

THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

The Executive Office for Administration and Finance
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



**STRATEGIC PLAN-IN-BRIEF
2013-2015**

Christopher C. Bowman | Chairman

Issued February 14, 2013

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Civil Service Commission is charged with ensuring that public employees, and those seeking to become public employees, receive fair and impartial treatment. In doing so, we are mindful that *our* decision-making process must be fair and impartial as well. We take that challenge seriously – every day.

Within thirty (30) days of receiving an appeal, the Commission holds a pre-hearing conference – in Boston, Springfield or North Dartmouth – at which time a Commissioner meets with all parties. At the pre-hearing conference, we ensure that all parties are familiar with our decision-making process and the legal standards that must be applied in deciding that particular appeal. These pre-hearing conferences often lead to a resolution, foregoing the need for a full hearing.

For those cases that cannot be resolved as part of the pre-hearing conference, a Commissioner or magistrate from the Division of Administrative Law Appeals (DALA) is assigned to conduct a full evidentiary hearing. At the full hearing, the parties are given an opportunity to

provide testimony and evidence that allows the hearing officer to issue findings and conclusions. These findings and conclusions are then reviewed and voted on by the full five (5)-member Commission. The final decision is then posted on our website at www.mass.gov/csc.

We can never ensure that all parties are satisfied with our final decision. However, we can – and do – work hard to ensure that the decision is made in a fair, impartial and timely manner. As always, we welcome your input regarding how this decision-making process can be improved.

Sincerely,

Christopher C. Bowman
Chairman

This document was developed pursuant to Executive Order 540 which calls on state government to develop and publish strategic plans and institute performance management. As an agency affiliated with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (A&F), the Civil Service Commission's 2013-2015 Strategic Plan aligns and supports the overarching goals set forth in the A&F Strategic Plan.

**Please send feedback regarding this plan to:
cscwebmaster@state.ma.us**

MISSION, VISION AND POLICY CONTEXT

OVERVIEW

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) is a quasi-judicial agency that hears and decides appeals from individuals protected by Massachusetts civil service law. This includes employees in state and local government who contest a disciplinary action, non-selection for promotion or job classification. It also includes individuals who contest the decision of a state agency or local government to appoint someone who is ranked lower than them on a civil service certification or roster. Finally, it includes individuals who contest an action or inaction by the state's Human Resources Division (HRD).

ACHIEVEMENTS

In recent years, CSC has focused on making the appeal process faster, more accessible and less costly. Several of the Commission's successes are highlighted below:

- CSC reduced the number of pending appeals from approximately 900 in 2006 to below 200 in 2012.

- During the same period, it cut total cycle time for appeals by two thirds.
- To improve efficiency and enhance customer service, the Commission expanded hearing locations outside of Boston to Springfield and North Dartmouth.
- CSC also rolled-out a digital recording system that provides all parties with a free CD of the record of proceedings.

CHALLENGES

As CSC works to continuously improve its operations, the Commission must overcome some challenges. CSC must continue to deliver its mission with greater efficiency without additional funding or resources. Additionally, CSC must ensure that it applies civil service law and rules consistently in all situations, including matters related to provisional employees. It also must ensure that cities and towns that have been delegated additional civil service functions receive accurate and consistent information about the law and regulations. Finally, CSC faces technological challenges related to an aging case management system.

MISSION

Hear and decide appeals of public employees and job applicants under the protection of the civil service law and ensure that employment decisions are based on an individual's relative ability, knowledge and skills and that all individuals receive fair and impartial treatment

VISION

A Commonwealth where all public employment decisions are made based on merit, free of any personal or political considerations and where any disputes regarding those decisions are resolved in a just and timely manner

STRATEGIC GOALS

SUPPORTING THE SECRETARIAT

A&F has four strategic goals: Better Finance, Better Health Care, Better Performance and Better Government. CSC has created a set of strategic goals that advance the mission and vision of the Commission as well as support A&F's Better Performance and Government goals.

Since the start of the Patrick-Murray Administration, CSC has eliminated a 700 case backlog. To build on this success, the

Commission is committed to developing new process and efficiency improvements to further reduce the cycle time for processing appeals. Additionally, it will expand efforts to hear cases in locations around the state that are convenient to all parties thus reducing travel time and related costs. CSC aims to process all cases within its established timeframes.

The Commission is also committed to ensuring that the appeals process is accessible and transparent and that all

parties are provided a fair and impartial opportunity to be heard. CSC will provide more information to the public about the appeals process and it will implement new initiatives to improve communication with involved parties to ensure an open and predictable decision-making process. Further, CSC will institute an anonymous survey tool to solicit feedback from the parties it serves with the intent of improving the customer experience.

THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION'S THREE STRATEGIC GOALS

Process all appeals in an efficient and timely manner at locations convenient to all parties

Provide all parties with an accessible, transparent and predictable decision-making process

Provide all parties with a fair, impartial hearing and render decisions with an unprejudiced mind, guided by common sense and the correct rules of law

ACTIONS

To deliver its strategic goals, the Civil Service Commission will take the following actions:

GOALS	ACTIONS
A&F Better Performance: Provide state government services more effectively, efficiently and equitably	
Process all appeals in an efficient and timely manner at locations convenient to all parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop process and efficiency improvements to further reduce the cycle time for processing appeals; ensure that the total number of pending cases does not exceed the equivalent of six months' inventory at any point during the fiscal year • Establish logistics and scheduling improvements to hold hearings in geographic locations that do not require the parties to travel long distances • Develop a technology approach to providing parties with a free CD of the hearing record
A&F Better Government: Build trust in government by improving accountability, transparency and responsiveness	
Provide all parties with an accessible, transparent and predictable decision-making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the CSC website and update processes to allow for faster publishing of decisions, hearing dockets, rules and statistics • Expand the email distribution list of individuals who receive weekly updates from the Commission
Provide all parties with a fair, impartial hearing and render decisions with an unprejudiced mind, guided by common sense and the correct rules of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an ongoing survey mechanism to evaluate the degree to which all parties believe they have been treated fairly regardless of the outcomes of an appeal • Track the number of CSC decisions overturned on appeal and implement practical improvements to the decision-making process

OUTCOME MEASURES

The Civil Service Commission will utilize the high-level performance measures below to assess success in achieving its strategic goals.

GOAL	MEASURE	DEFINITION/ NOTE	DATA SOURCE	FREQ.
Process all appeals in an efficient and timely manner at locations convenient to all parties	# of open appeals pending before the Commission	The number of open appeals pending before the Commission should not exceed the equivalent of 6 months' inventory at any point during the fiscal year	Case Tracking System	Monthly
	% of appeals disposed of within specified timeframes	25% of new appeals should be disposed of within 4 months, 50% within 6 months, 75% within 9 months, and 95% within 12 months	Case Tracking System	Monthly
	% of all appeals from Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties heard at a location in Western MA	95% of such appeals should be heard at a location in Western Massachusetts	Case Tracking System	Monthly
	% of all appeals from Bristol, Plymouth and Barnstable counties heard at a location in Southeastern MA	95% of such appeals should be heard at a location in Southeastern Massachusetts	Case Tracking System	Monthly
	# of digital recordings of hearings uploaded to shared directory with CDs burned and mailed to parties	Digital recording of hearings should be uploaded to the shared directory and CDs burned and mailed to all parties within 48 hours of hearing	Internal Records	Monthly
	% of pre-hearings conducted within 30 days of appeal being filed	Pre-hearings should be conducted within 30 days of appeal being filed, except if there is a mutual request for a one-time continuance	Case Tracking System	Monthly

GOAL	MEASURE	DEFINITION/ NOTE	DATA SOURCE	FREQ.
Provide all parties with an accessible, transparent and predictable decision-making process	% of weekly hearing dockets posted online within specified time target	Hearing dockets are to be posted on the CSC website weekly no later than the close of business the preceding Wednesday	Internal Records	Monthly
	# of recipients on the CSC email distribution list	CSC regularly sends Commission statistics via email to a distribution list – the goal is to increase the size of the list from 200 to 400 recipients	Internal Records	Monthly
Provide all parties with a fair, impartial hearing and render decisions with an unprejudiced mind, guided by common sense and the correct rules of law	% of survey respondents who are satisfied with the way their appeal was processed	CSC is working to develop a customer feedback mechanism that allows parties to anonymously provide feedback regarding how their appeal was processed	Internal Records	Quarterly
	<i>Of those decisions that are appealed to court, % overturned on appeal by the court</i>	CSC will develop a benchmark regarding a desired affirmation rate for those decisions appealed to the court	Internal Records	Monthly
	<i>Of the total decisions issued by the Commission, % overturned by the court</i>	Number of decisions overturned by court in a given year divided by the total decisions issued by the Commission in that same year	Internal Records	Monthly