



RECOMMENDATION FOR INTERAGENCY CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM

To improve civil rights enforcement, the new Administration should immediately create an interagency civil rights team to promote concerted and coordinated enforcement priorities and strategies. The team should be comprised of high-ranking representatives from each of the agencies that have civil rights enforcement responsibilities, including the Department of Justice, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The representatives should bring a cross-section of expertise in relevant areas, including with regard to bases of discrimination (race, national origin, sex, religion, age and disability) and sectors covered by the civil rights laws (including employment, education, housing and voting rights).

There are numerous benefits to creation of such an interagency team, including:

- The team can leverage scarce enforcement resources to maximize enforcement capabilities. While individual enforcement agencies may lack the personnel resources and/or the in-house expertise to aggressively enforce the civil rights laws, an interagency team can combine agency resources and enable agencies to receive advice and training from experienced personnel from other parts of the government.
- The team can enable the government to systematically address discrimination in different sectors and against different protected groups. While individual agencies may be able to tackle only limited numbers of investigations against particular entities alleging specific forms of discrimination, an interagency team can allocate enforcement resources to combat some of the most pressing forms of discrimination against each protected group. As a first year priority, for example, a segment of the team could investigate problems of sexual harassment across industries and educational institutions. Another team subgroup could simultaneously evaluate the existence of disability discrimination in voting rights and access to housing.
- The interagency team can readily share information about emerging issues of discrimination and enforcement strategies. The team can provide a forum for discussion of common barriers that different protected groups may face in different activities, emerging forms of discrimination, priorities for enforcement action, and appropriate enforcement strategies under each of the civil rights laws. This information sharing can help each agency to more effectively deploy its own resources in its individual enforcement activities.
- The interagency team can enhance the government's capacity to seek effective remedies. Through the team, investigators can consult attorneys so that investigations are structured to maximize the likelihood of success in litigation. Agency personnel can also collaborate in identifying and applying a range of sanctions and remedies that can be used to promote compliance. Finally, agencies can create uniform guidance on cross-cutting issues, such as the circumstances in which (and means by which) entities may permissibly implement affirmative action measures.