



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Washington Commission on Hispanic Affairs
Outline of the Powers and Responsibilities of the Commission and Commissioners

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Uriel Iñiguez,
Executive Director

Legislative declaration

In 1971, the legislature of the state of Washington declared that the development of public policy and the delivery of governmental services to meet the special needs of Hispanics can be improved by establishing a focal point in state government for the interests of Hispanics. The legislature declared that it is the duty of the state to improve the well-being of Hispanics by enabling them to participate fully in all fields of endeavor and assisting them in obtaining governmental services.

Commission Powers and Duties

Per RCW 43.115, our duties are to examine and define issues pertaining to the rights and needs of Hispanics, and make recommendations to the Governor and state agencies for changes in programs and laws. We then advise the Governor and state agencies on the development and implementation of policies, plans, and programs that relate to the special needs of Hispanics, and we advise the legislature on issues of concern to the Hispanic community. We also establish relationships with state agencies, local governments, and private sector organizations that promote equal opportunity and benefits for Hispanics. We can receive gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources that are made for the use or benefit of the Commission and expend, without appropriation, the same or any income from the gifts, grants, or endowments according to their terms.

The Commission shall consist of eleven members of Hispanic origin appointed by the governor. To the extent practicable, appointments to the commission shall be made to achieve a balanced representation based on the Hispanic population distribution within the state, geographic considerations, sex, age, and occupation. Members shall serve three-year terms. No member shall serve more than two full consecutive terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

Members shall receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

The Commission monitors, testifies, and writes testimonies on legislation to ensure equal opportunity and access for employment, education, health care and public services.

The people of the State of Washington have tasked the Commission on Hispanic Affairs with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and state and local agencies on issues that affect the Hispanic community of the State.

Commission Structure

Officers

The officers of the Commission are the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Chair will serve a term of two years, and the Vice-Chair will serve a term of one year, with the possibility of reelection for another term.

The election for the Chair will be held during the month of October, but no later than November 30. The Chair will be elected by a majority vote once the quorum is established. The elections for Chair will take place every two years. The newly elected Chair will start his or her term immediately. The Chair shall nominate, and with the advice and consent of the Commission, shall appoint a commissioner to serve as Vice Chair. The Chair shall nominate a candidate to be considered for the position of Vice Chair within one month after being elected.

In the temporary absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will assume the duties of the Chair until the return of the Chair.

If it is anticipated that the Chair's absence is permanent, a new Chair will be elected and will assume the Chair's responsibilities for the remainder of the term; he or she will have the opportunity to nominate and appoint a new Vice Chair.

In the event that the Vice-Chair leaves his or her position before the end of the term, the Chair shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Commission, shall appoint a commissioner to serve as Vice Chair at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

If the Chair or Vice-Chair is completing a term left open by a departing officer, he or she will be eligible to serve a subsequent term.

Commission Chair Duties and Responsibilities

The Chair provides leadership to the Commission, ensuring that all meetings are conducted in an orderly manner. The Chair has the following duties:

- 1) Appoints the Vice-Chair.
- 2) Assigns commissioners to special projects and/or committees.
- 3) Advises the Executive Director on issues or other matters that may require the Director's attention.
- 4) Reviews the Commission's biennial budget proposal with the Executive Director prior to presenting it to the public for recommendations.
- 5) Conducts exit interviews of Commissioners who resign or are removed from the Commission within 30 days of departure.

Vice-Chair Duties and Responsibilities

The Vice-Chair coordinates and recruits new commissioners. He or she directs the Personnel Committee and appoints two other commissioners, along with the Executive Director, to form the Personnel Committee. The duty of the Personnel Committee is to recruit Commissioner candidates, review resumes and applications, and to report to the Commission regarding a minimum of three potential applicants, whose names will be forwarded by the Commission to the Governor's office for selection. The Vice-Chair has the following duties:

- 1) Coordinates the recognition award ceremonies for the commissioners who have completed their term.
- 2) By April of every year, the Vice-Chair informs those of the commissioners in their third year of serving that a letter of interest must be submitted by May of that year if they would like to be re-appointed by the Governor.

Commissioner Participation Expectation Guidelines

Commissioners shall:

- Attend all Commission public meetings, study sessions, and special meetings. Any Commissioner, who has two unexcused, or three excused mandatory Commission public meetings, study sessions, and/or special meetings in a year will be asked to reconsider their ability to serve on the Commission.
- Commissioners hosting CHA community meetings shall submit a summary of meeting minutes, within 30 days of the meeting, to their key local leaders (Mayor, Chief of Police, local/state legislators, county executives, school district superintendent, etc...). A report must also be submitted to the Governor's Office outlining the issues identified at the meeting.
- Enter their activity information on the CHA database prior to each commissioner meeting.
- Examine and define issues pertaining to the rights and needs of Hispanics, and make recommendations to the governor and state agencies for changes in programs and laws. The following are examples of how this mandate can be achieved:
 - Participation in the writing of the CHA Assessment.
 - Writing letters of concern and or recommendations to state agencies and the Office of the Governor.
- Advise the governor and state agencies on the development and implementation of policies, plans, and programs that relate to the special needs of Hispanics.
 - Commissioners are to be knowledgeable about issues facing the Hispanic community in our state, and meet regularly with state agency representatives and representatives from the Office of the Governor to provide recommendations for changes in programs and laws.
- Advise the legislature on issues of concern to the Hispanic community.
 - Regularly meet with their federal, state and local elected officials.
 - Write bill testimonies, testify at legislative hearings, organize meetings with legislators and constituents, and keep their community informed on legislative issues.
- Establish relationships with state agencies, local governments, and private sector organizations that promote equal opportunity and benefits for Hispanics.

- Commissioners are to develop and enhance relationships with state agencies, local governments and the private sector. They should serve as a bridge to enhance the understanding of the needs of the Hispanic community to the general public.
- Receive gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources that are made for the use or benefit of the Commission and expend, without appropriation, the same or any income from the gifts, grants, or endowments according to their terms.
 - Actively pursue gifts, grant and endowments for the use or benefit of the Commission.

Annual Time Commitment

• CHA Community Meetings	144 to 160 hours a year <i>(Depending on # of community meetings)</i>
• CHA Conference Calls	12 to 24 hours a year
• Hosting Community Meetings	2 to 10 hours a year
• CHA Committee meetings	12 to 20 hours a year
• CHA database	6 to 12 hours a year
• CHA Assessment preparation	12 to 30 hours a year
• Writing letters to the state agencies and Office of the Governor	12 to 30 hours a year
• Meetings with state agencies and Office of the Governor	18 to 40 hours a year
• Writing letters and bill testimonies to federal, state and local elected officials	20 to 50 hours a year
• Meetings with federal, state and local elected officials	25 to 60 hours a year
• Pursuing gifts, grant and endowments for the use or benefit of CHA	5 to 16 hours a year
Total	Approximately 268 to 452 hours a year <i>(Minimum of 22 hrs monthly/ 5.5 hrs weekly)</i>

Being a CHA Commissioner

A Commissioner's duties are extensive, and the time commitment is substantial. It is a volunteer position, but not one to be entered into lightly. It brings both great challenges and great rewards. The Commission on Hispanic Affairs needs individuals who are dedicated to their community, who are passionate about voicing issues, finding solutions, and being real agents of change for Washington Hispanics. The ideal candidate for this position is someone who treats it as much more than a volunteer position; someone who treats it as a unique opportunity to effect change.

After eight years as a Commissioner, Lourdes Portillo Salazar reaffirms that it is a position that requires dedication:

"It is clear that our duty is to be a 'working' commission. Consequently, we are held accountable for community involvement and for establishing first-class working relationships with community organizations, community leaders and elected officials. Our mission is to address issues that are affecting our Hispanic communities, such as Education, Access to Justice, Immigration, Farm Workers, Pesticides and Healthcare. We have many goals and commitments that we have aspired to fulfill, all in addition to our regular day jobs. They truly are the most committed group of people I have ever worked with."