



**CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**2005-2006**

**Report on Plans and Priorities**

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The Honourable Irwin Cotler P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada



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**OVERVIEW**

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**The Chief Commissioner's Message**

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Over the past two years, the Commission has been engaged in a change process to more efficiently and effectively apply the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Employment Equity Act*. Our goal – to strengthen human rights, protect the public interest and enhance equality in areas under federal jurisdiction.

Our initial focus has been on improving case management, with encouraging results:

- the number of final decisions increased from 729 in 2002, to 1,307 in 2003, and dipped only slightly to 1,273 in 2004, an overall improvement in two years of about 74%;
- the average age of cases decreased from 25 months in December 2002, to 15 months in December 2003, to just over 12 months in December 2004, a 50% improvement since 2002; and
- the number of cases over two years old decreased from 465 in December 2002, to 244 in December 2003, to 141 in December 2004. Excluding inactive cases, the number of cases over two years old in December 2004 was 82.

These results show us that the changes we have made to streamline the management of complaints and to increase the use of mediation are resulting in the more timely and efficient treatment of human rights complaints.

Over the next planning period, we will continue to streamline our case management operations. At the same time, we are shifting some of our resources to discrimination prevention and human rights research to more effectively discourage discrimination in the first place.

We are strengthening our efforts in discrimination prevention by working in cooperation with federally regulated employers and service providers to develop workplaces that foster respect for human dignity and human differences. We are developing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with several large employers to set preventive strategies in place aimed at resolving allegations of discrimination as early as possible or preventing discrimination altogether, through a combination of training, policy development and mediation services. The first MOU was signed in January 2005, and others will follow soon.

The Commission's ongoing compliance audits under the *Employment Equity Act* also contribute to discrimination prevention by ensuring that federal employers identify and address employment barriers to the full representation of women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities in their workforces. A streamlined approach to the audits of small employers and improved decision-making processes are among the improvements planned for 2005.

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We are also placing a greater emphasis on human rights research through special studies to guide our work in ways that may be applied more broadly. We are targeting for study several human rights issues that affect broad groups of people. Among the issues we will be examining over the coming months are telephone access for the deaf, improved access to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* for First Nations peoples, barrier removal for persons with disabilities, and hate on the Internet.

These three areas – case management, discrimination prevention and research – will provide the framework for everything the Commission does in the coming years to administer both the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Employment Equity Act*. Guided by modern management practices, the Commission will strategically deploy its resources to their greatest effect to ensure that the principles of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination are followed in all areas of federal jurisdiction.

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Mary Gusella  
Chief Commissioner

## Summary Information

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (the Commission) was established in 1977 to administer the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. The purpose of the Act is to promote equality of opportunity and to protect individuals from discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted.

The Commission also has a mandate under the *Employment Equity Act*, which seeks to achieve equality in the workplace and to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. Both the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Employment Equity Act* apply to federal departments and agencies, Crown corporations and federally regulated private-sector organizations.

The Commission is made up of a Chief Commissioner and up to six part-time members. The Chief Commissioner is appointed for a term of up to seven years; and the other Commissioners, for terms of up to three years. The Chief Commissioner is responsible for the operations of the Commission, supported by the Secretary General.

### Financial Resources (\$ thousands)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
\$22,476	\$19,601	\$19,601

### Human Resources (FTE)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
199	190	190

### Commission Priorities

Priorities	Type	Planned Spending		
		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
1 Improve the case management system	Ongoing	15,879	12,794	12,794
2 Design and implement a human rights research program	New	2,130	2,198	2,198
3 Implement the new Discrimination Prevention Program	Ongoing	2,051	2,115	2,115
4 Deliver the Employment Equity Audit Program and design improvements	Ongoing	2,416	2,494	2,494
TOTAL		22,476	19,601	19,601

These figures are based on our best estimates of planned spending and are subject to change.

Priorities are subject to revision based on our changing environment. Therefore, it is not reasonable to forecast variances in the out years.

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## Commission Plans and Priorities

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### **PRIORITY 1** Improve the case management system

#### ***Plans***

- Progress toward a service standard by which 85% of cases are resolved within a year.
- Progress to reduce the average age of the case load from 12 months to between 8 and 10 months.
- Expand the effective delivery of alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

#### ***Risks and Challenges***

The Commission's capacity for processing human rights complaints in a timely manner may be impacted by:

- General resistance to ADR within the federal system, particularly in human rights cases where the Department of Justice is acting as the litigation agent for Government of Canada departments, agencies and other institutions.
- Delays on the part of departments and agencies in implementing informal conflict management systems as required under the new *Public Service Modernization Act*.

### **PRIORITY 2** Design and implement a human rights research program

#### ***Plans***

- Expand the Commission's research and policy capacity.
- Undertake ongoing environmental scans to monitor emerging and systemic human rights issues.
- Conduct impact assessments of government initiatives.

#### ***Risks and Challenges***

A risk for the Commission is that it might be unable to generate sufficient savings and efficiencies in the redesign of its case management system to redirect resources to emerging priorities, such as research. This risk should be understood in the broader context of budgetary reductions expected across the federal government in the reporting period.



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### **PRIORITY 3    Implement the new Discrimination Prevention Program**

#### ***Plans***

- Negotiate and enter into agreements with key organizations to assist them in reducing discrimination in workplaces or service centres by providing tools, training and workshops.

#### ***Risks and Challenges***

There are two prime risks. One is that the demand for service might exceed the capacity of the Commission to deliver on its prevention initiatives. The second risk is the same as for Priority 2 – that the Commission might be unable to generate sufficient savings and efficiencies in the redesign of its case management system to redirect resources to this emerging priority.

### **PRIORITY 4    Deliver the Employment Equity Audit Program and design improvements**

#### ***Plans***

- Complete approximately 56 planned audits in 2005-2006, including assessment of employers who, owing to their lack of reasonable progress, require implementation compliance audits.
- Complete remaining pilot audits of 25 small, private-sector employers (100-299 employees) and implement a streamlined approach to conducting employment equity audits.
- Implement a new accountability structure through to the level of Commissioners.
- Explore appropriate opportunities to bridge the audit work with the human rights case work.
- Identify efficiencies and opportunities for the development of standards for processing times.

#### ***Risks and Challenges***

The challenge will be to organize Commission resources in a way that synergizes the energies and competencies of the Employment Equity Audit Program with other activities of the Commission.



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### ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME

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#### Analysis by Program Activity

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##### Strategic Outcome

Equality, respect for human rights and protection from discrimination by fostering understanding of and compliance with the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Employment Equity Act*.

##### Program Activity

A. Foster understanding of and compliance with the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

##### Description

The Commission provides recourse for those who believe that their rights, as set out in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (the Act), have been violated. The Act applies to federally regulated organizations.

##### The Human Rights Complaint Process

A complaint of discrimination may move through several stages from inquiry and intake to mediation, investigation, conciliation and litigation. Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) is offered at all stages of the process.

**Inquiry:** An inquiry is any initial contact with the Commission by a person, group or organization seeking information or wishing to bring a situation or concern to the Commission's attention.

**Intake:** At the intake stage, additional information is gathered and further analysis is conducted to determine whether the allegation constitutes a basis for a complaint of discrimination under the Act. If it does, it is referred to mediation or investigation.

**Referral to alternative redress:** In cases where the complainant has access to an alternative redress mechanism, such as a grievance process, or where the issue could be resolved through another Act of Parliament, the complainant can be asked to exhaust this other avenue first. If not satisfied with the result of that process, the complainant may return to the Commission to ask that it deal with the complaint. If the complainant does come back, an assessment will be made of the extent to which the other process has appropriately addressed the human rights issues raised in the complaint.

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**Section 41 analysis:** Officers will assess the admissibility of complaints and determine the appropriate next steps, based on section 41 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. In some cases, they may recommend that the Commission not mediate or investigate complaints that are filed beyond the one-year time limit or that could be considered trivial, vexatious or made in bad faith. There are also circumstances in which the Commissioners may be asked to decide on a contentious jurisdictional issue.

**Preliminary assessment:** This process is an early opportunity for both parties to have a frank and open discussion and assessment of a case with a senior human rights specialist. The objective is to either resolve the case or expedite the investigation by narrowing the issues and helping the parties to establish realistic expectations.

**Mediation:** Mediation is a voluntary process of discussion and negotiation between the parties. Mediated settlements are submitted to the Commissioners for approval. An improved ADR process has been implemented as an alternative to investigation. While ADR is available to the parties at all stages of the complaint process, in practice, most dispute resolution takes place at one of two critical points: immediately after a complaint has been filed, when, prior to investigation, the complaint is referred to mediation; or after investigation, when, based on an investigator's findings, the Commissioners decide to refer the complaint to conciliation. Both processes are confidential and conducted without prejudice.

**Investigation:** An investigation is a process in which evidence related to the complaint is gathered and analyzed, and recommendations are prepared for the consideration of the Commissioners.

**Conciliation:** Conciliation normally takes place after investigation, when the Commissioners have had an opportunity to review the investigator's findings and believe conciliation could help to resolve the case.

**Litigation:** Litigation begins with the referral of a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal for an inquiry. Under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, legal counsel of the Commission represents the public interest before the Tribunal.

### ***Expected results***

Increased compliance with the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

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### **Link to priorities**

This program activity primarily supports the Commission's priority to improve the case management system. In addition, it supports the priorities of preventing discrimination, and increasing and sharing research aimed at increasing compliance with the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

### **Financial Resources\*** (\$ thousands)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
\$19,628	\$16,750	\$16,750

### **Human Resources\*** (FTE)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
167	158	158

\* Note that the above financial and human resources include Corporate Management planned expenditures to support this activity.

### **Sub-activities**

**A 1** Integrated processing of individual human rights complaints filed against federally regulated employers and service providers.

### **Description**

The Act empowers the Commission to receive and investigate complaints of discrimination in federal employment and in the provision of goods and services by federally regulated providers, based on the 11 grounds enumerated in the Act. The Commission also has the authority to investigate complaints of wage discrimination on the grounds of sex.

Expected results	Performance indicators
Stakeholders recognize the Commission's complaint process as timely, effective, efficient and transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Percentage of cases less than one year old</li><li>• Average age of cases</li><li>• Service satisfaction of participants</li><li>• Participation rate in mediation</li><li>• Service standards are developed and monitored</li></ul>

**A 2** Prevention initiatives and collaborative arrangements within the federal system to promote sound human rights practices in the workplace.

**Description**

The Commission’s prevention activities are centred on working with federally regulated organizations to identify areas where improvements are required to create workplaces and service delivery centres embracing a human rights culture.

Expected results	Performance indicators
Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) are in place with key respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in complaints against respondents with whom there are MOUs, and complaints resolved sooner in the workplace</li> </ul>

**A 3** Stakeholder outreach, policy research and development, public inquiries, national human rights institution-building and human rights impact assessments of government initiatives.

**Description**

The Commission undertakes research, consultations, impact assessments and policy development. The purpose of these activities is to guide the Commission’s work and inform the public, government employers and service providers about human rights principles and best practices to improve respect for human rights in Canada. The Commission assesses new legislation and government policies to ensure consistency with human rights standards.

Expected results	Performance indicators
Timely and accessible research, policy statements, and background documents about human rights concepts and best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate reporting to Parliament</li> <li>Tools on discrimination prevention are available to federally regulated organizations</li> <li>Information on the work of the Commission is available to Canadians</li> </ul>

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**Program Activity**

B. Employment equity audits in federal and federally regulated workplaces.

**Description**

The requirements of the *Employment Equity Act* are designed to ensure that federally regulated private-sector employers with more than 100 employees, Crown corporations, and federal government departments and separate agencies take the necessary steps to identify, correct or eliminate the effects of employment discrimination, intentional or otherwise, on the four designated groups: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

**Expected results**

A workforce more representative of the four groups designated under the *Employment Equity Act*.

**Link to priorities**

This program activity primarily supports the Commission’s priority to continue to implement and monitor the Employment Equity Audit Program. It also supports the priorities of preventing discrimination and increasing and sharing research aimed at increasing compliance with the *Employment Equity Act*.

**Financial Resources\*** (\$ thousands)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
\$2,848	\$2,851	\$2,851

**Human Resources\*** (FTE)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
32	32	32

\* Note that the above financial and human resources include Corporate Management planned expenditures to support this activity.

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## Sub-activities

**B 1** Ensuring employer compliance with employment equity statutory requirements in the form of an employment equity plan.

### **Description**

The Commission carries out compliance audits of federal and federally regulated workplaces to assess their compliance with the *Employment Equity Act* and to ensure cases of noncompliance are corrected. The primary output of this sub-activity is an employment equity plan that, once implemented, will result in reasonable progress toward full representation of the four designated groups.

Expected results	Performance indicators
Employers are in compliance with the <i>Employment Equity Act</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number and percentage of employers in compliance</li><li>• Number and percentage of employees working for employers in compliance</li></ul>

**B 2** Ensuring reasonable efforts and reasonable progress are made toward full representation in accordance with labour market availability.

### **Description**

The Commission monitors the employer's progress in implementing the employment equity plan to determine whether reasonable progress has been made. Reasonable progress is defined as meeting the hiring and promotion goals established in the plan.

The Commission initiates an implementation audit when an employer has not demonstrated reasonable progress over three years. The purpose of the audit is to assess whether all reasonable efforts were made to implement the plan. If the employer has demonstrated reasonable efforts and has appropriately reviewed and revised its plan, the Commission issues a new finding of compliance with the Act. However, if reasonable efforts have not been made, the employer is required to propose undertakings to implement the plan.

Expected results	Performance indicators
Employer progress toward full representation, in accordance with labour market availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Percentage increase in representation of designated groups in organizations that have been audited</li><li>• Number of employers who have integrated employment equity into their business plans and can demonstrate results</li></ul>



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**B 3** Stakeholder outreach, policy research and development, public inquiries, and employment equity impact assessments of government initiatives.

**Description**

The Commission provides information and assistance to employers and service providers so they can better understand their obligations in employment equity and responsibilities for the application of human rights principles. The Commission is also working collaboratively with central agencies in furthering human rights across the federal system.

The Commission’s prevention activities are designed to assist employers in the prevention of discrimination in the workplace, under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. The audits conducted under the *Employment Equity Act* allow the Commission to identify systemic discrimination, as well as barriers to employment and best practices in overcoming those barriers. Strategic linkages between the Employment Equity Audit Program and the prevention activities need to be explored to improve the human rights culture of federally regulated employers.

Expected results	Performance indicators
Commission’s employment equity work is seen as coherent and useful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employer survey every five years to affirm employer understanding and perception of the program</li></ul>



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**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION****Management Representation Statement**

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I submit for tabling in Parliament, the *2005-2006 Report on Plans and Priorities* for the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

This document has been prepared based on the reporting principles contained in the *Guide for the Preparation of 2005-2006 Part III of the Estimates: Reports on Plans and Priorities*.

- It adheres to the specific reporting requirements outlined in the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) guidance;
- It uses an approved program activity architecture structure;
- It provides a basis of accountability for the results achieved with the resources and authorities entrusted to the Commission; and
- It reports finances based on approved planned spending numbers from TBS.

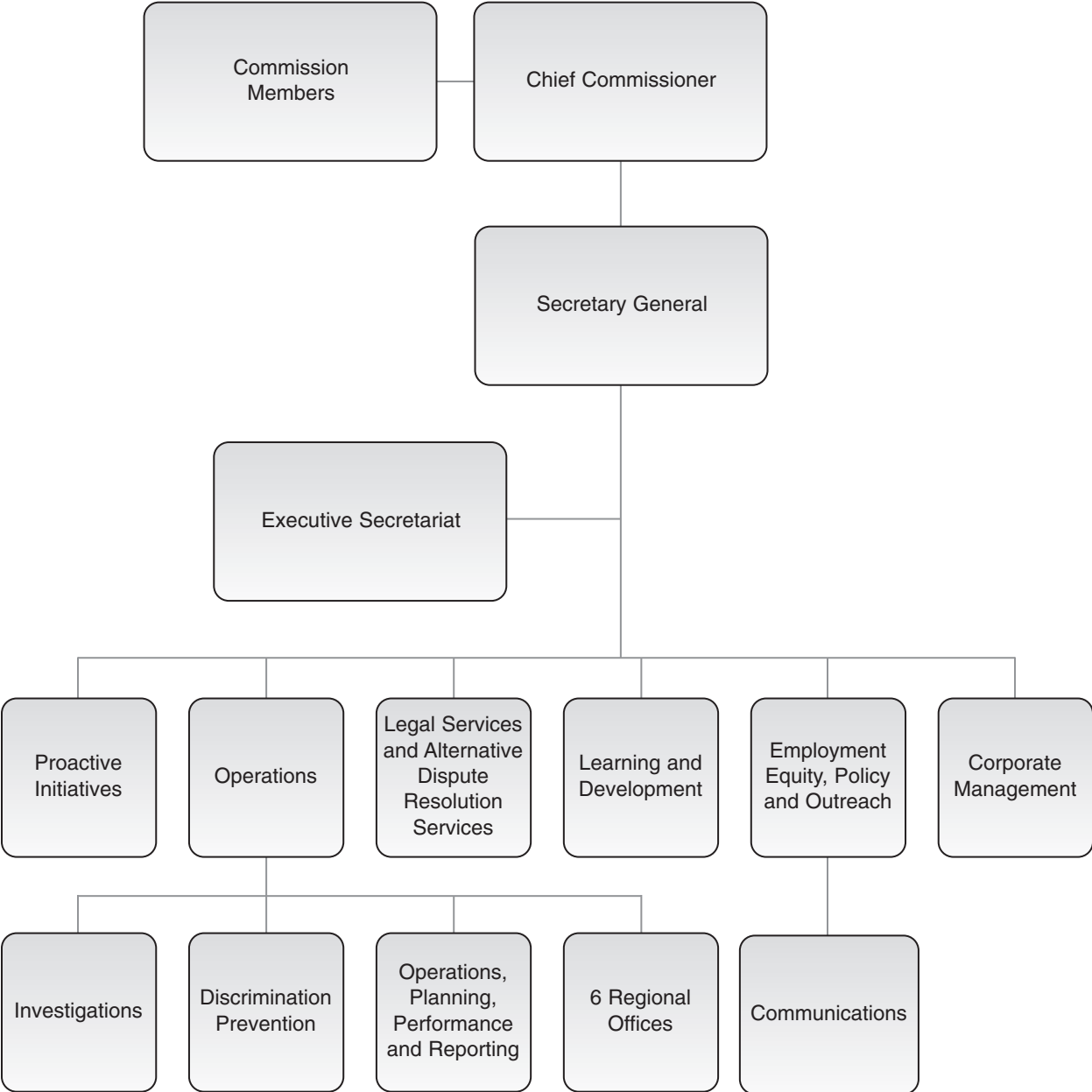
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Robert W. Ward  
Secretary General

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# Organizational Information

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**Table 1: Commission Planned Spending and Full Time Equivalents**

(\$ thousands)	Forecast Spending 2004-2005*	Planned Spending 2005-2006	Planned Spending 2006-2007	Planned Spending 2007-2008
Foster understanding of and compliance with the <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i>	17,806.0	<b>19,577.0</b>	16,562.0	16,562.0
Employment equity audits in federal and federally regulated workplaces	2,917.0	<b>2,803.0</b>	2,918.0	2,918.0
Budgetary Main Estimates (gross)	20,723.0	<b>22,380.0</b>	19,480.0	19,480.0
Non-Budgetary Main Estimates (gross)	-	-	-	-
Less: Respendable revenue	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Main Estimates</b>	20,723.0	<b>22,380.0</b>	19,480.0	19,480.0
<i>Adjustments:</i>				
Supplementary Estimates:				
Funding for participation in pay equity cases before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the courts	1,800.0	-	-	-
Funding for salary increases resulting from collective bargaining agreements	156.0	<b>116.0</b>	121.0	121.0
Budget Announcement: ERC exercise**	-	<b>(20.0)</b>	-	-
<i>Total adjustments</i>	1,956.0	<b>96.0</b>	121.0	121.0
<b>Total Planned Spending</b>	22,679.0	<b>22,476.0</b>	19,601.0	19,601.0
Total Planned Spending	22,679.0	<b>22,476.0</b>	19,601.0	19,601.0
Less: Non-Respendable revenue	-	-	-	-
Plus: Cost of services received without charges	3,296.2	<b>3,186.0</b>	3,201.9	3,201.9
<b>Net cost of Commission</b>	25,975.2	<b>25,662.0</b>	22,802.9	22,802.9
<b>Full Time Equivalents</b>	194	<b>199</b>	190	190

\* Reflects the best forecast of total net planned spending to the end of the fiscal year.

\*\* This reflects the reductions to the Commission's planned spending as a result of the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) exercise and which were announced in the 2005 Budget – more information will be provided in the next Supplementary Estimates.

The decrease of \$2,900,000 between the 2005-2006 and the 2006-2007 planned spending is attributed to:

- \$1,800,000: funding for ongoing participation in the hearing of pay equity cases before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the courts (this funding sunsets in March 2006);
- \$ 600,000: temporary funding received since April 2002 for the reduction of the complaints backlog (this funding sunsets in March 2006);
- \$ 500,000: temporary funding received for the development of an electronic infrastructure which comes to term in March 2006 (this funding is a reprofiling from 2004-2005 due to implementation delay).

**Table 2: Program Activities**

Program Activities	2005-2006			Total Main Estimates	Total Planned Spending
	Budgetary				
	Operating	Gross	Net		
Foster understanding of and compliance with the <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i>	19,577.0	19,577.0	19,577.0	19,577.0	19,628.0
Employment equity audits in federal and federally regulated work places	2,803.0	2,803.0	2,803.0	2,803.0	2,848.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,380.0</b>	<b>22,380.0</b>	<b>22,380.0</b>	<b>22,380.0</b>	<b>22,476.0</b>

**Table 3: Voted and Statutory Items Listed in Main Estimates**

Vote or Statutory Item	Description	Current Main Estimates	Previous Main Estimates
10	Program expenditures	<b>20,089.0</b>	18,270.0
(S)	Contributions to employee benefit plans	<b>2,291.0</b>	2,453.0
	<b>Total Commission</b>	<b>22,380.0</b>	20,723.0

The increase of \$1,657,000 between the current and the previous Main Estimates is mainly attributed to temporary funding received for participation in the hearing of pay equity cases before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the courts (funding sunsets in March 2006).

**Table 4: Net Cost of Commission**

(\$ thousands)	Total
<b>Net Planned Spending (Total Main Estimates plus Adjustments as per the Planned Spending table)</b>	<b>22,476.0</b>
<i>Plus: Services Received without Charge</i>	
Accommodation provided by Public Works and Government Services Canada	<b>2,259.0</b>
Contributions covering employer's share of employee insurance premiums and expenditures paid by Treasury Board Secretariat (excluding revolving funds)	<b>916.2</b>
Worker's compensation coverage provided by Social Development Canada	<b>5.3</b>
Salary and associated expenditures of legal services provided by Justice Canada	<b>5.5</b>
	<b>3,186.0</b>
Less: Non-Respendable Revenue	-
<b>2005-2006 Net cost of the Commission</b>	<b>25,662.0</b>

**Table 5: Resource Requirement by Branch or Sector**

2005-2006			
(\$ thousands)	Foster understanding of and compliance with the <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i>	Employment equity audits in federal and federally regulated work places	Total Planned Spending
Executive Offices	1,153.3	184.9	1,338.2
Legal Services and Alternative Dispute Resolution Services	6,416.7	-	6,416.7
Operations	6,785.2	-	6,785.2
Employment Equity, Policy, Outreach and Communications	2,283.0	2,236.3	4,519.3
Corporate Management and Learning and Development	2,989.8	426.8	3,416.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,628.0</b>	<b>2,848.0</b>	<b>22,476.0</b>

**Table 6: Details on Project Spending**

(\$ thousands)	Current Estimated Total Cost	Forecast Spending to March 31, 2005	Planned Spending 2005-2006	Planned Spending 2006-2007	Planned Spending 2007-2008	Future Year Spending Requirement
<b>Foster understanding of and compliance with the <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i></b>						
Case management technology project	1,400.0	846.2	553.8	-	-	-
Project phase: Implementation						





## OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

### Corporate Management

Corporate Management encompasses services provided in all aspects of modern management. This includes finance and administration, human resources, learning and development, planning, internal audit and evaluation, information management/information technology and communications.

#### Financial Resources\* (\$ thousands)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
\$5,107	\$5,069	\$5,069

#### Human Resources\* (FTE)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
58	56	56

\* All these planned expenditures are prorated in the planned expenditures of the two program activities.

### Significant Initiatives

#### *Management Accountability Framework (MAF) Action Plan*

The MAF Action Plan addresses improvement opportunities identified as part of the Commission's Modern Comptrollership Capacity Assessment, completed in September 2003, as well as other ongoing improvement opportunities at the Commission directly related to business plan implementation. The MAF Action Plan is meant to leverage efforts already undertaken by the Commission and to assist with organization renewal. The MAF Action Plan identifies 10 key areas.

#### **Public Service Values**

The Commission launched a formal dialogue on public sector values and ethics by providing awareness sessions and workshops to its staff in 2004. In the next phase, it will continue employee consultations as the foundation for working in a respectful and productive environment. The objectives centre on developing a new ethics learning curriculum, a three-year Values and Ethics Plan and a code of conduct.

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## **Governance and Strategic Direction**

The leadership of the Commission is committed to a culture of innovation and continuous improvement in a context of good management. Progress is monitored through monthly reporting to Commissioners on program results, as well as the ongoing monitoring of financial, human and material resource indicators of sound practice. A number of horizontal oversight committees are in place to advise senior management in areas such as employment equity, health and safety, and learning. Corrective action is taken promptly when warranted.

## **Results and Performance**

The Commission has developed Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks (RMAFs) for its two core programs, the Human Rights Complaint Management Program and the Employment Equity Audit Program. The Commission's Performance Management Framework and the RMAF for the entire Commission will be completed by May 2005. Extensive operational performance indicators are in place to guide day-to-day decisions. In addition, the first set of performance indicators related to higher level results are drawn from these reports. Additional work will be undertaken during the planning period to refine and expand reporting on results.

Electronic data capture and reporting is critical to making a significant leap forward in performance reporting. This need has been identified in the initiative to modernize the Commission's electronic business applications (see **Citizen-Focussed Service** below).

## **Policy and Programs**

The Commission plans to strengthen its research, policy and analytical capacity to ensure high-quality advice to Commissioners, stakeholders and the Canadian public. Increased human rights research is identified as one of the Commission's top four priorities.

## **People**

The Commission has integrated its human resources planning with business planning in order to best attract, retain and develop staff in accordance with its objectives. The new Learning and Development Division will be key to fostering a productive workforce and building capacity and leadership in the organization. The focus throughout the next reporting period will be to put in place a new human resources management regime in accordance with the various elements of the *Public Service Modernization Act*, which comes fully into effect by December 2005.

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## **Citizen-Focussed Service**

The Commission will continue to develop and revise its policies, programs and service standards, based on consultations with its internal and external stakeholders and in accordance with provisions of the new *Public Service Modernization Act*. This new Act allows for human rights complaints to be considered as part of a grievance process and requires governments and agencies to develop informal conflict management systems. It is expected that service to Canadians on human rights matters will be enhanced as a result of the synergies inherent in new collaborative approaches at the Commission, and new approaches within the federal system. Tools for measuring client satisfaction will be explored and developed during the reporting period.

New investment to modernize the Commission's electronic business applications – the Complaint Management System and the Employment Equity Audit Tracking System – will eventually yield benefits in terms of enhanced online service for Canadians. It is forecast that the Commission will have new electronic business applications in 2006-2007.

## **Risk Management**

The Commission's risk management policy and framework will be completed by May 2005. A risk management strategy will be developed for the implementation of the framework and training of management and staff.

## **Stewardship**

The Commission's control regime is well established with oversight committees in place for procurement, human resources management, and financial management. A financial audit of the Commission provided assurance that sound practices are in place. On a regular basis, a financial situation report is prepared and tabled for review at the Executive Committee meeting. Variances are examined, and appropriate actions are taken. To ensure that the control regime principles are clear and understandable, information, awareness sessions and workshops will continue to be provided to the staff.

## **Accountability**

The Commission will revise both its financial and human resources delegations in the next reporting period to ensure that authorities are clear and appropriate. Executive accountability is assured through signed accords, which are monitored at key stages in the year. Cascading down, performance agreements and appraisals are completed annually for all managers and staff, and individual learning plans will be developed in 2005-2006. The results of the Commission's internal financial audit were approved by the Audit and Evaluation Committee, and the action plans in response to the audit recommendations will be fully implemented in 2005-2006.

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## **Learning, Innovation and Change Management**

The Commission is in the third year of a comprehensive change initiative that will transform the delivery of service in all facets of its work. The focus is both internal and external, as the opportunity to work with stakeholders on prevention initiatives will have an impact on changing culture within the federal system as a whole. To successfully reinforce a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, any change initiative must integrate learning into its day-to-day operations. Learning plans will be in place in 2005-2006 in support of business plan objectives. The Awards and Recognition Program, which has been in place for several years, is a critical element for rewarding innovation and continuous improvement.