



New York City Comptroller
Scott M. Stringer

NEWS

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**COMPTROLLER STRINGER AUDIT FINDS NEW YORK CITY COMMISSION ON
HUMAN RIGHTS TOOK OVER A YEAR TO PROCESS MORE THAN HALF OF ITS
CASES**

No effort made to address processing delays

New York, NY – The New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) failed to address more than half of received complaints within a one-year benchmark set by the Commission, instead completing complaints within an average of 427 days, according to an audit released today by New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer.

“Our City has an obligation to move as quickly as possible on any complaint of harassment or discrimination,” Comptroller Stringer said. “Every day that a human rights case sits in a pile of files is another day that someone in our City is experiencing a violation of their individual rights. New York City must set the bar for handling highly sensitive cases by addressing them with the same degree of urgency.”

The audit covered from the period from January 2012 through June 2013 and focused on the Agency’s processes and timelines in handling cases related to discrimination pursuant to the City’s Human Rights Law.

The findings include:

- **Cases dragged on past deadlines:** Less than half (291 of 593) of cases closed between January 1, 2012 and June 14, 2013, were within the agency’s one-year benchmark. For the remaining 302 cases, CCHR needed an average of 427 days to complete an investigation and close a case. Auditors expressed concern that as more time passed, the likelihood of details of the incident being lost or less clear for witnesses increased.
- **Inaccurate database information:** Lack of adequate data checks in the complaint tracking database (CTS) leading to inaccuracies that can be triggers for overlooking key witnesses. Of the total 27,968 records included in the CTS data as of June 13, 2014, 649 complaint numbers were

skipped or missing in the sequential numbering of complaints, 199 records had no complainant and respondent names, and several had dating anomalies.

- **No formal procedure for handling cases:** A lack of formal standardized operating procedures for the handling and processing of complaints, resulting in the risk of inconsistent case assessment and varying degrees of access to justice.

The Comptroller offered the following recommendations to CCHR:

- **Identify and address delays:** Complete a formal analysis of the case file processing to identify the cause of delays, and develop strategies to minimize them.
- **Integrate data checks into the CTS database:** Make the necessary updates to the program to check for human entry errors, and minimize irregular date entries.
- **CTS database replacement:** Consider a plan for replacing the CTS database, or conduct a comprehensive review, and develop a plan and timeframe for this for the long term.
- **Define clear policies and procedures for complaint processing & case management:** Develop a baseline plan for acceptable case and complaint management that reflects the urgent nature of addressing human rights complaints, in accordance with the Human Rights Law and the Comptroller's Directives.

“Government must work better for New Yorkers – especially those in vulnerable situations. The implications of these findings extend far beyond the realms of our city government: they speak to basic human rights of all New Yorkers. CCHR must address these findings immediately,” Stringer said.

To read the full audit, please click [here](#).

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