

# Freedom of Information Commission

## *At a Glance*

**COLLEEN M. MURPHY, *Executive Director***  
**Eric V. Turner, *Managing Director***  
**Mary E. Schwind, *Director, Legal Department***  
**Gloria J. Davis-Delancy, *Chief Administrative Officer***  
**Thomas A. Hennick, *Public Education Officer***  
***Established – 1975***  
***Statutory authority – CGS Section 1-200 et. Seq.***  
***Central office – 18-20 Trinity Street,***  
***Hartford, CT 06106***  
***Number of employees – 23***  
***Recurring operating expenses – \$2,257,397***  
***Organizational structure – Commission***

## **Mission**

*To ensure citizen access to the records and meetings of all public agencies in Connecticut.*

## **Statutory Responsibility**

To ensure that all public agencies comply with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

## **Public Service**

The Commission holds hearings and renders decisions on citizen complaints alleging denial of access under the FOIA. It also conducts educational programs and prepares literature for public officials and the general public.

## **Improvements/Achievements 2010-2011**

The Commission continued its efforts to efficiently tackle its heavy volume of contested cases, placing emphasis on its ombudsman program as it had done the previous year. In 2010, staff resolved 555, or 69%, of the 806 cases, without a hearing. The remaining 251, or 31%, either went to a hearing or are scheduled for a hearing.

Nonetheless, the continuing upward spiral of formal complaints makes accomplishing such efficiencies a formidable task. The Commission now averages approximately 800 formal complaints a year, with 807 in calendar year 2008, 792 in 2009 and 806 in 2010. Prior to 2006, the highest number of complaints ever received by the Commission was 676 in 2000.

In other matters of interest, the Commission:

- Distributed, with the support of the Connecticut Foundation for Open Government, a high school civics curriculum designed to incorporate Freedom of Information into Connecticut's public schools' civics classes. A professionally designed and printed curriculum booklet was prepared and mailed to every school district in the state. The Commission also continued to craft other facets of its community outreach program, including a special program for the Spanish-speaking community and a new video focusing on the history and the importance of open government laws.
- Experienced a continued increase in requests for workshops for public officials and members of the public about the requirements of the FOIA. The Commission has provided an annual average of 80 workshops and speakers in the past five calendar years, including 86 in 2010 and a projected 85-95 in calendar year 2011.

### **Reducing Waste**

The Commission is committed to regular reviews of its current operating procedures aimed at reducing waste and increasing efficiency.

### **Strategic Planning**

- hear and resolve cases in a timely fashion;
- settle contested cases informally through ombudsman program;
- defend the Commission through staff counsel in court appeals;
- conduct workshops, provide speakers, publish Commission reports and other literature;
- develop public policy positions with regard to issues of information accessibility, especially as they relate to such matters as emerging information technologies;
- render declaratory rulings of general applicability under the FOIA;
- expand and broaden community outreach program and
- refine and expand training program for advisory board members and liaisons.

### **Information Reported as Required by State Statute**

The Commission is committed to equal employment opportunities for all.