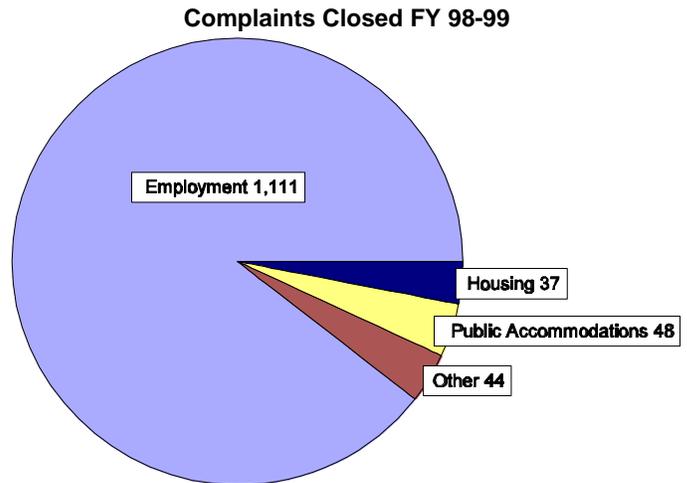


A Review of the Human Affairs Commission's Hiring Practices and Timeliness of Investigations

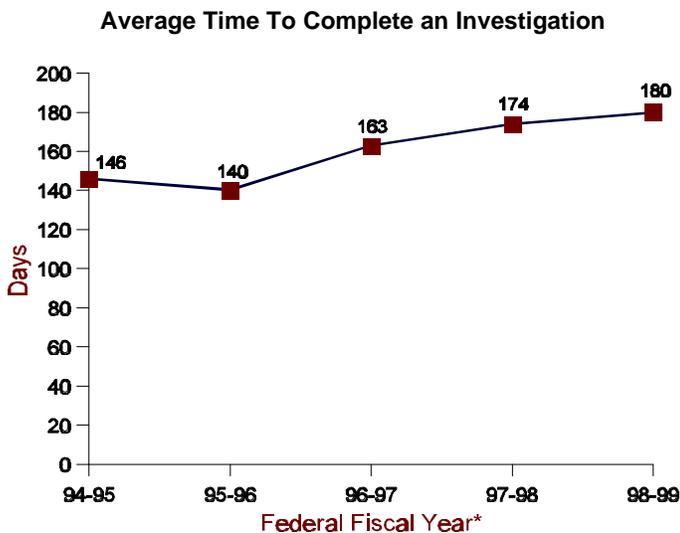
Members of the General Assembly requested that we conduct an audit of the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission (SHAC). We were asked to review the timeliness of SHAC's investigations and to determine whether the commission's hiring practices have been in compliance with state law.

A primary function of the Human Affairs Commission is to receive, investigate, and resolve complaints alleging unlawfully discriminatory employment and housing practices. Complaints may be filed on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, or familial status (housing only). The number of complaints closed by SHAC in FY 98-99 is shown in the graph.



TIMELINESS OF INVESTIGATIONS

Employment Discrimination Complaints



SHAC completed 1,111 employment discrimination investigations in FY 98-99. We reviewed the timeliness of employment discrimination investigations and found the following:

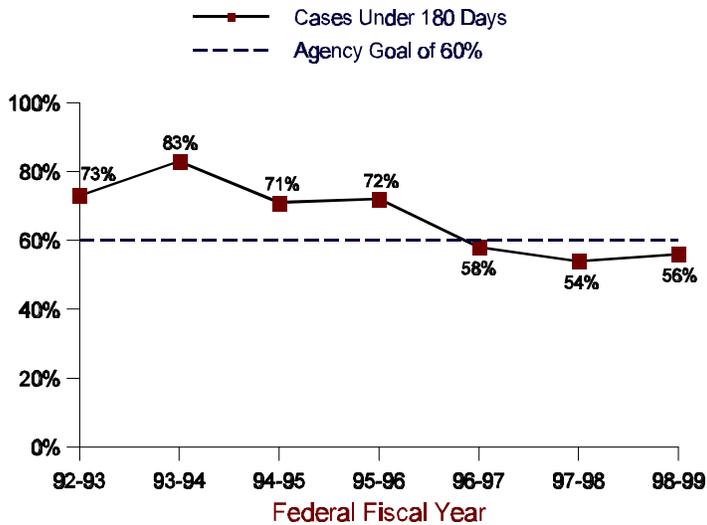
- The average length of time to complete an employment discrimination investigation increased 23% from 146 days to 180 days over the past five years, and the inventory of pending cases has increased.
- For the last 3 years, SHAC has not met its goal of completing 60% of investigations within 180 days and has not regularly monitored its progress in meeting goals stated in its annual state accountability reports.

However, SHAC's employment discrimination investigations have been more timely than those conducted by the federal EEOC.

*October 1 to September 30.



Percent of Cases Completed in Less Than 180 Days

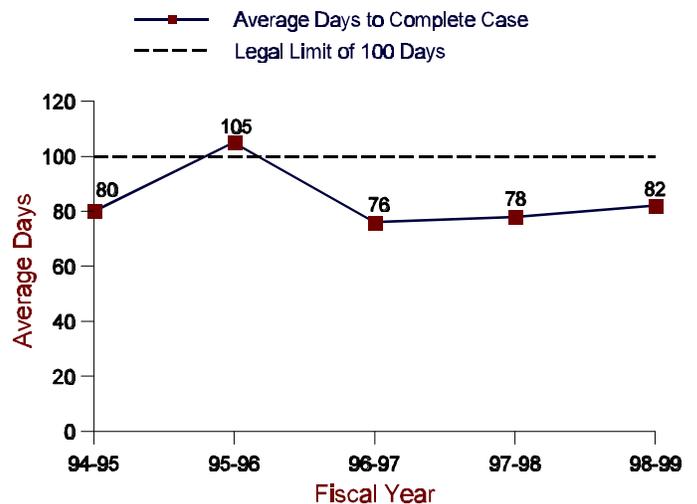


The reasons for the increase in investigative time are not clear. We recommend that SHAC improve its monitoring of program goals and consider other strategies, such as screening cases more tightly during the intake process.

Fair Housing Investigations

In FY 98-99 SHAC completed 37 fair housing investigations. We did not identify significant problems with the timeliness of fair housing investigations. For the past three years, the average length of time to complete an investigation has been below the statutory limit of 100 days.

Duration of Fair Housing Investigations



HIRING PRACTICES

The Human Affairs Commission has generally been in compliance with laws and regulations that govern the hiring process. We reviewed the records for the 19 persons hired or promoted since July 1997 and did not identify problems. However, SHAC should require transcripts or official school documents to verify the education of applicants and retain documentation of all job postings.

The Human Affairs Commission should re-evaluate its contract for a full-time lobbyist. The commission has a contract for \$60,000 per year with a lobbyist who is to encourage the General Assembly to amend the Human Affairs law and increase the agency's budget. These resources could be used to address other agency needs. Also, SHAC has not complied with statutory requirements for reporting lobbying expenditures.

This document summarizes our full report, *A Review of the Human Affairs Commission's Hiring Practices and Timeliness of Investigations*. Responses from the Human Affairs Commission are included in the full report. All LAC audits are available free of charge. Audit reports and information about the LAC are also published on the Internet at www.state.sc.us/sclac. If you have questions, contact George L. Schroeder, Director.