

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
November 17, 2022 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP, Chairperson; Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP; Magdalena S. Navarro, MSc, Diane E. Bernier

Management Present: Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director; Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director; Glendora Hughes, General Counsel; Kara N. Hunt, PhD, Director of Education & Outreach; Martine Chery, Assistant Director for Administration.

Staff Present: Gerald T. Ford, Executive Associate; Alesha Bell, Investigative Unit Supervisor

Meeting called to order at 10:05 am

Motion to approve the October minutes was suspended due to lack of a quorum.

Chairperson's Report

The Chair and the Executive Director will explore organizing a meeting with the Governor-Elect and the new Attorney General by early next year.

Executive Director's Report

The Executive and Deputy Director participated in training sponsored by EEOC on leadership. A part of that training was the importance of understanding/creating organizational core values. As a result of that training, the Executive Director determined that MCCR would greatly benefit from engaging in a process to identify its core values. Over the past few days, staff has gone through a series of facilitated exercises by the same facilitators from the EEOC training designed to help us identify our own core values.

In addition, MCCR is preparing to do an internal staff survey to evaluate the culture of MCCR. This survey will be an excellent gauge as to what the organization is doing well and how we can improve upon our overall environment.

Deputy Director's Report

- For the month of October, MCCR brought in 50 complaints
 - 32 employment
 - 15 housing
 - 4 public accommodations
- A total of 34 abortions for the month of October
 - 20 for employment

- 9 housing
 - 5 public accommodations
- Housing and PA units,
 - 142 open housing cases.
 - Average number of days open is 307 days.
 - 22 open Title XX only cases with an average of 193 days
 - 34 open PA cases with the average number of days over 652 days
 - During the month of October 2022, the Office of General Counsel closed: • 1 Housing case (Dual Filed with HUD) with a total monetary settlement of \$30,000.
- Employment
 - As of November 1st, 280 assigned employment cases
 - Approximately 311 employment cases in backlog status
 - Average number of days open for employment cases is 480 days
 - During the month of October, closed 32 employment cases with a total monetary benefit of \$12,000
- Have not received this year's EEOC contract yet. Anticipate receiving it in February.
- Effective July 1, recreational marijuana will be legal in the State of Maryland. MCCR has been having internal conversations around the impact this new law will have. MCCR hopes to partner with stakeholders around the state to plan a symposium on recreational marijuana use legalization and its employment and housing implications.
- Completed Biannual HUD Performance assessment. Do not expect to have any major noncompliance findings in our assessment report.
- Staffing in MCCR
 - Added 4 contractual investigators. Two contractual PINS will be dedicated to the Housing Unit. The other 2 will go to the employment unit.
 - Promoted Aneika Peoples to a Civil Rights Officer I
 - Currently recruiting for an Office Secretary

General Counsel's Report

- General Counsel added to the Deputy Director's report on recreational cannabis. A major issue in Maryland is the law did not address cannabis in the workplace. There is very little case law that would provide guidance. Now that cannabis will be legal in Maryland, legislation and regulations must be drafted to address issues concerning cannabis and the workplace.
- There was nearly 1/3 turnover in the General Assembly. It is imperative that MCCR makes its presence known to the new members of the General Assembly and to the Governor elect.
- General Counsel has been in contact with Sen. Lee's office and the Senator is interested in resubmitting the Public Accommodations bill.
- Reviewed written case report.

Administration Report

- As of November 1st, MCCR s has spent 36% of its budget

- MCCR currently has one vacancy.
 - Office Secretary III –
- MCCR has submitted its FY 24 Budget Request to DBM and responded to DBM's analysis.

Director of Education & Outreach Report

- Civil Rights Leadership Program – E&O has begun recruiting for this year's cohort and the deadline for submitting an application is February 1st. Recruited at several African American Studies classes at the University of Maryland College Park
- Young Scholars Program (in partnership with Prince Georges County Schools) has ended, and E&O educated 120 scholars. They will begin the fair housing segment in January.
- Maryland Equity and Inclusion Leadership Program (in partnership with the University of Baltimore) has shifted to an 8-week program. It will run three times per year as opposed to once a year. The deadline for applying is November 30th.
- Future virtual trainings
 - December 7: Disability, Reasonable Accommodations and the Law
- Western Maryland Advisory Council had a recent vacancy and E&O is looking to fill that vacancy by January.

Old/New Business

- The next in person Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 14, 2023, the option to join virtually will also be available.

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 pm.