



PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

October 2012

Report No. 2012-11

Merger of the Human Relations Commission with the Civil Rights Division Would Yield Limited Cost Savings

Summary

The General Assembly directed the Program Evaluation Division to evaluate the Department of Administration's Human Relations Commission and the Office of Administrative Hearing's Civil Rights Division to determine whether there is duplication of services and to recommend the placement of the agencies. The Human Relations Commission performs two major activities: resolving housing discrimination complaints for private persons and improving community relations. The Civil Rights Division has one major activity: resolving employment discrimination complaints for government employees.

Although the Human Relations Commission and Civil Rights Division both investigate discrimination claims, there is no duplication of duties and services between the two entities. The major differences between the commission and division's anti-discrimination activities are they cover different persons, administer different laws, interact with different federal agencies, and have different litigation responsibilities. In terms of the Human Relations Commission's community relations activities, there is limited evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of these activities.

Moving the Human Relations Commission's fair housing activities to the Civil Rights Division could generate an estimated \$67,453 in recurring savings, but this cost savings may be offset by transfer costs. Although the majority of states have a combined fair housing and employment agency, their fair employment agencies serve both private and public employees as compared to North Carolina's agency that only serves public employees. North Carolina's employment discrimination laws could be clarified to better reflect this structure and the Civil Right Division's enforcement authority in this area.

Because there is no duplication of duties and services between the Human Relations Commission and the Civil Rights Division and combining the two entities has limited cost savings, the Program Evaluation Division does not recommend merging the two entities at this time.

Both entities would benefit from increased accountability and transparency. To this end, the General Assembly should

- require the Human Relations Commission and Civil Rights Division to report annually on their activities;
- amend the Equal Employment Practices Act by removing reference to the Human Relations Commission's enforcement authority; and
- create a statute that explicitly prohibits employment discrimination against government employees and gives the Civil Rights Division enforcement authority.