

# Providence Human Relations Commission

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

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
Hon. Vincent A. Cianci, Jr.

## COMMISSIONERS

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John M. Huntley  
Harry Kizirian  
Lynn H. Smith

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Benjamin W. Little

August 4, 1977

Mr. Vincent Vespia  
City Clerk  
City Hall  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Mr. Vespia:

Enclosed are twenty-six copies of the Providence Human Relations Commission Annual Report 1974-1977, to be distributed to City Council members.

Sincerely,

Benjamin W. Little  
Executive Director

BWL:jg  
Enc.

IN CITY COUNCIL  
SEP 1 1977

READ:

WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT  
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

*Rozem Mendonca*  
CERN

# ANNUAL REPORT



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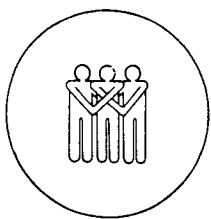
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Benjamin W. Little

The 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 progress report of the Providence Human Relations Commission for the fiscal years 1974 through 1977.

Over the past three years the Commission has broadened its involvement in the area of equal opportunity and continued its efforts to promote inter-group harmony throughout the City of Providence.

It is hoped that this report will reflect the progressive role the Commission has assumed in responding to community needs in an active rather than a reactive manner.

At this time we would like to rededicate our commitment to the elimination of discrimination and ask for your continued support toward the achievement of full civil rights for every Providence resident.

Very truly yours,

Frederick C. Williamson  
Chairman

FCW:jg

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Since the community we serve is a dynamic entity subject to growth and transition, it has been our objective to develop methods of detecting the pulse of that organism and to make our services concomittant with its changes.

As the community is in a state of growth and change, so is the Commission. The Providence Human Relations Commission was established in 1963, at a time of intense civil turmoil. In retrospect, the role of the Commission was one of reaction to the crisis of the time. In the 1970's PHRC became concerned with channeling its efforts in an active rather than reactive way. By taking responsibility for implementing the City's Affirmative Action programs, coordinating attitude workshops and in-service training, the Commission has sought to prevent future crisis, alert itself to the needs of the community, and involve community members in a positive approach to resolving common problems.

We do not believe in presenting idle talk about the emmergence of new hope for today's individuals or creating new meaning for the word community but are here to act towards its realization.

*Benjamin W. Little*

## LEGAL AUTHORITY

A bi-racial committee, designed to investigate the pressing problems of racial tension in the early 60's, was forerunner of the Providence Human Relations Commission (PHRC). An ordinance for the creation of the Commission gained the required two passages before the City Council in 1963.

Ordinance, 1963, Ch. 1570, Sec. 3

### Sec. 2-264 Functions

- (a) To foster mutual understanding and respect among all racial, religious, and ethnic groups in the city;
- (b) To encourage equality of treatment for, and to recommend methods and procedures to prevent discrimination against any racial religious or ethnic group or its members, particularly in the fields of housing, employment, education, and accommodations, as may be useful to promote decent human relations and the full realization of American citizenship;
- (c) To cooperate with governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations having like or kindred functions; and
- (d) To make such investigations and studies in the field of human relations as in the judgement of the Commission will aid in effectuating its general purposes.

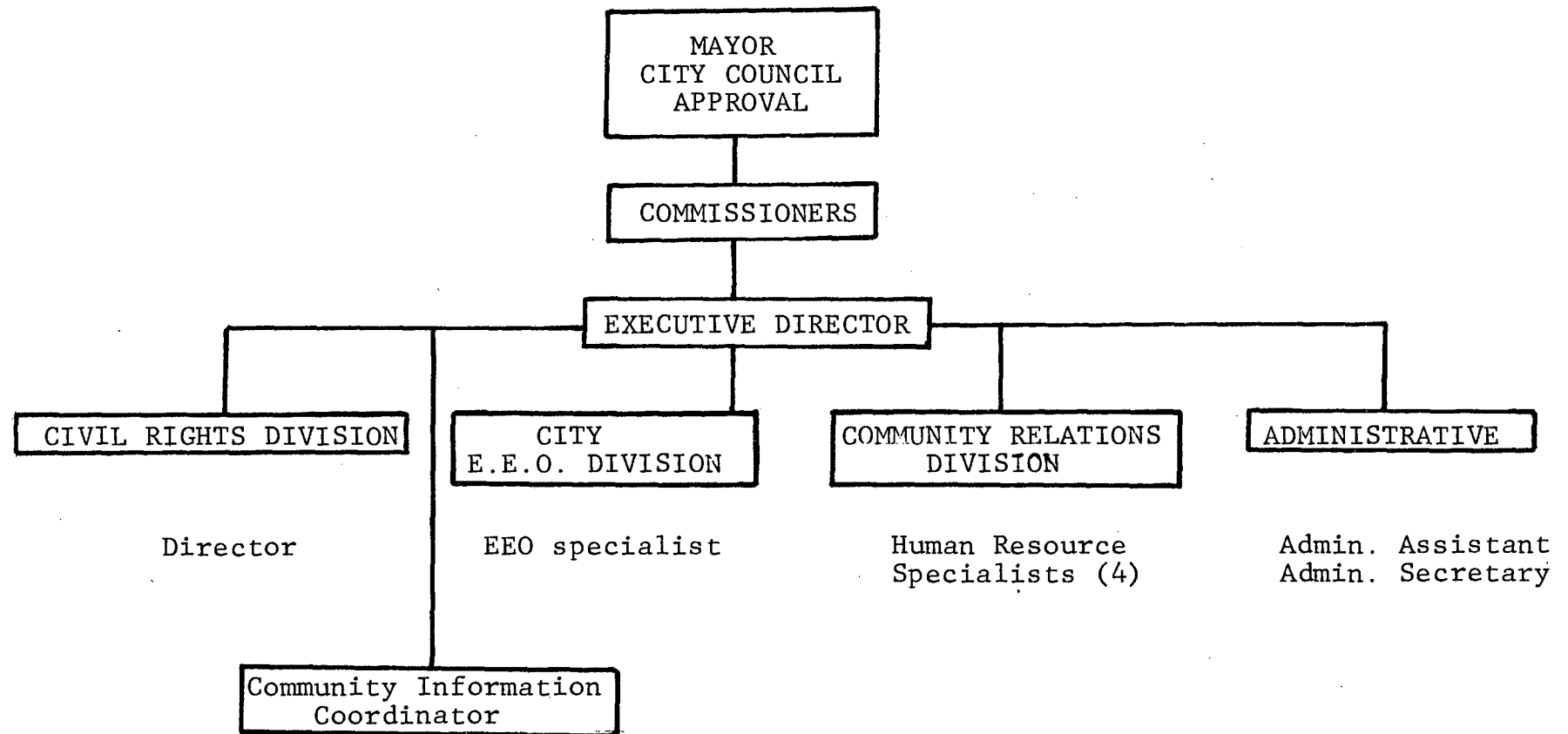
### Sec. 2-266 Powers and Duties

- (a) To work together with federal, state, and city agencies in developing courses of instruction for presentation to city employees and others in public and private schools, public libraries, museums, and other suitable places, on techniques for achieving harmonious inter-group relations within the city;
- (b) To enlist the cooperation of various racial, religious, and ethnic groups, community organizations, labor organizations, fraternal and benevolent associations, and other groups in the city, in programs and campaigns devoted to eliminating group prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, and discrimination;
- (c) To study the problems of prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, discrimination, and disorder occasioned thereby in all fields of human relations;

- (d) To receive and investigate complaints and to initiate its own investigation of:
  - (1) Racial, religious, and ethnic group tensions, prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, and disorder occasioned thereby;
  - (2) Discrimination against any person, group of persons, organization, or corporation, whether practiced by private persons, associations, corporations, and, after consultation with the mayor, by city officials or city agencies;
- (e) To issue publications and reports of investigations and research designed to promote goodwill and to minimize or eliminate prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, discrimination, and disorder occasioned thereby;
- (f) To promote the establishment of local community organizations when and where it may deem it desirable, consisting of representatives from different groups in such community, to plan and carry out educational programs in such community;
- (g) To create such advisory committees and subcommittees as in its judgement will aid in effectuating the purposes of this article and to empower them to study the problems of prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, disorder, and discrimination in all or any fields of community relations;
- (h) To appoint an executive director with the approval of the mayor and such additional personnel as it may deem necessary and to prescribe their duties;
- (i) To recommend to the mayor and to the city council legislation to aid in carrying out the purposes of this article;
- (j) To submit an annual report to the mayor and to the city council; and
- (k) To adopt, amend, publish, and rescind rules and regulations regarding the operation of the commission consistent with the powers and duties outlined.



1977-PROVIDENCE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION ORGANIZATION CHART



Additional staff projected for 1977-1978 include  
(3) EO Specialists, (2) Clerk-IV and (1) Attorney.

## COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

### Commissioners

Francis B. Brown, 1971	Jeremiah J. Gorin
Reverend Robert L. Carter, Jr. S.T.M.	Stanley Grossman
John A. Daluz, Jr.	Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman
Barbara L. Dubois	John M. Huntley
Susan L. Farmer, Secretary	Harry Kizirian, 1963
Joseph M. Finkle, Vice Chairman, 1967	Lynn H. Smith, 1971
Frederick C. Williamson, Chairman, 1963	

### Past Commissioners

Who served during period covered by report

Mrs. Jason H. Cohen	Mrs. Isadore W. Miller, Secretary
William Iacobucci	Mrs. Charles Potter
Very Reverend William L. Kite, L.H.D.	Frank Tabela

The legislation under which the Commission operates specifies that there shall be no more than thirteen (13) members appointed by the mayor with approval by the City Council, to serve three year staggered terms without compensation. In 1976 Commission membership increased from eleven (11) to a full complement of thirteen (13) with eight new members.

Thus, the broadest representation of the City's residents is now reflected in the membership of the Commission. The Commissioners reflect a wide range of religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, have varied professional and political backgrounds, and are of a wide age range.

### Staff

Benjamin W. Little, Executive Director

John K. Gaffney, Director of Civil Rights Division

Beverly Chase, Volunteer for Civil Rights Division

Madeline C. Farina, Community Information Coordinator

Gloria F. Isom, Human Resource Specialist

Jane R. Pennington, Administrative Assistant

Jose A. Severino, City Human Resource Specialist

Cecelia M. Shloul, Human Resource Specialist

Victor A. Taber, Human Resource Specialist

Rudolph S. Tavares, City EEO Specialist

Cora P. Thomas, Administrative Secretary

### Past Staff

Who served during period covered by report

Robert L. Brooks

Norma Long

Eileen Coyle

Faith Schacht

Nellie Lathan

Margaret Williams

The present director, Benjamin W. Little, was appointed to the Commission in November, 1973. A native Rhode Islander, Mr. Little holds Associate of Science and Bachelor of Science degrees in Business Administration from Roger Williams College. From January, 1970, until coming to the Commission, Mr. Little worked with the Progress Association for Economic Development/Entrepreneurial Development Training Center in Providence. While with that organization, he created and administered the Small Business Development Center, which was responsible for the successful initiation of numerous minority businesses.

During the period covered by this report PHRC has added four full-time positions to its staff. Since 1975 a Human Resource Specialist and an EEO Specialist, both under City Hall Contract, have been housed at PHRC. Through the federally funded CETA Program the Commission has also added to its staff the position of Community Information Coordinator.

With the establishment of the EEO Division in 1975 (now the Civil Rights Division) came the position of Division Director. The expanded duties and responsibilities of this division, which will be discussed in greater detail throughout the report, have led to the need for staff expansion. Six new positions are anticipated in the coming year to include three EO Specialists, two clerk typists and one attorney.

PHRC employees contribute a diversified combination of expertise to the total pool of resources. Staff members are encouraged to participate in outside committees and advisory boards relating to individual community interest. Such participation and the insight it gives to staff members is a valuable source of reference for the entire organization.

Employees are also encouraged to continue their formal education as a means of career growth and personal development. Presently two staff members are enrolled as part-time students at University Without Walls and two others are enrolled in individual course studies. Developing bi-lingual skills is emphasized and at this time the majority of employees at PHRC have acquired a working knowledge of the Spanish language.

Many volunteers and part-time workers have contributed to the development of PHRC. Temporary workers have been sponsored at the Commission through the Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC) and the Work Incentive Program (WIN). Both federally funded work training programs are designed to give on-the-job experience to participants and to prepare them for career development.

## Advisory Committees

### Education Committee

Dr. Paul P. Chasse	Rabbi Leslie Gutterman
Mel Clanton	Doris Gurland
Rita Couture	Lummer Jennings
Raymond Dettore, Jr.	Very Reverend Thomas R. Peterson, OP
Joseph C. Di Palma	Marlene Silva
Charles Greenwood	Lynn Smith
Arthur Zarrella	

### EEO Committee

Barbara Dubois	George Lally
William Formicola	Owen Matthews
Marilyn Gounaris	Wilson Thirdgill
Stanley Grossman	Anna Tucker
Ann Von Hoffman	Kenneth Walker
Michael Warren	

### Health and Welfare Committee

Nellie Ayvasian	Willie R. James
Frank Baptista	Joyce Jarrett
Peter W. Barry	Iola Mabray
Reverend Robert L. Carter	Ann Silveira
Dr. Dix S. Coons	Reverend Mesrob Tashjian
Naomi Craig	Dr. Frances Taylor
Isabel Zuleta	

### Housing Committee

Russell Archibald	Barbara Krank
Benita Arroya	Olivia Peck
Reverend Ernest Davis, Jr.	Albert Pointe
Richard Frusher	Gabriel Quilles
John M. Huntley	Linwood Young

Legislative Committee

Edward Clifton  
John Daluz, Jr.  
B. Albert Ford  
Ronald Glantz

Jeremiah J. Gorin  
Clifton Moore  
Walter Stone  
Ronald L. Thomas

Police/Community Relations Committee

Francis B. Brown  
Norman Dakake  
Michael Dollinger  
Susan Farmer  
Joseph Finkle

Dr. Charles Fortes\*  
Charlotte Penn  
Jack Reeder  
Dr. Jack Tobin  
Ralph Willoughby

Public Relations Committee

Jesse R. Bradley, III  
Alfred Brassard

Joseph Fogarty  
Harry Kizirian

Frank Walker

\*PHRC lost one of its most dedicated supporters this year with the death of Dr. Charles Fortes. Dr. Fortes served for many years as an Advisory Committee member.

Contributing to the research and development of special projects are the PHRC Advisory Committees. The committees are comprised of a broad cross-section of Providence residents and a cross-section of people doing business in Providence, so that PHRC activities and programs may receive a wide range of community input. Citizen participation in Commission activities is a vital aid in monitoring community change and gearing programs accordingly.

A commissioner acts as chairperson with at least one staff member coordinating the activities of each committee. In 1975 the Commission reorganized the structure and goals of the Advisory Committees in an Advisory Committee Manual.

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this advisory committee shall be to plan for the enrichment of life in Providence by enabling citizens from all facets of community life to come together to:

1. Identify socio-economic needs, and to plan the orderly development of resources to meet those needs;
2. Issue publications and reports, etc;
3. Utilize participation of as broad as possible a cross-section of concerned individuals so that the resultant decisions will be based on a combination of professional expertise and viewpoints from the citizenry;
4. Enhance the Commission's involvement in community problems, to lessen the communication gap between the general public and those responsible for delivery of services.



# COMMISSION PROJECT FLOW

## 1. Input

Community Requests  
Study Plan (staff)  
Commissioners Requests  
Advisory Committee Recommendations

## 2. Board of Commissioners

A. Approval for further study- yes  
B. Request for more data - no

## 3. Advisory Committee

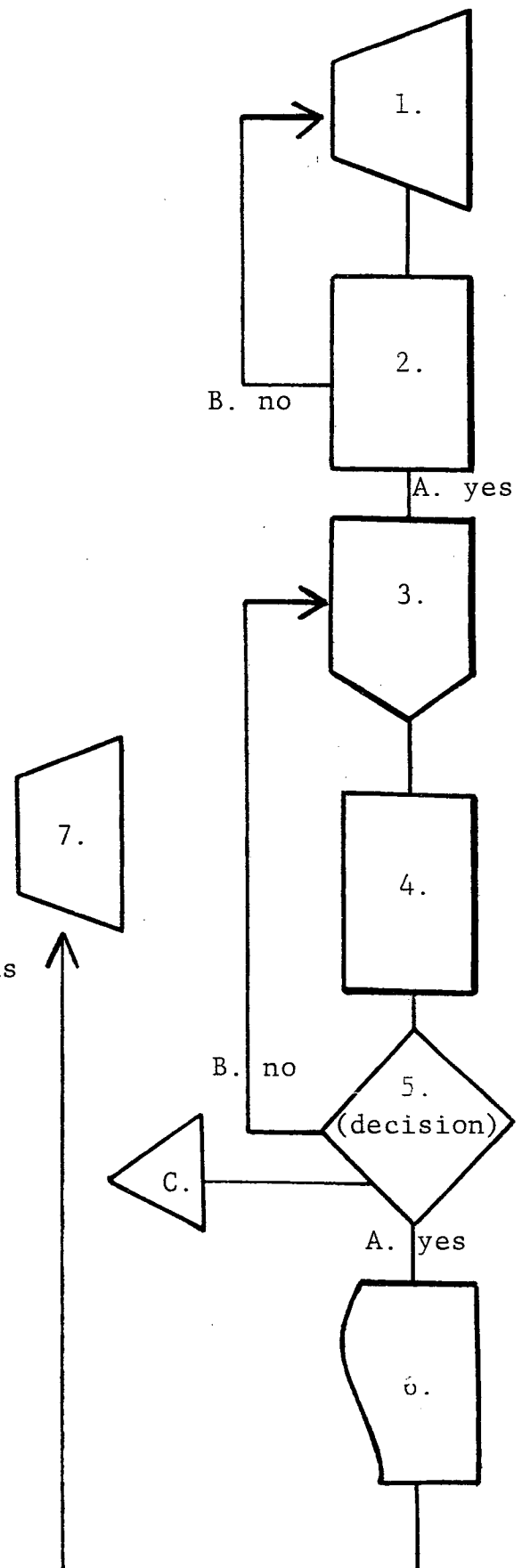
Study - Recommendations

## 4.& 5. Board of Commissioners

A. Approval for publication/or  
B. Request further study and recommendations  
from Advisory Committee/or  
C. File no action

## 6. Documentation - Publication

## 7. Implementation and follow-up by staff



## ADMINISTRATION

### New Location

In November, 1975, PHRC moved from 56 Washington Street to its present location at 40 Fountain Street. The move was necessitated by the Commission's expanded duties and work loads and the resultant increase in personnel. The present facilities have increased the work space to include a reception area, ten offices, a storage room, library, and conference room.

### In-House Reorganization

There have been continual efforts to improve in-house organization, efficiency, and communication. This has been done by refining both administrative and case filing systems. Forms have been updated and complaint intake made uniform through special training sessions, inter-agency exchange, and staff suggestion. Inter-office human relations, conversational Spanish, and the proper use of the telephone have been topics of course instruction.

Legislative classes, coordinated and instructed by Civil Rights Director John Gaffney, have been conducted on a weekly basis since February, 1977. Beginning with a basic review of the Reconstruction Era and the history of Civil Rights legislation, the classes have given staff members an understanding of the evolution of law, the basic elements of a discrimination case, and the role of administrative agencies in implementing law.

### A Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Ordinance For Providence

On April 7, 1977, a comprehensive anti-discrimination ordinance for the City of Providence was introduced into the City Council. This ordinance would provide PHRC with enforcement powers comparable to those of the Rhode Island Commission on Human Rights, of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and other federal anti-discrimination agencies.

The ordinance is designed to provide substantially the same coverage as state equal opportunity laws in order to permit close cooperation between the agencies and to facilitate compliance by local residents.

Federal support has been indicated through the approval of a \$35,000 grant with the likelihood that federal funding will meet the costs of administering the new ordinance over the next several years.

### Rule Making Powers Exercised

On March 23, 1977 The Commission, after a public hearing, adopted a set of rules establishing new procedures for the processing of charges of discrimination. These rules will allow PHRC to prepare for the anticipated new duties under the proposed anti-discrimination ordinance.

Ongoing training, designed to prepare the staff for the procedural changes, has been incorporated into the weekly legislative classes.

### Contact With Other Human Rights Agencies

As in any other professional area, PHRC has maintained contact with other human relations agencies. These contacts are a valuable means of keeping abreast of the latest civil rights information as well as acquiring new organizational techniques. Mr. Little represented the Commission at a regional conference of the United States Civil Rights Commission in Boston in 1974. The process of strengthening state and local human relations agencies was discussed as well as public employment, inter-agency relationships, and special interest seminars.

The director also attended an executive management seminar sponsored by the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) in March, 1975. The seminar offered ideas on management training and general information on the effective administering of human relations agencies.

Locally, the Commission has planned joint training with agencies such as the Rhode Island Commission on Human Rights. In cooperation with this office, PHRC has also shared the correction of EEO forms, general information regarding in-house procedures, and has discussed local legislative activities.

### Initiation Of A Regional Association of Human Rights Directors

Representing the Commission, Mr. Little began meeting with municipal human relations directors of New England in 1974. His meetings with directors from Worcester and New Bedford led to a discussion of the value and feasibility of forming an association of municipal human rights/relations directors. Positive feedback from several regional agencies resulted in the formalization of the New England Association of Human Relations Directors (NEAHRD) in April, 1975. Since then the directors have met regularly.

This association has been valuable in solving administrative problems specific to local agencies. While participating in national organizations is beneficial to an understanding of the larger framework of human relations agencies, it is often costly and beyond the budget limitations of municipal agencies. National and state associations do not always deal with the set of problems specific to municipal human relations agencies. NEAHRD has effectively served in

this capacity, providing a means to exchange ideas and to articulate various perspectives on problem solving.

The Association has assisted in the formulation of human relations agencies in small cities. In the past it has given counsel to the New Bedford Commission when it was working to obtain enforcement power. Members include: New Haven, Worcester, New Bedford, Newton, Brookline, Framingham, Salem, Taunton and Providence. Special membership has also been extended to the Rhode Island Commission On Human Rights Director and the Affirmative Action Officer of East Providence.

### Funds

Bringing optimum service to the taxpayer is a primary administrative concern. Therefore, careful consideration is given to budgetary expenditures both for administrative services and research projects. Personnel and line item expenses are included in the city budget. CETA now provides salary funds for two staff members. Funds for the research and development of special projects are sought from agencies distributing federal monies and state and local educational agencies. Among these agencies are the Providence Community Action Program (ProCap), Office of Mayor's Community Development, the Urban Educational Center (UEC) and the State Department of Education.

# FINANCIAL DATA

	1974-1975	1975-1976	1976-1977
City Funds	\$63,174.00*	\$66,373.00	\$80,372.00
Federal Funds	4,539.00	13,408.00	42,294.00
Other Funds	0	18,706.00	33,196.00
Total	\$67,713.00	\$98,487.00	\$155,862.00

\*All items are rounded off to whole dollars

## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

### Community Resources

The Commission has begun to develop its own resources to be offered to the community. Among the materials are special films and a large variety of literature available on loan to community members and groups. Over the years the materials have increased through donations and the inclusion of this service in the budget. These materials have proven a valuable resource for staff presentations and studies as well as a lending service to others.

### Lending Technical Assistance

PHRC began fulfilling its commitment to community organizations under the present administration with an East Side senior citizens' group. Aid was extended to this group from 1974 through 1975. The Commission gave technical assistance in the construction of by-laws and counsel in effective organization.

In 1974 PHRC gave technical assistance to Progress for Providence (P for P) during its time of reconstruction, which included the formation of new program policies and the election of new directors. The following year P for P became Providence Community Action Program (ProCap). PHRC continued to help reform the organization so that it would be more representative of all communities. Originally the OEO (Office of Economic Opportunity), ProCap sponsors community action programs which promote orderly economic and social improvement within Providence.

In 1974 the Commission also contributed to a study committee of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers in Providence, sponsored by the R.I. Council for Community Services. A report submitted by the study-committee was incorporated in a larger study of community agencies in Providence and the neighborhoods they serve. Taking into account the existing services which agencies provide and how recipients identify with them, the study recommendations aimed at unifying the awareness of community problems with agency responses.

In 1975, a PHRC staff member began working for the establishment of an Alternative Drug Program. He contributed to the technical formulation of the program and in ascertaining a non-profit status, and continues to serve as a member of the Board of Directors.

Over the years the director has fostered contact with commercial and non-profit organizations in order to improve overall community relations. PHRC representatives have attended meetings with such groups as the Better Business Bureau and the Hospital Trust Bank to discuss community services and the need for social responsibility. The Commission also assisted the United Way in assessing the educational needs in Providence in order to improve the services provided by the agency. The director has served as a member of the Special Allocations Committee of the United Way.

## The Latin-American Community

PHRC has assisted the growing Latin-American community in achieving positive orientation within Providence. Through workshops and special presentations, the Commission has fostered inter-agency awareness of the services available to the Spanish community as well as informing the Spanish community of these services. A staff member has worked to compile a list of all Latin-owned businesses in Providence for distribution to interested agencies and individuals as well as a list of Latin-American representatives and agency services compiled in Spanish, Portuguese and English. The Commission was also represented in an advisory capacity on the Board of Directors for the Latin American Center.

## Presentations and Exhibits

Special community exhibits are often promoted or sponsored by the Commission as an interesting and educational way of encouraging community awareness. An Afro-Cultural Fair was co-chaired by two staff members in September, 1975. More recently the Commission organized an exhibit entitled "Black Pioneers and Contemporaries in Science and Technology", which was well-received in Providence and Newport. The exhibit provided interesting and little-circulated information regarding the technological and scientific contributions of black men and women. PHRC is available to lend coordinating efforts to any organization wishing to stimulate community awareness in this way. It has done so recently with the planning of Hispanic Day Activities.

In 1974 and 1975 a race relations workshop was offered to the National Guard and Army Reserve. PHRC has also prepared booth presentations at special events such as the 1974 fair sponsored by the Women's Political Caucus, 1975 and 1976 fairs by the Rhode Island Minority Caucus, and the Bryant College Law Day in 1976. In an effort to distribute information to the public, the Commission also published its first newsletter in the summer of 1976 and produced and distributed a brochure.

## Channels of Mass Media

The single most effective means of circulating information, however, is the channels of mass media. Our responsibility to the community includes insuring equal representation of all groups in media employment and programming. The Commission has been able to establish a good working relationship with the media in Providence in gaining time and space for the publication of community issues.

In communicating our interest in fair media practices, the director appeared before the Rhode Island Broadcasters Association in 1974 to discuss "community needs and problems". At this time the director also became a member of the WPRI Advisory Group to contribute program recommendations relating to pertinent community issues.

PHRC has been represented regularly on radio and television shows,

offering insight into current local issues and announcing its services to Providence residents. This has been done with spot announcements aired on each Sunday both in English and Spanish. The Commission recognizes the difficulties which accompany a language barrier for some residents of the community. It has worked to study the specific problems of inter-communication between ethnic groups and the rest of the community and has sought to include bilingual programs in order to diminish these problems. In July, 1976, the Commission coordinated the presentation of a program in Spanish called "Understanding Life Saving Techniques." The show was aired on WPRI-TV.

Radio and television programs on which representatives of PHRC have appeared include: "Confrontation" and "La Voz Hispana," WKLW-FM; "Community Rap," WPRO; "Black Talk," WICE; "To Be Equal" and "Nuevo Horizontes," WPRI-TV; "Impacto" and "Perspectives," WJAR-TV; and "Aqui Nosotros," WSBE-TV.

### "Commission Talk"

In April, 1976, the Commission began taping its own half-hour radio programs which have been aired the third Sunday of every month from 8-8:30 a.m. "Commission Talk", which is aired on WPRO, has been received widely as evidenced by feedback and requests for further information. The programs feature discussions of a wide variety of community issues such as drug abuse and rape crisis, and hosts local authorities as well as recruiting the perspectives of outside sources.

PHRC has also received a great deal of coverage from the Providence Journal and other newspapers. To supplement news coverage the Commission regularly prepares press releases and often takes advantage of the editorial page.



## EDUCATION

### School Bus Discontinued

Responding to complaints by parents concerning the discontinuance of the school bus from Coddington Court and Wiggins Village, the director of PHRC attended parents hearings and meetings between parents and school officials. The bus had been discontinued due to disruptive behavior of the school children. At the hearings parents explained that the bus was often very late in arriving and that the adults involved in the daily rides to school were not responding properly to children when quarrels arose. The bus was reactivated with the provision that a parent would ride the bus each day for the remainder of the year and that in-service training for drivers and aides would be initiated.

Student disruptions occurred in 1974 with outbreaks at Nathan Bishop, Central, and Mount Pleasant High Schools. Investigation by the Commission staff concluded that such outbreaks would continue until communication was improved. Particularly lacking were channels of feedback for students and communication between the police and school departments.

### Student Rights and the Pushout Problem

At the close of 1974, PHRC became concerned with reports of unfairness in student disciplinary hearings. It was discovered through investigation that the procedures for hearing suspended students were not systematically employed and were often enacted arbitrarily and inconsistently. Since such practices could result in the violation of the constitutional rights of students, PHRC resolved to promote an awareness of due process of hearing rights to students and parents and to participate as a third and impartial party in all future hearings which came to its attention.

In January and February of 1975, two Supreme Court decisions held that students have a right to a free public education which cannot be taken away by school officials, even temporarily, without due process of law. The second decision further extended student rights by ruling that in the context of school discipline, school officials may be sued by students for money damage if they knew, or reasonably should have known, that their actions would violate the constitutional rights of students.

### Alternatives to Suspension

In response to the push-out problem in Providence, PHRC began organizing on-going training seminars and workshops for school personnel to promote the discussion of alternatives to suspension. The first workshop was held in August, 1975, during a school administrators' seminar. Following the seminar, an open meeting for all interested parties was held. At this meeting plans for further workshops

were confirmed.

In preparation for future workshops, two PHRC staff members attended a push-out seminar sponsored by the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission in September, 1975. The results of the training were a better understanding of the use of advisory committees and the potential of a local students' rights center.

In December, 1975, PHRC education committee held an all-day workshop, to which assistant principals were invited, to clarify study priorities. It was agreed that target areas would include circulating information on the rights and responsibilities of students. Proposed methods included the development of a student advocacy center and a community manual.

In an effort to gather as much information as possible relating to current educational issue, two PHRC staff members attended a seminar on student rights and suspensions in January, 1976. The seminar held at Rhode Island Junior College and sponsored by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Children, featured a guest speaker from the Massachusetts Advocacy Center.

The Education Committee, with funds from the State Department of Education, organized a workshop for all assistant principals in March, 1976. With 25 administrators in attendance, Luther Seabrook and Steven Kaminsky of the New York City School Department led a discussion on alternatives to suspension. Among the alternatives mentioned were "problem letters" to parents, detentions and other in-school punishment, use of ombudsmen to arbitrate between teachers and students, referrals to outside agencies, home visits, changes in class placement, and in general a more humanistic approach to students by personnel.

At this time the State Department of Education asked PHRC to participate in a three-phase study directed at ultimately eliminating suspension and expulsion in the Providence Public School System. It was to be completed with the implementation of a model program in a particular school to be replicated in other schools. Two PHRC staff members were chosen to serve on the advisory committee and to help gather data for the study. At the close of 1976 plans were underway to implement the experimental program at Roger Williams Middle School. PHRC received cooperation in its research activities from the Student Relations Division and the Planning Office of the school department.

One of PHRC's concerns is the dissemination of information regarding education. The first series of the "Commission Talk" radio programs was largely devoted to the discussion of current educational issues. A great deal of positive feedback and requests for further information confirm that the programs have been widely received and have expanded community awareness and interest in education.

#### Affirmative Action Plan for School Department

Paralleling PHRC's involvement in the student rights issue was

its work to develop an Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) for the school department. PHRC was represented on the Affirmative Action Committee of the school department. After numerous meetings with the school superintendent, this committee submitted an AAP to the School Committee. The plan was adopted by the School Committee in October, 1974. Mr. Little continues to serve as an affirmative action advisory committee member. He also contributed to a sub-committee formed to draft the responsibilities of the affirmative action committee and to review its purpose for the new school superintendent in 1976.

### University Affiliations

PHRC also tried to create ties with institutions of higher learning within the community, and to work towards increasing the enrollment of minority students. Since 1975 Mr. Little has served as chairman to the advisory board of TRIO, talent development programs at the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and Rhode Island Junior College. Some of its major goals are to increase university awareness of talent development students, increase enrollment of minority students, and increase employment of minority teachers and tutors. This has been accomplished through contact with the Board of Regents and The Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

In September, 1974, two PHRC staff members attended a conference at Rhode Island College where the criteria used in distributing financial aid to students were discussed. In 1975 PHRC co-sponsored with the political science department at Rhode Island College forums on "American Democracy" and "Promise and Fulfillment." They involved a series of informative lectures over a period of five months. One of the most well-received lecturers was Mayor Kenneth Gibson of Newark, N.J., who discussed his experience as a Black mayor.

## EMPLOYMENT

### PHRC Charged With Responsibility To Implement City's Affirmative Action Program

In March, 1975, the director of PHRC was appointed chairman of the mayor's Affirmative Action Task Force. At this time the Commission included in its recommendations to Mayor Cianci a request to extend the function of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) to PHRC. This suggestion, which was further defined in the completed Affirmative Action Plan Program, was in response to the apparent need for an outside objective body to assist in assuring that the AAP guidelines are fulfilled and result oriented throughout municipal government as well as in private industry.

Throughout the planning and research for the AAP, PHRC held meetings with the heads of various city departments to distribute information and data forms. On May 8, 1975 the City Council adopted a resolution supporting an AAP for the city. In August of that year, the Mayor's Affirmative Action Task Force completed and formally submitted the Affirmative Action Plan guidelines which included a policy statement, implementation procedures, timetables, and an evaluation system.

### Added Responsibility

The City Council resolution held the head official of each city department responsible for establishing and implementing an Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) of equal opportunity. It also provided that PHRC would be responsible for establishing regulations, rules, and standards for effective implementation of AAP's in all city departments. At this time PHRC was authorized by the city council to seek funds for an EEO division which would eventually act as a check on all city personnel practices with regard to fair employment.

In September, 1975, ProCap granted \$17,000 to PHRC for the establishment of an EEO Division. This new extension to the Commission was a necessary step in realizing the goals of affirmative action in Providence and in promoting and enforcing equal opportunity throughout the city. With it came an increase in staffing at PHRC in order to fulfill the added responsibilities of the Commission in the area of employment. Among the duties of the Commission are:

1. aid to all city departments in formulating individual AAP's
2. review of all aspects of city departments employment practices from recruitment to retirement and insuring that there are no impediments to the equal treatment of minorities and women
3. periodic evaluations and corrective recommendations when necessary
4. provision of a system for the hearing of discriminatory complaints

5. consultation with other organizations for useful information regarding affirmative action
6. active public information regarding the city's equal opportunity policy

On March 23, 1977, PHRC, after a public hearing, adopted a set of rules for implementation of the city's AAP. The rules require notification by all city offices of all job openings and the monitoring of all new hirings, transfers, promotions, and terminations.

In accordance with the new responsibilities, PHRC staff members have attended training seminars to increase their knowledge of AAP's and complaint procedures as well as organized workshops to pass on information to other city workers. Staff members attended conferences sponsored by IAOHRA, the State of Rhode Island EEO office, Boston Regional Training Center, Marquette University Law School, and the Inter-agency Personnel Act.

#### Technical Assistance in Developing AAP's

While continuing to strengthen its commitment to EEO, the Commission has given a great deal of technical assistance to government funded agencies and private organizations in formulating AAP's. The Providence Fire Department was the first local public service organization to develop an AAP. In 1974, PHRC, upon request, assisted in formulating an AAP for the Providence School Department.

Among the other organizations to which PHRC has provided assistance in this area are: The Providence Police Department; The Outlet Company; ProCap; The Providence Mental Health Association; and the City Personnel Department.

#### Aiding the Unemployed

While PHRC has sought to manifest its obligation to the promotion of equal employment opportunity through compliance efforts and initiating the standards of affirmative action, it also has become involved in employment referrals. Beginning in 1974, the Commission has worked with local employment referral agencies such as The Concentrated Employment Program (CEP), The Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC), Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), and The Urban League in directing the unemployed to job possibilities and training programs. In this capacity the Commission assisted ProCap, The Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), and Rhode Island College in identifying employment applicants in 1975.

In November, 1975, PHRC began developing a bank of resumes of unemployed and underemployed individuals (mainly but not exclusively, minority group members and women). Although PHRC does not function as an employment agency, it has developed referral services as a courtesy to employers and potential employees who seek advice at the Commission.

Due to added responsibilities in other areas such as housing (which will be discussed in the following section), the Commission's EEO Division has become the Civil Rights Division. This title is believed to be a more accurate description of the expanded duties of this Division, of which EEO is a part.

## HOUSING

PHRC, lacking enforcement powers, has turned to conciliatory approaches when there are tenant/landlord differences. When a discrimination case reaches the Commission it is immediately turned over to the Rhode Island Commission On Human Rights, which may use its enforcement powers as provided by the Fair Housing Law.

### Volunteer Affirmative Marketing Agreement

In 1974, representing the Commission, Mr. Little began working with Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in planning a Volunteer Affirmative Marketing Agreement for realtors in Rhode Island. Affirmative marketing is defined as a program to inform the minority community of homes listed for sale or rent by realtors, of the services offered by realtors in selecting a home for purchase, and of the availability of these homes and services to all buyers regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

The agreement, designed by the National Association of Realtors and the Washington office of the United States Department of HUD, was a preliminary step in complying with the policy established by Congress in its 1968 Fair Housing Act.

In June, 1976, The Greater Providence Board of Realtors became the first organization of real estate brokers in New England to sign such an agreement. Since then the remaining six local boards have signed the agreement. The Commission currently is represented on the Resource Board for HUD's Voluntary Affirmative Marketing Agreement.

### Equal Housing Opportunity Training

In order to become better informed of discriminatory practices and methods of eliminating them, PHRC has made every effort to attend conferences and training seminars dealing with these subjects. In March, 1974, the director attended a three-day conference in Springfield, Massachusetts sponsored by the United States Department of HUD. The Fair Housing Equal Opportunity Seminar discussed the role of civil rights and human rights agencies in housing, affirmative marketing agreements as a method of complying with civil rights requirements, civil rights involvement in housing programs, employment discrimination in real estate, and federal agencies efforts in housing.

In September, 1974, a PHRC staff member attended a seminar in Massachusetts which was co-sponsored by the National Conference of Catholic Charities and the National Housing Training and Information Center. The workshops centered on discussions of discrimination in housing and ways in which social and religious agencies can effectively work together to combat unfair housing practices.

## Homestead Proposal

Continuing its involvement with housing laws and regulations, PHRC developed the Homestead Proposal in 1975 and submitted recommendations to the Mayor's Office. The recommendations have been incorporated in the Homestead Act which deals with rights and transaction procedures of disowned or abandoned housing.

## Public Service Announcements

In recent years, while PHRC has continued to research unfair housing practices and support laws which prohibit such practices, it has concentrated on developing educational material to inform the public of fair housing laws. The Commission arranged for public service announcements, as part of a national campaign, to be shown on Channels 10 and 12 in 1976 and local radio announcements to be aired in 1977. The announcements were designed to publicize typical discriminatory practices such as blockbusting, steering, redlining, and excuses. Here are some examples:

"When a real estate agent tells you your neighborhood is changing racially and your property values are going down, then asks you if you want to sell your house, he's blockbusting and that's illegal. When he won't show you a house or discourages you from looking in a certain neighborhood he is steering and that's illegal too."

"Is there redlining strangling your neighborhood? Redlining is when lending institutions in your community refuse loans to your neighborhood because of its racial composition or income level of the residents. Make sure your money works for your neighborhood."

The results of the announcements could be seen in an increase in calls to the Commission for information on housing laws. Thus, PHRC has expanded its role to that of educator while simultaneously responding to complaints and arbitrating between tenant and landlord disputes.

## Public Housing

The director has served as an alternate to the Grievance Board of the Providence Housing Authority and has acquainted the Rhode Island Tenants association with the services provided by the Commission. In working cooperatively with the housing authority, PHRC has assisted in the translation of housing regulations into Spanish.

## Equal Housing Opportunity Program

Current plans include an equal housing opportunity program to be funded by the Mayor's Office For Community Development and administered by the Commission's Civil Rights Division. The overall goal of the project is to achieve integrated housing and stable neighborhoods throughout the city of Providence. The program is designed to combine



voluntary compliance, educational and enforcement efforts in a comprehensive program for equal opportunity. Emphasis in the first year of the program will be on education, research, and the encouragement of combined action of city government, real estate, and citizen group resources to clarify problem areas, to acquaint all parties with relevant law, and to develop meaningful responses. In the second year of the program, emphasis will shift to the enforcement effort of PHRC under the open housing laws.

## POLICE/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### Staff Training

In 1974 PHRC began participating in summer training programs at Adelphi University in Long Island, New York. The project has been sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) and funded by the Law Enforcement Assistant Act (LEAA). Members of PHRC and the Providence Police Department have attended the workshops for three consecutive years.

Designed to provide trainees with methods of analyzing conflict producing phenomena, the workshops encourage participants to examine the cause of conflict. By bringing the causes into intellectual focus, participants can design methods to deal constructively with conflict.

The course outline includes three areas of discussion: (1) Understanding ourselves (prejudice, self-insight); (2) Understanding others (minorities, youths); (3) Understanding the community (riots, rebellion). In addition to broadening their knowledge of current police/community relations issues, participants also learn more about ways to initiate similar workshops of their own. Included in the training are visits to local courts, correctional institutions, and police departments. Such training has aided PHRC investigators in dealing with conflict situations.

### Camp/Cypress Disruption

One such crisis situation in which PHRC became involved occurred at the Camp/Cypress area of the East Side. Investigation by a special task force which began in 1974 found that disruptive conduct by gangs of youths had led to intimidation of law abiding community members and to a general demise of the neighborhood.

Among the recommendations of the task force were the development of a neighborhood center, improved communication between community members and police, improved protection by police, and improved facilities by which complaints can be aired and emergencies reported.

### The Value Of Staff Training Realized

In an effort to improve police and community relations and to discuss group prejudice, PHRC used the techniques learned at Adelphi in a workshop co-sponsored with NCCJ in December, 1975. Police officers and interested members of the community were invited to participate in the workshop with the hopes of discussing pertinent problems and establishing priorities for future planning.

The workshop succeeded in providing a forum for discussing the many problems which inhibit effective police service in Providence. Future workshops are planned to discuss ways to encourage change and

to improve police and community cooperation.

### Addressing Police Recruits

Over the years, PHRC has been involved in the training of police recruits at the Providence Police Academy. In an attempt to enlighten future police officers to the importance of community relations, members of PHRC have lectured on human relations, how police can improve their attitude towards the public, and how they can implement preventative measures to reduce disturbances. Self-awareness interviews and question and answer sessions have been used to encourage intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. Films concerning prejudice and discrimination also have been used as supplementive learning aides.

Spanish speaking people constitute a growing segment of the Providence community. To help the police department to respond to the needs of this community, PHRC has given staff time to train recruits in conversational Spanish. Over a period of two years a PHRC staff member introduced policemen to a basic understanding of the Spanish language and culture.

### The Need For A More Effective Method Of Complaint Response

Recent research efforts by the PHRC police/community relations advisory committee has resulted in a Civilian Complaint Profile. The report discussed the present methods employed by the Providence Police Department in dealing with complaints against officers. It points out that inadequacies within the present system often result in a loss of faith in the police by complainants and breeds apathy and frustration within the community. The report appeals to the entire management function of the police department to take measures to reduce the causes of complaints by using preventative methods to be employed during recruitment, screening, training, evaluation, and retraining.

### Crime Prevention Study

In February, 1976, PHRC compiled information concerning crime, and ways of reducing it, in a proposal entitled "Crime Prevention Techniques and Methods." With the aim of reducing target crimes, (rape, robbery, and burglary) in Providence by 5% in two years and 20% in five years, the program's suggested methods include increasing public awareness of specific crimes, awareness and support of neighborhood precincts, utilization of crime prevention techniques by potential victims, and specific individual involvement in precinct activities. Among the suggestions for community involvement would be the use of citizen band radios to alert police to suspect actions.

### Developing Criminal Justice Standards and Goals

In the summer of 1976, Mr. Little participated as a member of the Governor's Task Force to develop criminal justice standards and goals.

The task force worked to produce guidelines for municipal police departments in Rhode Island and attempted to unify police standards and goals. This was done to adapt the national advisory commission's standards and goals to the police structure in Rhode Island. Representing the Commission, Mr. Little worked on the Community Relations Sub-Committee, which concentrated on constructing methods to improve police and community relations.

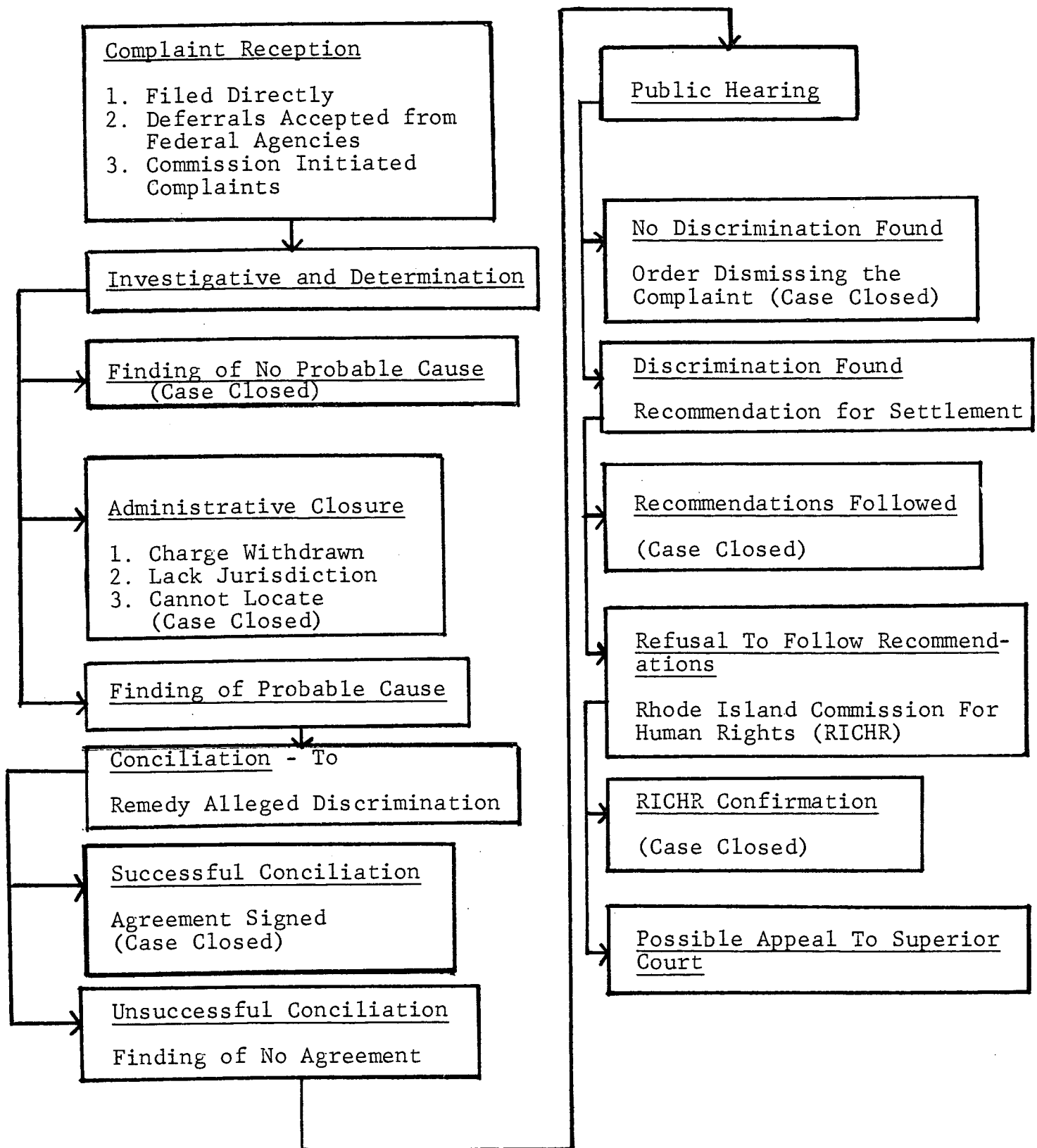
## FUTURE PLANS AND GOALS

The Providence Human Relations Commission has developed more effective rules of procedure for complaint intake and investigation, has adopted more result-oriented rules for monitoring the city's affirmative action programs, and anticipates the initiation of the Equal Housing Opportunity Program. Thus we have established a role which is more comprehensive and which leads towards a greater involvement in the enforcement of equal opportunity and civil rights.

For the future we intend to continue our commitment to the improvement of harmonious intergroup relations in the city. While educating the public to the progress of civil rights and the fact that discrimination is illegal as well as immoral, we foresee a more active participation in the enforcement of the law.

The development of more sophisticated techniques within PHRC is in response to the more sophisticated discriminatory techniques now employed in the 70's and in anticipation of the coming decade. Our objective is to bring violators of human rights to task and finally to end unfair discrimination. We hope to create an environment in which we can all realize our full potential with pride in ourselves and in our community.

## BASIC COMPLAINT PROCESS



STATISTICAL REPORT:  
INVESTIGATIVE CASE LOAD

	1974-1975	1975-1976	1976-1977
RACE:			
Black.....	75	122	226
White.....	28	71	137
Spanish.....	27	77	99
Other.....	<u>4</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	134	286	474

	1974-1975	1975-1976	1976-1977
CASE CLASSIFICATION:			
Education.....	12	53	97
Employment.....	17	39	104
Housing.....	14	54	67
Health/Welfare.....	21	38	51
Information.....	22	17	31
Intergroup Relations..	9	31	44
Police.....	28	39	61
Other or Multiple.....	<u>11</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>19</u>
Total	134	286	474



	1974-1975	1975-1976	1976-1977
CASE RESOLUTION:			
Pending.....	0	0	75
*Dismissed.....	25	50	57
Conciliated.....	87	166	254
Referred.....	<u>22</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>88</u>
Total	134	286	474

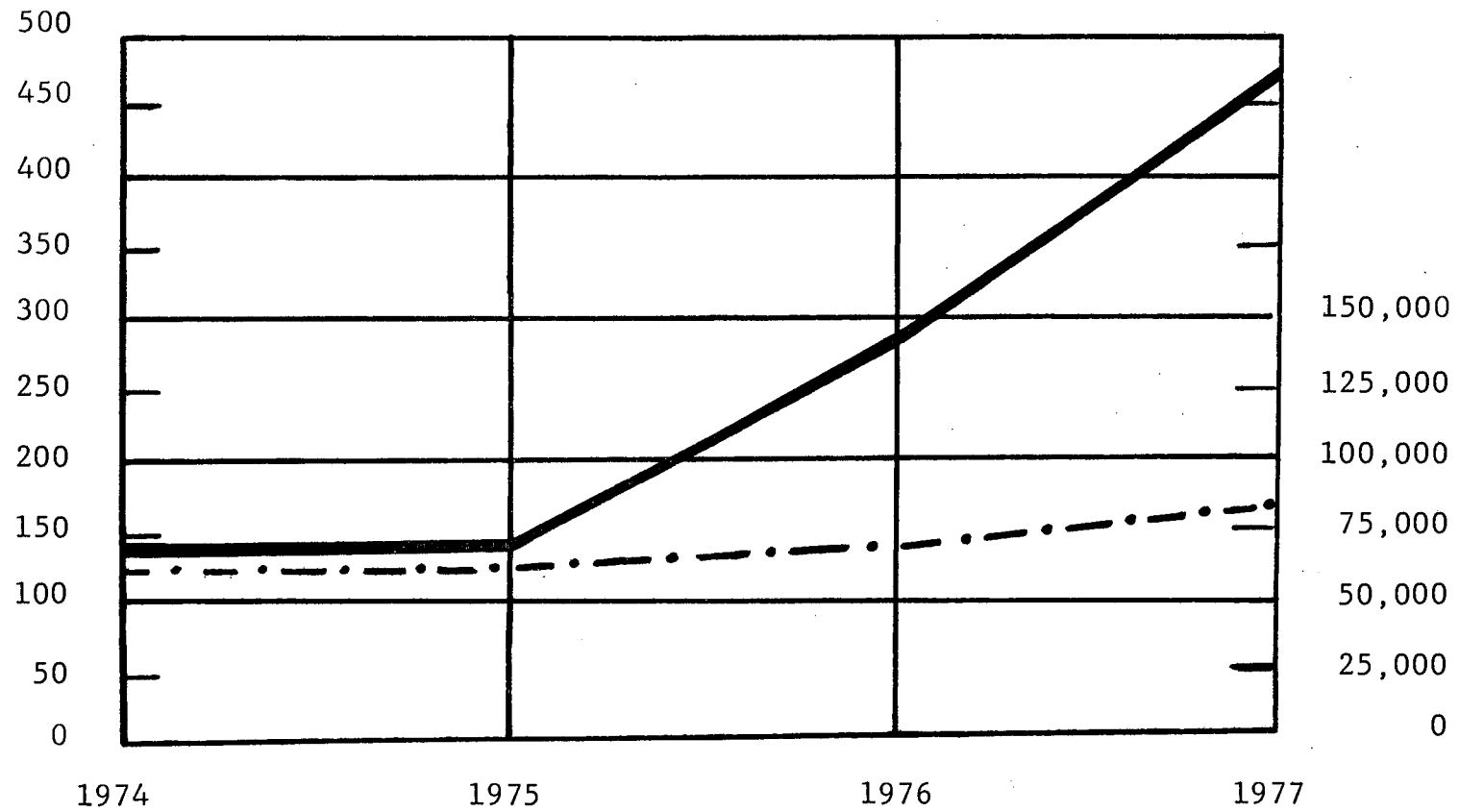
\*Lack of sufficient evidence

# BUDGET AND CASELOAD COMPARISON

1974 - 1977

CASES

DOLLARS



..... Budget (City funds only)

———— Caseload