



State of Vermont
Human Rights Commission
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To: House Appropriations Committee
From: Big Hartman, Executive Director & General Counsel
Re: HRC Budget Adjustment Act
Date: January 28, 2025

In terms of our BAA requests for FY25, we require a total of \$35,137 to meet operating expenses. This amount is reflected in the Governor's Recommended Budget Adjustment Act in Section 8. This amount is necessary to cover the "vacancy turnover savings" of \$24,862 that did not materialize, plus \$2,895 for necessary computers, plus \$7,380 in ADS-IT expenses that were not anticipated/budgeted. In addition, we requested two additional positions in this year's BAA, which the Governor did not recommend.

HRC is at a crisis point. We are unable to accept, process, and investigate many new cases due to the spike in new complaints in the past year. To address the overwhelming demand for services, we requested in BAA (1) a full time intake specialist, to process new inquiries to our office, conduct intake meetings, and draft complaints, and (2) an additional Staff Attorney Investigator position to begin immediately investigating cases that have been opened in FY25, but are on hold due to the current caseload of our investigators. We have a total of 3 Staff Attorney Investigator positions currently, and it is simply not enough to meet the need for timely investigations.

Assuming we receive authorization to fill these 2 crucial positions in April 2025, we expect that the positions would cost:

- Intake Specialist (Pay Grade 22): \$25,000 for salary and benefits + \$2,000 for equipment
- Staff Attorney Investigator: \$33,000 for salary and benefits + \$2,000 for equipment

Therefore, the total additional funding we are requesting from the BAA is \$62,000 on top of the \$35,137 that is recommended by the governor, for **a total BAA request of \$97,137.**