

Providence Human Relations Commission

40 FOUNTAIN STREET • PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903 • (401) 421-3708

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Benjamin W. Little

February 1, 1978

Honorable Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., Mayor
Honorable Members of the City Council


Dear Mayor Cianci and Members of the City Council:

We hereby submit for your review a report on minority group members and women in City employment.

This report covers "New Hires" during FY 1976-77, which ended June 30, 1977. The information contained in this report is based on data reported by all department heads in response to the Providence Human Relations Commission's questionnaires.

The report is offered only as an interim analysis of City employment in which other aspects of employment will be discussed in the subsequent Annual Report scheduled for June 30, 1978.

Very truly yours,

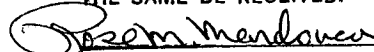

Benjamin W. Little
Executive Director

BWL/spg

Enclosure: Report

IN CITY COUNCIL
FEB 16 1978

READ:
WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

 CLERK

MINORITY GROUP MEMBERS
WOMEN
CITY GOVERNMENT
NEW HIRES
JULY 1, 1976 - JUNE 30, 1977

A Report Of
THE PROVIDENCE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Prepared By
CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

December 7, 1977

INTRODUCTION

The Providence Human Relations Commission under the terms of both Council Resolution 405 (1975) and the Mayor's Affirmative Action Program is assigned the role of monitoring the City's progress in meeting its goals for the employment of minority groups and women. In June, 1977, PHRC issued its first report on affirmative action, covering all aspects of City employment during fiscal year 1976. The current report covers "new hires" during FY 1977, which ended June 30, 1977. Other aspects of City employment will be discussed in subsequent reports.

The information contained in this report is based upon data reported by all department heads, in response to PHRC questionnaires. As used in this report, the term "minority" means Blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and Native Americans. Minority women are counted in each category. Persons who were employed under the CETA programs are not included in this report. (CETA participants will be the subject of a later report). CETA administrative personnel and all other "federally-funded" positions are covered in this report.

We would note once again that one cannot draw inferences of unlawful discrimination or its absence from statistics alone. Statistics can provide a useful tool for judging where problems may exist and where special attention is needed. "Numbers games," relying on uninterpreted statistics divert attention from the real issues of affirmative action. The context in which these statistics are developed, as we shall see, is what is important.

OVERALL TRENDS

In its report on the progress of affirmative action released by PHRC last June, we reported that the figures then available gave some cause for hope, if not for satisfaction. Data for FY 1977 sustain us in this attitude.

In FY 1975, the year before the AAP was promulgated by the Mayor, 9.5% of all new employees were minority group members. In FY 1976, the first year of the AAP, 15.2% of new employees were minorities, a significant increase, but still short of the 20% goal established by the program. There was a small increase during the last year, with 16.2% of all new hires going to minority group members.

For women, the gains under the AAP have been even more dramatic. This is particularly encouraging because, before the AAP was put into effect, women were more under-represented in the City's work force and more generally limited to lower paying jobs.

In FY 1975, women constituted 19.8% of the new hires. During the first year of the AAP, this figure rose to 24.7%. Last year, 34.8% of the new hires were women.

In these terms, then, the AAP has shown a significant effect on the hiring process of the City. The City's hiring goal for women is now being met. Goals for minority group members, despite this progress, have not yet been achieved.

Graph One shows the over-all trend in the hiring of women and minority group members.

EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATION

As we have noted many times before, hiring patterns which only serve to reinforce patterns of employment concentration (e.g., women in office/clerical positions) serve finally to defeat the purposes of affirmative action. It is, therefore, encouraging to report that significant changes have been made in this regard over the last year. In FY 1976, all of the minority group

members who were hired went into jobs classified as "blue collar," mostly in the service/maintenance category. In FY 1977, however, fully one-half of the new minority hires went into professional or other "white collar" jobs.

In FY 1976, 87% of the new female hires went into clerical positions; by contrast in FY 1977, 30% of the new female hires went into professional or administrative positions.

Graph Two shows the changing trends regarding employment concentration.

EFFECTS OF THE HIRING FREEZE

While we may be encouraged by this progress under the AAP, it might also be noted that while the proportion of minority group members and women being hired into City positions has increased, the actual number of persons hired has decreased. The reason for this seeming anomaly, of course, is that the overall growth in City employment has been sharply curtailed. This must, of course, have an impact on the City's long-term affirmative action goals and timetables.

The hiring freeze, which has been in effect for virtually the entire period of the AAP, has made new placements difficult. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the freeze has been most effective on entry-level jobs, where affirmative action is normally most effective. The general economic recession, moreover, has discouraged City employees from finding other jobs.

As a result, the total number of new hires has dropped by nearly two-thirds. FY 1975, the base year for the AAP, saw 250 positions filled; in FY 1977, that figure fell to 86. Graph Three demonstrates that minority group members and women have increased their share of new jobs principally by "holding their own" as the overall number hired has decreased.

This factor alone means that the City's goal of a work force with 20% minority representation and 20% female by 1980 could be met only if virtually all new hires were minority group women. At the current rate of hire and with current turnover, the long-term AAP goals will not be met until 1988.

Another aspect of this problem may be seen in the fact that the three departments in which more than half of the new City jobs were located - CETA Administration, the Mayor's Office of Community Development and the Human Relations Commission - are all heavily dependent upon federal money for their programs. Many more City departments are using CETA participants to meet new or increased program needs. While hiring in these three departments and the CETA program, in general, have shown very strong representation for women and minorities, the nature of their funding means that the gains shown could be quickly reversed if federal programs change.

(Affirmative action regarding CETA participants, where special federal requirements prevail, will be the subject of a later PHRC report.)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It does not diminish the importance of the City's AAP to suggest that we must look elsewhere to solve the unemployment problems of the black and Hispanic community. The 86 new hires last year represents only a tiny fraction of those unemployed in Providence today. Nor is the prospect for new municipal employment likely to improve in the future.

Significant gains in the economic situation of blacks and Hispanics can be made only through a vigorous expansion in both the private sector and public service employment, coupled with strong equal opportunity law enforcement. It remains true today that the principal reason for the huge disparity between the unemployment rates of minorities and whites is discrimination, either direct or indirect. Civil rights law enforcement can be an effective means to lowering the disparity in unemployment rates. This is especially true in regards to

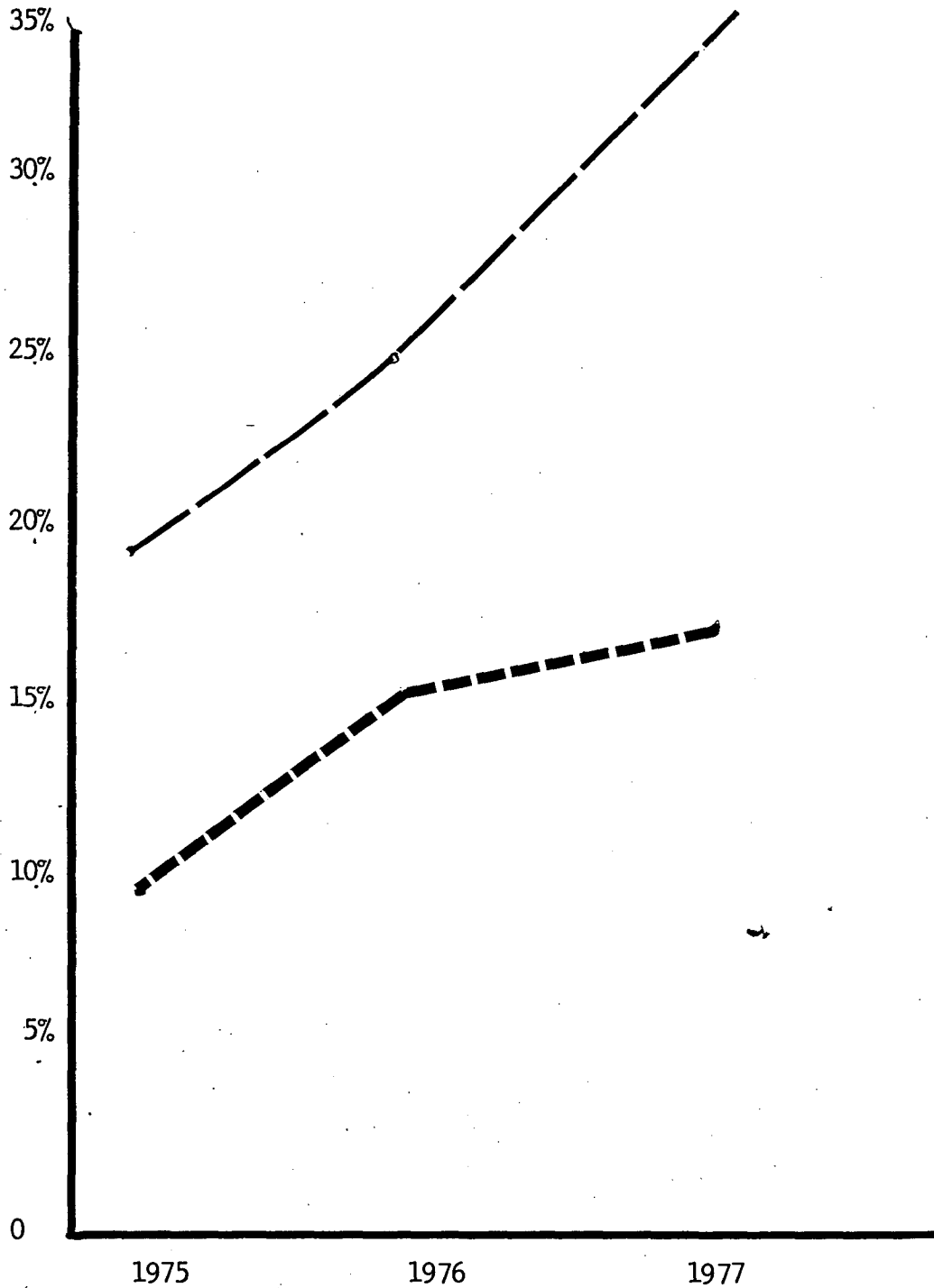
employment by firms holding public contracts.

The passage of the Providence Comprehensive Anti-discrimination Ordinance will, we believe, have an important impact on the economic situation of the disadvantaged. That economic situation is a demonstration of the inadequacy of the current civil rights enforcement effort. The proposed Ordinance has been before the Council for over seven months; we urge prompt favorable action on this legislation.

The City can have an especially important impact on the employment of minorities and women by those firms doing business with the City. To this end, this Commission has developed a proposed Non-discrimination and Affirmative Action Ordinance, which will mandate (through contractual provisions) affirmative action by City contractors. Vigorous compliance efforts under this Ordinance could insure that all our people share in the opportunities created by the expenditure of tax dollars.

Regarding City employment, we urge the Council to pass the Ordinance submitted by Mayor Cianci to create the position of City Affirmative Action Officer. Without this commitment on the part of the City Council, the AAP is bound to fail. In this matter, too, it is time for the Council to act.

GRAPH 1

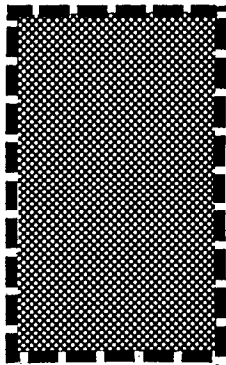


Percentage of minority group members
and women among new hires. By fiscal
year.

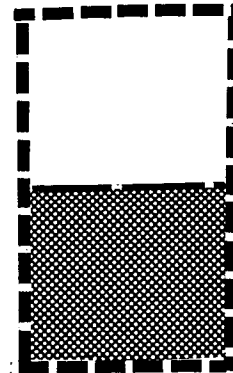
----- = MINORITY GROUP RATE OF HIRE
----- = WOMEN'S RATE OF HIRE

GRAPH 2

MINORITY GROUP MEMBERS

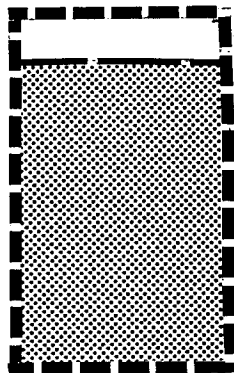


FY 76

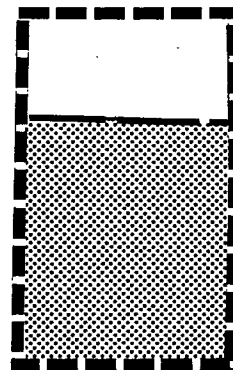


FY 77

WOMEN



FY 76



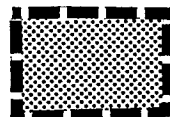
FY 77



Professionals, Administrators

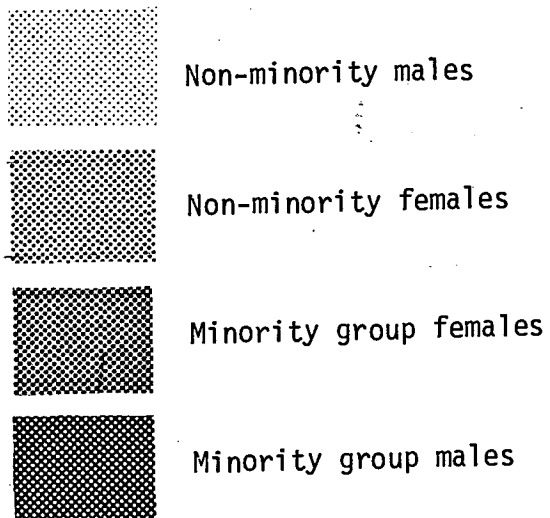
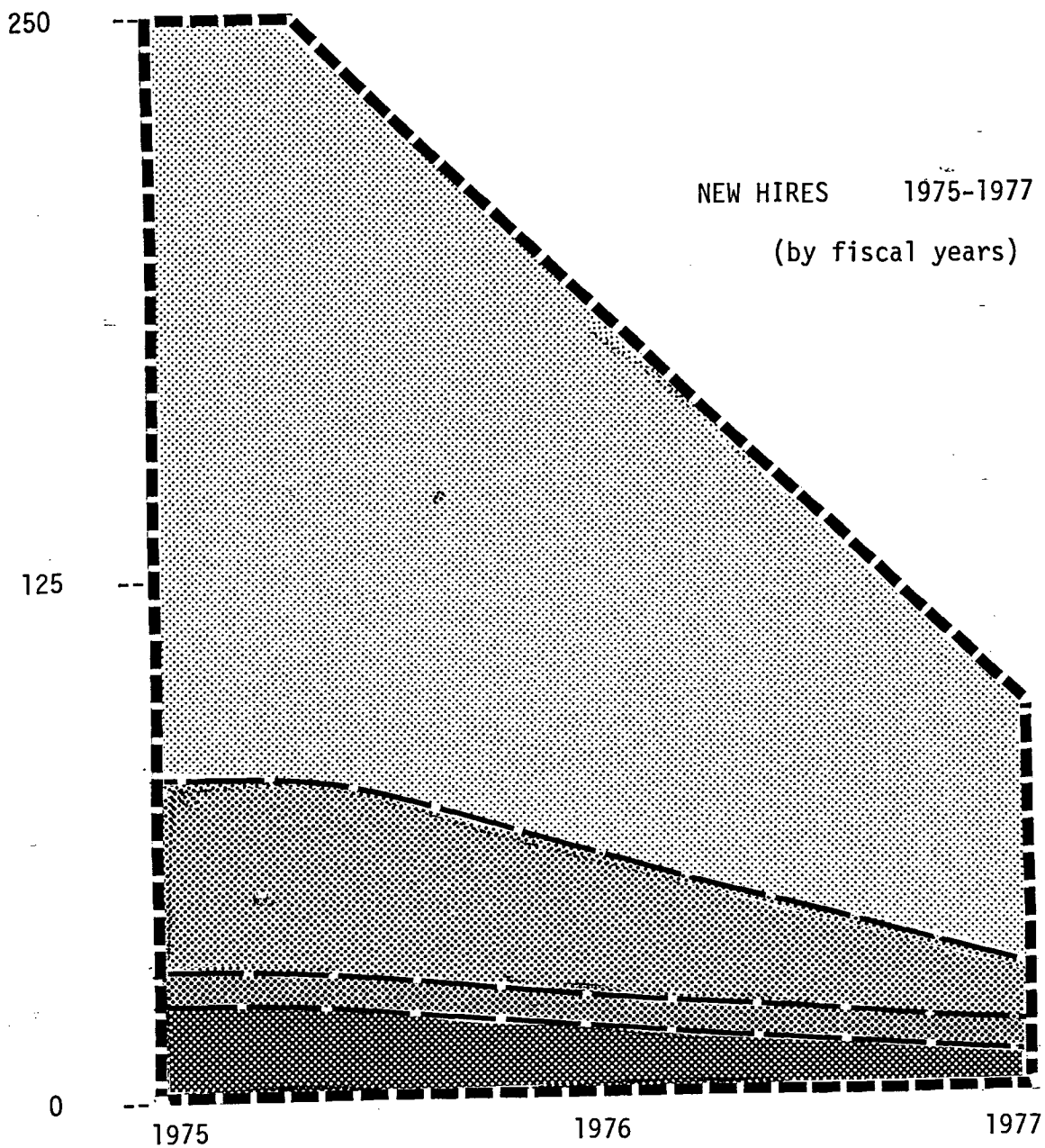


Blue Collar Jobs



Office/Clerical Jobs

GRAPH 3



While the overall number of new hires decreased sharply, the share taken by minority group members and women has increased.

