

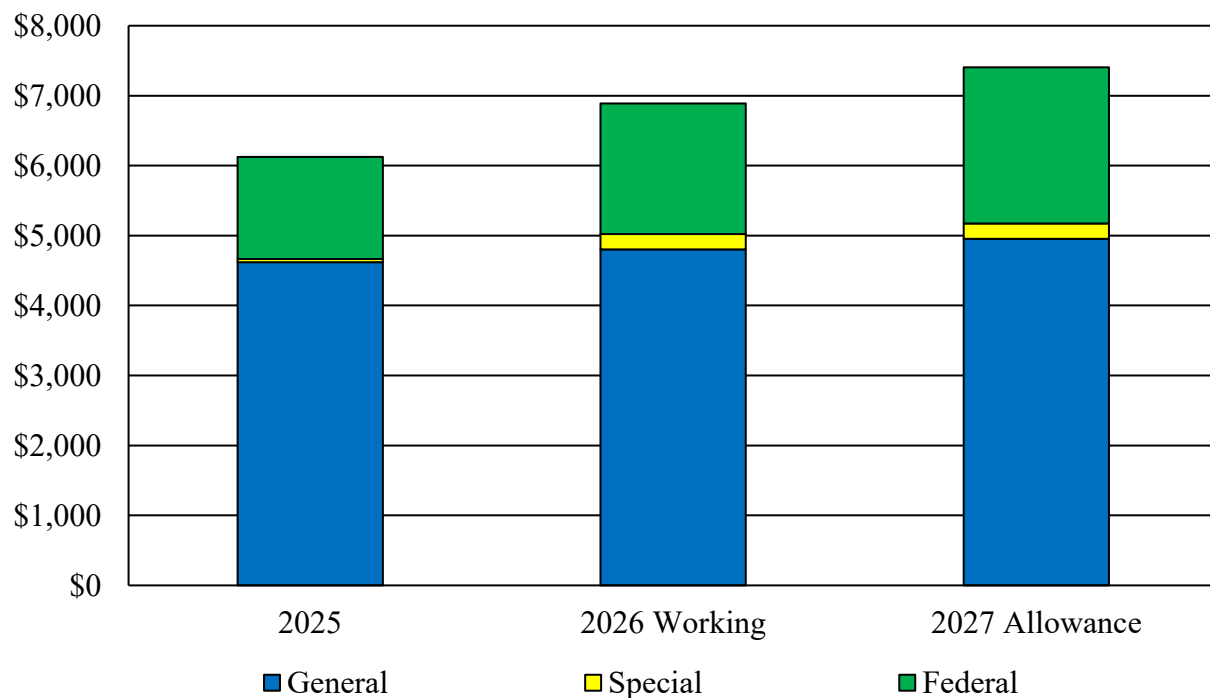
D27L00
Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Program Description

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) aims to prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunity in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodation, State contracts, health services, and commercial leasing. The commission engages in the investigation and resolution of claims of civil rights violations and conducts educational training programs aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of unlawful discrimination along with solutions to address these issues. To enhance its efforts in employment and fair housing, MCCR has work-sharing agreements with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Operating Budget Summary

**Fiscal 2027 Budget Increases \$517,118, or 7.5%, to \$7.4 Million
(\$ in Thousands)**



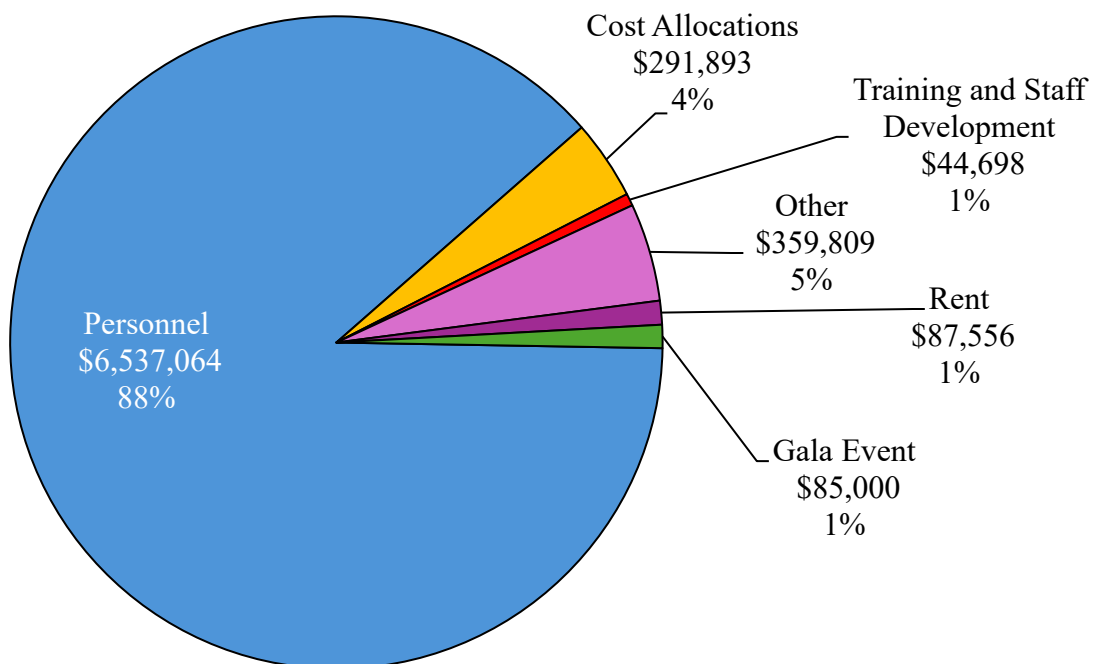
Note: The fiscal 2027 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency's budget.

- The majority of MCCR’s expenditures are supported by general funds, which increase by 3.2% in the fiscal 2027 allowance compared to the fiscal 2026 working appropriation. MCCR also receives federal funds from HUD and EEOC to investigate discrimination claims related to housing and employment. Federal funds increase by 19.5% in the fiscal 2027 allowance compared to the fiscal 2026 working appropriation.

Fiscal 2027 Overview of Agency Spending

As shown in **Exhibit 1**, the fiscal 2027 allowance for MCCR totals \$7.4 million. Personnel expenses account for the largest share of the total budget (88%), supporting 49 regular positions and 3 contractual full-time equivalent positions. Each year, MCCR hosts a gala event, which honors civil rights leaders in Maryland and raises awareness on issues related to discrimination. MCCR’s fiscal 2027 allowance includes \$85,000 (1% of total spending) for their gala, which is the same amount of funding as in fiscal 2026.

Exhibit 1
Overview of Agency Spending
Fiscal 2027 Allowance



Note: The fiscal 2027 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency’s budget.

Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2027 Budget Books

Proposed Budget Change

As shown in **Exhibit 2**, the fiscal 2027 allowance increases by \$517,118, or 7.5%, compared to the fiscal 2026 working appropriation. The primary factor contributing to this change is personnel costs (an increase of \$547,010), including employee and retiree health insurance costs, which increase by \$256,907, and a decrease in MCCR's turnover rate, which increases the fiscal 2027 budget by \$233,595. Increases in personnel costs are partially offset by a reduction of \$58,874 in one-time equipment costs from fiscal 2026, which was used to replace aging information technology equipment and provide equipment to new MCCR staff.

Exhibit 2
Proposed Budget
Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
(\$ in Thousands)

How Much It Grows:	General Fund	Special Fund	Federal Fund	Total
Fiscal 2025 Actual	\$4,619	\$45	\$1,461	\$6,125
Fiscal 2026 Working	4,802	219	1,869	6,889
Fiscal 2027 Allowance	4,954	219	2,233	7,406
Fiscal 2026-2027 \$ Change	\$152	\$0	\$365	\$517
Fiscal 2026-2027 % Change	3.17%	0.00%	19.53%	7.51%

Where It Goes:	Change
Personnel Expenses	
Employee and retiree health insurance.....	\$257
Turnover rate decrease from 10.63% to 6.51%.....	234
Salary increases and associated fringe benefits.....	114
Deferred compensation match due to statewide change in budgeting	16
Abolished administrative specialist position that was added in fiscal 2026	-73
Other Changes	
Postage increase to reflect actual and expected expenditures for fiscal 2025 and 2026	20
Training and staff development, including for new staff added in fiscal 2026	10
Cost allocations	13
Travel.....	-6

D27L00 – Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Where It Goes:	<u>Change</u>
Supplies and equipment from one time replacement of aging information technology equipment and equipment for new personnel.....	-\$59
Other changes	-9
Total	\$517

Note: Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding. The fiscal 2027 allowance does not include statewide salary adjustments budgeted within the Department of Budget and Management.

Personnel Data

	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 26-27
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Working</u>	<u>Allowance</u>	<u>Change</u>
Regular Positions	38.00	50.00	49.00	-1.00
Contractual FTEs	<u>1.00</u>	<u>3.00</u>	<u>3.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Personnel	39.00	53.00	52.00	-1.00

Vacancy Data: Regular Positions

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	3.19	6.51%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/2025	8.00	16.00%
Vacancies Above Turnover	4.81	

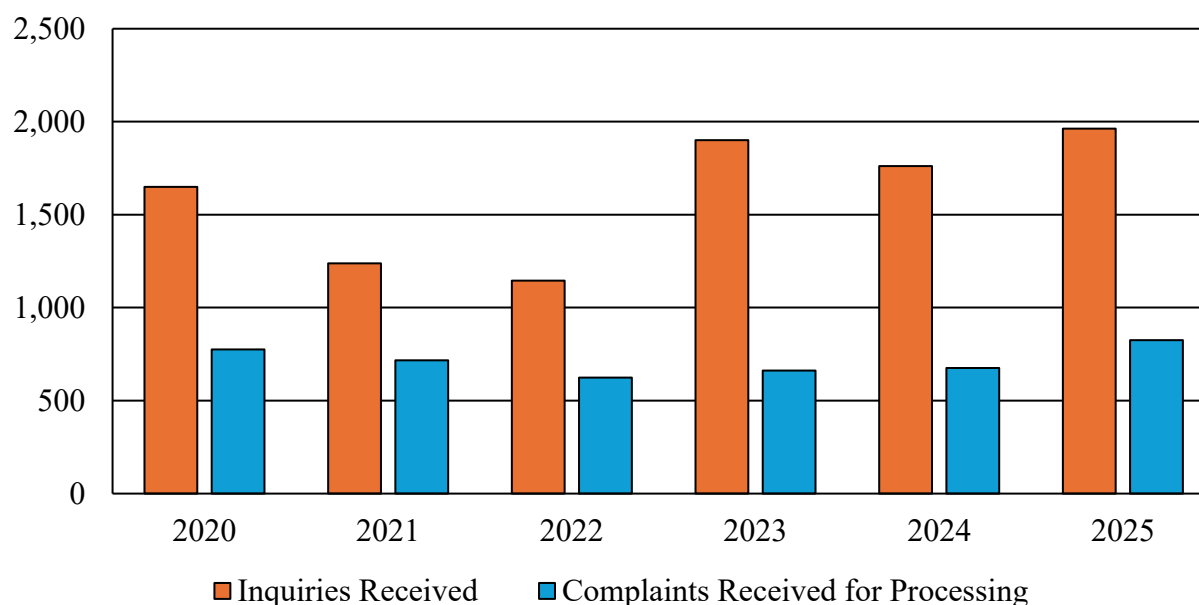
- Over the last several years, MCCR has experienced ongoing challenges in case processing that have been attributed in large part to staffing limitations (discussed further in Key Observation 1). To assist in addressing this issue, the fiscal 2026 budget included 12 new positions, including 1 contractual conversion. As part of the response to committee narrative in the 2025 *Joint Chairmen's Report* (JCR), MCCR stated that as of December 12, 2025, 7 of the 12 new positions have been filled, and MCCR was actively working to fill 3 of the remaining positions. MCCR reported that 2 positions, a civil rights officer position and an assistant general counsel position, are being held vacant to accommodate personnel expense reductions in the fiscal 2026 budget.
- MCCR's 8 vacant positions as of December 31, 2025, include 5 civil rights officer positions, 2 assistant general counsel positions, and an administrative specialist. The administrative specialist position is being abolished in the fiscal 2027 allowance. **MCCR should comment on planned recruitment efforts.**

Key Observations

1. Recent Patterns in Civil Rights Inquiries and Complaints

Exhibit 3 presents information on inquiries received and complaints received for processing by MCCR. Inquiries refer to initial contacts or requests for assistance received by MCCR, whereas cases represent formal complaints that proceed through the agency’s investigation and resolution process. Following a decline in civil rights inquiries handled by MCCR between fiscal 2020 and 2022 that the agency attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and related closures of offices and public spaces, inquiries rose sharply to 1,900 in fiscal 2023 as employees returned to the office. Though inquiries fell slightly in fiscal 2024, to 1,761, they rose again in fiscal 2025 to 1,962, an 11.4% increase compared to fiscal 2024. MCCR attributes this increase to the political environment.

Exhibit 3
Civil Rights Inquiries and Complaints
Fiscal 2020-2025



Source: Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

The number of complaints received for processing has varied during the period from fiscal 2020 to 2025. This variation generally, but not always, follows the trend of inquiries. After a decline in fiscal 2021 and 2022 (from 716 to 623), complaints received for processing rose

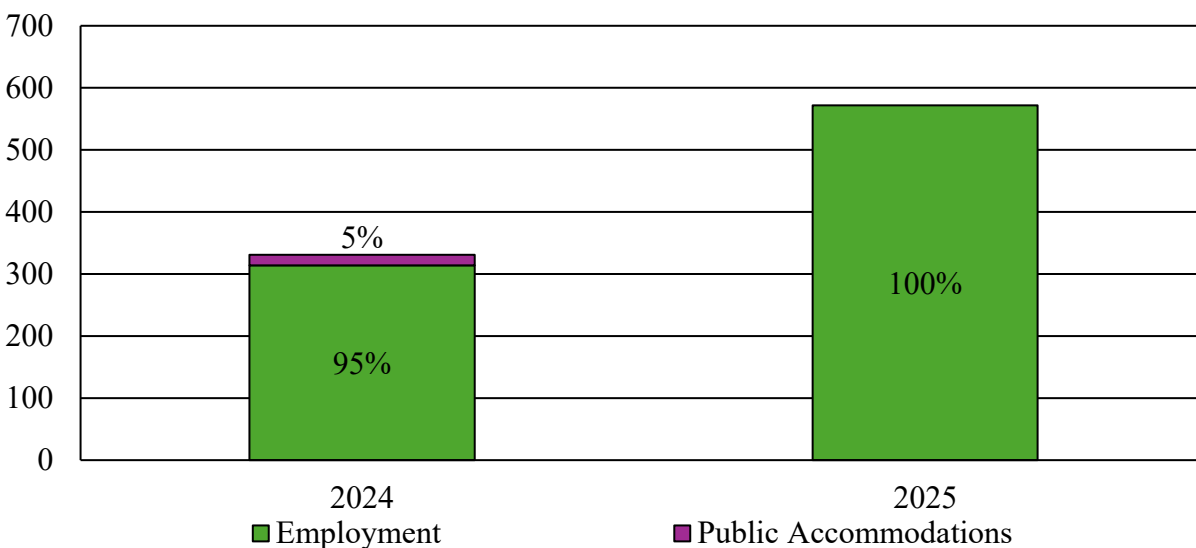
slightly in fiscal 2023 and again in fiscal 2024, to 676. In fiscal 2025, MCCR experienced a substantial increase in complaints, to 825, an increase of 22% compared to fiscal 2024. The agency attributes this increase to the rise in inquiries received.

Case Backlog and Status of Active Cases

Unassigned Cases

In fiscal 2025, MCCR reported 572 unassigned cases as of June 30, 2025, a sharp increase from the 331 reported the year prior. **Exhibit 4** shows that employment cases accounted for 100% of these unassigned cases in fiscal 2025. Employment cases encompass discrimination categorized under EEOC and MCCR, such as retaliation, disability, and harassment among others. There were no unassigned housing cases in either fiscal 2024 or 2025, as these are assigned upon receipt in accordance with HUD statutory requirements.

Exhibit 4
Unassigned Cases by Type
Fiscal 2024-2025



Source: Department of Budget and Management; Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

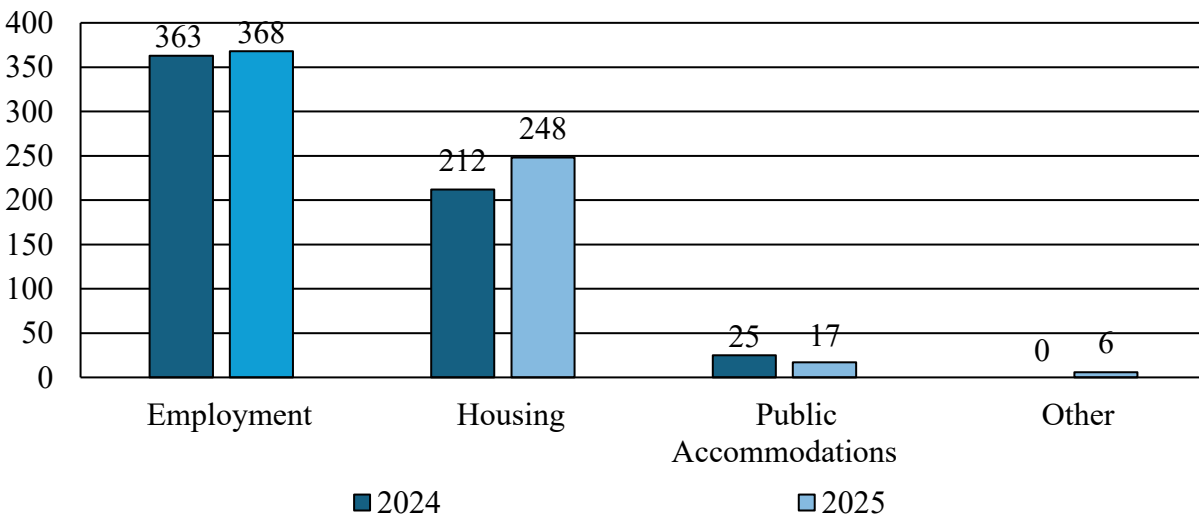
Committee narrative in the 2025 JCR requested that MCCR submit a report on the impact of new positions on case assignment and backlog management, which was submitted on December 16, 2025. As part of that response, the agency discussed reasons for the employment case backlog. MCCR explained that typically investigators have 40 active cases each at any given time, and new cases are not assigned until their caseload falls below this level. MCCR also noted

that because they receive more employment cases than any other case type, it typically takes the Intake Unit much longer to contact complainants and schedule intake interviews than for other case types. Because new investigators were still undergoing training at the time of their report submission, MCCR reported that it was difficult to assess the impact of the new investigators on the case backlog. However, MCCR reported that at the time of writing, there were 498 cases awaiting assignment to an investigator, a decrease of 74 from the 572 reported as of July 30, 2025.

Open and Pending Cases and Cases Open Over One Year

In fiscal 2025, MCCR managed a total of 639 open and pending civil rights cases across various categories. As shown in **Exhibit 5**, employment cases made up the majority of the open and pending cases in fiscal 2025, with 368 cases (58%), followed by housing with 248 cases (39%), and public accommodations with 17 cases (3%). The remainder of open and pending cases included State contracts, health services, and commercial leasing contracts. MCCR had a total of 6 open and pending cases in these categories in fiscal 2025, representing less than 1% of the total. Between fiscal 2024 and 2025, the total number of open and pending cases increased by 39 (6.5%). The majority of that growth was in housing cases, which increased by 36 (17%) compared to fiscal 2024. State contracts, health services, and commercial leasing contracts are new categories reported in fiscal 2025 and as such, there were no open and pending cases listed in those categories reported in fiscal 2024.

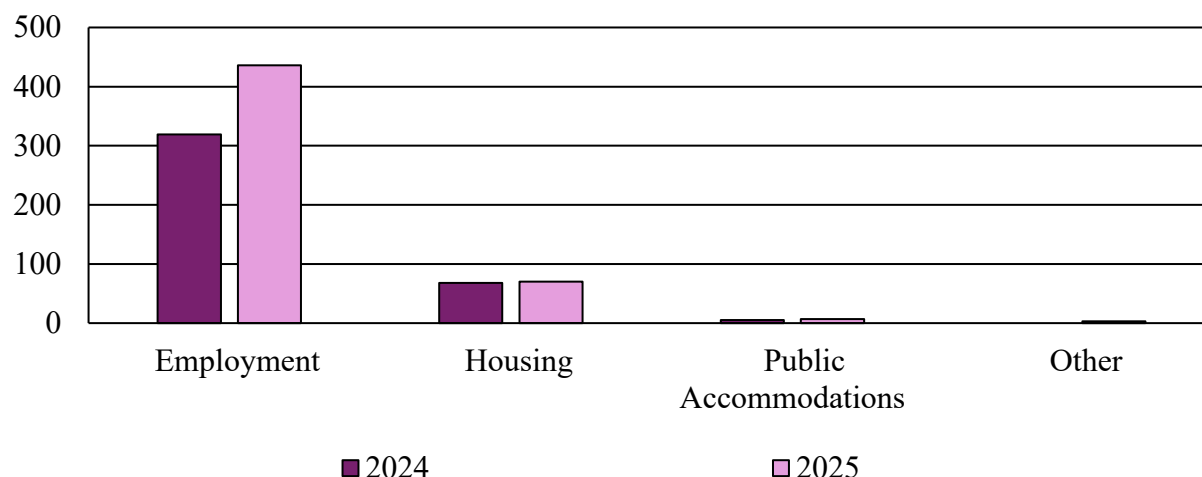
Exhibit 5
Open and Pending Cases
Fiscal 2024-2025



Source: Department of Budget and Management; Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

As of June 30, 2025, MCCR reported that 516 cases had been open more than one year, an increase of 124 from the same point in fiscal 2024. This includes both cases that are considered open and pending, as well as unassigned cases that exceed one year since being opened. As shown in **Exhibit 6**, employment cases represented the largest share of these cases with 436 cases (84% of cases open over one year), while housing accounted for 70 cases (14%), public accommodations accounted for 7 cases (1%), and all other categories accounted for 3 cases (less than 1%). Between fiscal 2024 and 2025, the number of employment cases that had been open for more than one year increased by 36.7%.

Exhibit 6
Cases Open More Than One Year
Fiscal 2024-2025



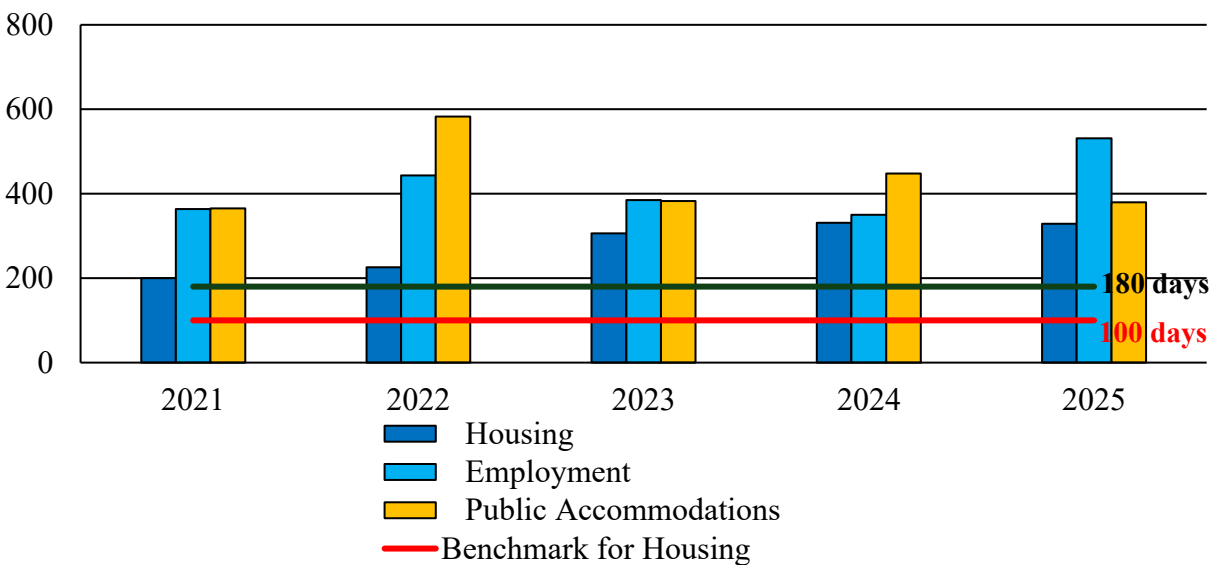
Source: Department of Budget and Management; Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Processing Times by Case Type

Over the past several years, MCCR has struggled with lengthy case processing times that far exceed goals. Benchmarks established by MCCR target an average resolution time of 180 days or fewer for employment and public accommodation cases, and 100 days for housing cases, in line with HUD's standards. However, as shown in **Exhibit 7**, MCCR did not meet those benchmarks in any year between fiscal 2021 and 2025. After peaking in fiscal 2022 at 583 days, the average processing time for public accommodations cases decreased by 34.8% between fiscal 2022 and 2025. However, the average processing time for housing cases has risen over the same period, from 226 days in fiscal 2022 to 329 days in fiscal 2025. While average processing times for employment cases decreased each year from fiscal 2022 to 2024, the average processing time increased significantly in fiscal 2025 from 350 days in fiscal 2024 to 531 days, an increase of

51.7%. MCCR attributes this increase in processing times in part to the amount of time between case opening and initial interviews. In the response to the committee narrative, MCCR noted that initial intake interviews with employment discrimination complainants typically are not scheduled until two months after preliminary questionnaires are submitted due to the volume of employment cases. Despite improvements in public accommodations case processing times, MCCR continues to face challenges in meeting the established timelines across all case types.

Exhibit 7
Average Processing Times by Case Type
Fiscal 2021-2025



Source: Department of Budget and Management; Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Additional Efforts to Reduce Case Backlogs

In the response submitted in December 2025, MCCR also discussed additional measures being implemented to decrease the case backlogs, including a relaunch of their Alternative Dispute Resolution program and a new custom Customer Management System (CMS), which is expected to roll out in early calendar 2026. The Alternative Dispute Resolution program allows some cases to be resolved through mediation, which the agency believes will result in fewer cases remaining unassigned in their backlog. According to MCCR, the new CMS will eliminate MCCR's current practice of calculating many metrics by hand, allowing the agency to calculate and analyze metrics more frequently. Additionally, the new CMS will automate staff workflows, allowing investigators and others to work more efficiently. **The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends adopting committee narrative requesting that MCCR submit a report discussing measures implemented to reduce case backlogs.**

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Adopt the following narrative:

Measures Implemented to Reduce Case Backlogs: The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) has faced persistent challenges in case processing that have been primarily attributed to staffing limitations, contributing to delays and a backlog of cases awaiting assignment. The committees request that MCCR submit a report outlining any measures implemented to reduce case backlogs, including:

- the status of filling vacant positions related to both the new positions in fiscal 2026 and other vacant positions, and the impact of filling vacant positions on the case backlog and case assignment timelines;
- metrics tracking case resolution outcomes, including average processing time, number of cases closed, and proportion of cases resolved within established benchmarks;
- a discussion of operational improvements, including any changes in workflow, investigator caseloads, or coordination with involved parties and any impacts these changes have had on case backlogs; and
- current average staff to caseload ratios by case type and a comparison to the staff to caseload ratios held at similar offices in other jurisdictions.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on measures implemented to reduce case backlogs	MCCR	November 1, 2026

Appendix 1
2025 Joint Chairmen’s Report Responses from Agency

The 2025 JCR requested that MCCR prepare one report. Electronic copies of the full JCR response can be found on the DLS Library website.

- ***Impact of New Positions on Case and Backlog Management:*** MCCR submitted the requested report in December 2025 outlining the impact that the 12 new positions added in the fiscal 2026 budget had on case management and MCCR’s backlog of cases. Further discussion can be found in Key Observation 1 of this analysis.

Appendix 2
Object/Fund Difference Report
Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

<u>Object/Fund</u>	<u>FY 25 Actual</u>	<u>FY 26 Working Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 27 Allowance</u>	<u>FY 26 - 27 \$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Positions					
01 Regular	38.00	50.00	49.00	-1.00	-2.0%
02 Contractual	1.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	0.0%
Total Positions	39.00	53.00	52.00	-1.00	1.9%
Objects					
01 Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits	\$4,929,946	\$5,770,616	\$6,317,626	\$547,010	9.5%
02 Technical and Special Fees	87,821	263,920	274,196	10,276	3.9%
03 Communications	58,160	39,520	54,520	15,000	38.0%
04 Travel	25,587	34,661	28,306	-6,355	-18.3%
07 Motor Vehicle Operation and Maintenance	22,483	12,520	12,020	-500	-4.0%
08 Contractual Services	823,257	535,977	546,771	10,794	2.0%
09 Supplies and Materials	35,462	53,000	53,000	0	0.0%
10 Equipment – Replacement	12,136	58,874	0	-58,874	-100.0%
11 Equipment – Additional	1,462	500	500	0	0.0%
12 Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions	0	8,800	8,800	0	0.0%
13 Fixed Charges	128,791	110,514	110,281	-233	-0.2%
Total Objects	\$6,125,105	\$6,888,902	\$7,406,020	\$517,118	7.5%
Funds					
01 General Funds	\$4,618,993	\$4,801,601	\$4,953,725	\$152,124	3.2%
03 Special Funds	44,769	218,800	218,800	0	0.0%
05 Federal Funds	1,461,343	1,868,501	2,233,495	364,994	19.5%
Total Funds	\$6,125,105	\$6,888,902	\$7,406,020	\$517,118	7.5%

Note: The fiscal 2027 allowance does not include statewide salary adjustments budgeted within the Department of Budget and Management.