of Spanish-Speaking Affairs within the Department of Management and Budget and a State Interagency Council on Spanish-Speaking Affairs within the Office.

Executive Order 1991-29, effective December 16, 1991, transferred all the statutory authority, powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the Commission and the Office 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*.

\* See glossary on page 13 for definition.

The Commission's purpose is to develop a unified policy and plan of action to serve the needs of Michigan's Spanish-speaking people. The Office's purpose is to provide the Commission with information concerning the problems of Spanish-speaking people and to implement Commission policy. The Council's purpose is to coordinate and provide for the exchange of information on all programs relating to services for Spanish-speaking people and to assist the Office and the Commission in the development of an annual report.

For fiscal year 1997-98, Commission expenditures totaled approximately \$208,000. The Office had two full-time permanent employees as of December 31, 1998.

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**AUDIT OBJECTIVE  
AND CONCLUSION**

**Audit Objective:** To assess the effectiveness of the Commission in fulfilling its statutory requirements to review, advise, and make recommendations concerning State Hispanic programs and to recognize Hispanic accomplishments and contributions in the State.

**Conclusion:** Our assessment disclosed that the Commission actively worked toward fulfilling its statutory requirements to review, advise, and make recommendations concerning State Hispanic programs and to recognize Hispanic accomplishments and contributions in the State. However, we noted a reportable condition\* related to the continuous quality improvement process\* (Finding 1).

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**AUDIT SCOPE AND  
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of

\* See glossary on page 13 for definition.

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, interviewed Commission staff, and tested the Commission's compliance with the enabling statute, appropriations acts, and policies and procedures.

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**AGENCY RESPONSE  
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 the 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. Carmen Munoz, Chairperson  
Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs  
741 N. Cedar Street, Suite 102  
Lansing, Michigan

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

This is our report on the performance audit of the Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs, Department of Civil Rights.

This report contains our executive digest; description of agency; audit objective, scope, and methodology and agency responses 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 164, P.A. 1975 (Sections 18.301 - 18.307 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*), established the Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs in the Department of Management and Budget. Act 164 also established the Office of Spanish-Speaking Affairs within the Department of Management and Budget and a State Interagency Council on Spanish-Speaking Affairs within the Office.

Executive Order 1991-29, effective December 16, 1991, transferred all the statutory authority, powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the Commission and the Office 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 purpose is to develop a unified policy and plan of action to serve the needs of Michigan's Spanish-speaking people. The Office's purpose is to provide the Commission with information concerning the problems of Spanish-speaking people and to implement Commission policy. The Council's purpose is to coordinate and provide for the exchange of information on all programs relating to services for Spanish-speaking people and to assist the Office and the Commission in the development of an annual report.

The Commission consists of 15 members appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for three-year terms. The members are Spanish-speaking and of Spanish-speaking origin. The members are paid per diem compensation for attending meetings and are reimbursed for actual and necessary traveling expenses incurred on official business.

The Council consists of the directors, or their authorized representatives, of the Departments of Agriculture, Career Development, Civil Rights, Community Health, Corrections, Management and Budget, and Natural Resources; the director of the Family Independence Agency; the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the State Treasurer; the State Personnel Director; the Attorney General; the Secretary of State; the executive director of the Michigan Women's Commission; and the chairperson of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

For fiscal year 1997-98, Commission expenditures totaled approximately \$208,000. The Office had two full-time permanent employees as of December 31, 1998.

## Audit Objective, Scope, and Methodology and Agency Responses and Prior Audit Follow-Up

### Audit Objective

The objective of our performance audit of the Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs, Department of Civil Rights, was to assess the effectiveness of the Commission in fulfilling its statutory requirements to review, advise, and make recommendations concerning State Hispanic programs and to recognize Hispanic accomplishments and contributions in the State.

### Audit Scope

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Commission on Spanish-Speaking 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.

### 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 review of the enabling statute. We interviewed Commission staff, examined Commission meeting minutes, and 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 Responses 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 the 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 Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs in fulfilling its statutory requirements to review, advise, and make recommendations concerning State Hispanic programs and to recognize Hispanic accomplishments and contributions in the State.

**Conclusion:** Our assessment disclosed that the Commission actively worked toward fulfilling its statutory requirements to review, advise, and make recommendations concerning State Hispanic programs and to recognize Hispanic 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 the State's Spanish-speaking people.

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 annually establishes goals and objectives related to issues affecting Spanish-speaking people of 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 issues related to Spanish-speaking people, providing information to Spanish-speaking people in the State, providing assistance to Spanish-speaking migrant workers, and working on legislation affecting Spanish-speaking people in the State. However, the absence of a performance measurement system\* limits the Commission's ability to determine if it is effectively addressing issues related to the State's Spanish-speaking people.

Developing performance measures would provide a basis to help the Commission measure, report, and propose changes to improve its effectiveness in addressing issues related to the State's Spanish-speaking people.

### **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 the State's Spanish-speaking people.

### **AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE**

The Commission concurs with the recommendation. The Commission informed us that the issue will be specifically addressed at the next Commission meeting and a working model will be in place not later than the end of the current year.

\* See glossary on page 13 for definition.

## Glossary of Terms

<b>continuous quality improvement process</b>	A process that consists of 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.
<b>effectiveness</b>	Program success in achieving mission and goals.
<b>efficiency</b>	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.
<b>goals</b>	The agency's intended outcomes or impacts for a program to accomplish its mission.
<b>inputs</b>	Resources (e.g., staff hours or expenditures) that a program consumes in producing outputs.
<b>mission</b>	The agency's main purpose or the reason the agency was established.
<b>objectives</b>	Specific outputs a program seeks to perform and/or inputs a program seeks to apply in its efforts to achieve its goals.
<b>outcomes</b>	The actual impacts of the program. Outcomes should positively impact the purpose for which the program was established.

<b>outputs</b>	The products or services produced by the program. The program assumes that producing its outputs will result in favorable program outcomes.
<b>performance audit</b>	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.
<b>performance indicators</b>	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.
<b>performance measurement system</b>	A system for capturing and processing data (including forms, procedures, information data bases, and reporting) to determine if the program is achieving its goals.
<b>performance standards</b>	A desired level of output or outcome as identified in statutes, regulations, contracts, management goals, industry practices, peer groups, or historical performance.
<b>reportable condition</b>	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.
<b>type I transfer</b>	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).