

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee  
**MEMORANDUM**

Date: July 30, 2008

To: Ruffin Hall, Key Business Executive  
Budget & Evaluation

From Willie Ratchford, Executive Director  
Community Relations Committee

Subject: FY2009 Strategic Operating Plan

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This memorandum transmits the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee's (CRC) FY2009 Strategic Operating Plan. The overall strategic direction for CRC is the same as last year.

The FY2009 SOP includes a budget of \$1,286,273 for FY2009. CRC is not proposing any current changes to its baseline budget for FY2009. Funding for the budget includes \$803,099 in general funds (equivalent to the baseline budget recommended in the FY2008 budget) and \$483,174 in federal, state and local grant dollars. CRC's operating budget provides funding for 13 positions in FY2009.

This budget enables CRC to provide services in four core areas: inter-group relations; fair housing and public accommodations; conflict management and ADA; and police review. These services are designed to address and prevent discrimination and enhance human relations in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

CRC faces the following challenges in FY2009:

**I. Diminished Funds & Increased Demand for Service**

CRC has been asked by the City Manager's office and some members of City Council to provide leadership on several new initiatives that carry forward into FY09 and beyond. These requests, coupled with increased requests for support from CRC members, City and County government and community organizations prompted a reorganization of existing staff roles and responsibilities. Management staff continues to assess and balance requests for service, work load equity and staffing issues and will make adjustments accordingly to ensure seamless, accessible and responsive customer service while intentionally aligning and grooming staff for current and future organizational needs.

**II. Comprehensive Citizen Service & Diversity**

At the request of the City's Neighborhood Cabinet, CRC is working with Corporate Communications and Neighborhood Development to develop a series of videos that will help Hispanic/Latinos understand City government services and what is necessary to participate fully in our community around the good neighbor model. Building on past, current and future efforts, CRC will develop a series of best practices for communications, education and outreach to Hispanic/Latinos, and share this information with all City KBE's. Resources will need to be identified to support this comprehensive effort.

### **III. Adjusting Service Delivery Models**

CRC's Dispute Settlement Program (DSP) has experienced a significant decline in referrals and cases mediated. Several variables are impacting this trend. First, CRC successfully transitioned the Dependency Mediation Program to the State of North Carolina in July 2007. This program mediated approximately 125 cases per year. Second, the Truancy Mediation Program, a partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, got off to a late start due to the reorganization taking place throughout CMS administrative offices. This program typically mediates 100 plus cases per year. Staff is working hard to leverage new internal partnerships with City and County government, the Clerk of Court as well as new ways to increase referrals from the courts, district attorney's office and criminal magistrates. DSP staff screen cases, a process that was in place years ago, to identify cases already in the criminal justice system. DSP, the DA's office and clerk of court are developing training for criminal magistrates to target appropriate cases prior to court intervention.

Please feel free to contact me at 704-336-2195 if you have any questions. If I am not available, please contact Stephanie Jennings at 704-336-2605.