

The Agency

Commission on Judicial Tenure and Discipline

Agency Operations

The Commission on Judicial Tenure and Discipline is responsible for conducting investigations of judges suspected of or charged with misconduct. The commission, upon receiving from any person a verified statement, not unfounded or frivolous, alleging facts indicating that a Justice of the Supreme Court, the Superior Court, the Family Court, the District Court, the Workers' Compensation Court, and the Traffic Tribunal, Probate Court judges or magistrates and judicial officers appointed pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws is guilty of a serious violation of the Canons of Judicial Ethics, or of willful and persistent failure to perform his/her duties, or disabling substance abuse, or conduct that brings the judicial office into serious disrepute, or that such a judge has a physical or mental disability that seriously interferes and will continue to interfere with the performance of his/her duties, shall make a preliminary investigation to determine whether formal proceedings shall be instituted and a hearing held. The commission may, on its own initiative, make such a preliminary investigation, without receiving a verified statement, to determine whether formal proceedings shall be instituted and a hearing held.

When formal proceedings are ordered, the justice is given formal notice of the charges and of the time fixed for a public hearing. The justice is required to appear at the hearing, may be represented by counsel, offer evidence and otherwise participate in said hearing. Recommendation concerning the disciplining of any justice shall be made in a report to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is required to grant a review if requested by said justice. After the hearing, the Supreme Court may affirm, modify or reject the commission's recommendation(s).

Agency Objectives

Ensure the integrity of the Rhode Island Court System.

Investigate reasonable allegations of wrongdoing by Rhode Island judges.

Recommend, when appropriate, sanctions to be imposed against Rhode Island judges.

Statutory History

The Commission on Judicial Tenure and Discipline was established in 1974 under Rhode Island Public Law 1972, Ch. 136, Section 1 for the purpose of conducting investigations upon verified complaint or upon its own initiative of the conduct of judges of the Supreme, Superior, Family, District Courts, and Workers' Compensation Commission. Subsequent enactments in P.L.1983, Ch. 26 and P.L. 1990, Ch. 332, Article 1, sec. 13 and P.L. 1991, Ch. 132, sec. 2 as well as P.L. 1991, Ch. 205, sec. 2 and P.L. 1996, Ch. 312 enlarged the jurisdiction to include the new courts of Workers' Compensation Court, the Traffic Tribunal as well as all judges of Probate Courts in any city or town in the State of Rhode Island.

The Budget

Commission on Judicial Tenure and Discipline

	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Revised	FY 2007 Recommended
Expenditures By Object				
Personnel	90,420	123,419	105,638	106,999
Other State Operations	5,300	5,689	7,773	7,773
Aid To Local Units Of Government	-	-	-	-
Assistance, Grants and Benefits	-	-	-	-
Subtotal: Operating Expenditures	\$95,720	\$129,108	\$113,411	\$114,772
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-
Capital Debt Service	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	\$95,720	\$129,108	\$113,411	\$114,772
Expenditures By Funds				
General Revenue	95,720	129,108	113,411	114,772
Total Expenditures	\$95,720	\$129,108	\$113,411	\$114,772
FTE Authorization	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9
Agency Measures				
Minorities as a Percentage of the Workforce	-	-	-	-
Females as a Percentage of the Workforce	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Persons with Disabilities as a Percentage of the Workforce	-	-	-	-
Program Measures				
Percentage of Verified Complaints Disposed of within 90 Days of Docketing	95.0%	94.7%	95.0%	95.0%