



Executive Director's Report for May 2025

Summary of Highlights

Internal Audit completed its audit of the Equal Rights Commission. The report has been transmitted to the mayor and assembly and is publicly available at https://www.muni.org/Departments/internal_audit/Pages/2025-Audit-Reports.aspx. The municipal audit committee, chaired by Assembly Member Rivera, is tentatively scheduled to review this audit at its next meeting on July 2, 2025, from 12:40 – 1:40 p.m. The executive director and lead investigator will attend. Commissioners are welcome and encouraged to attend if available.

We are very excited that a full-time executive director is scheduled to start on June 23, 2025. Many thanks to Commission Chair Aqua and Commissioner Roley for the time they dedicated to serving on the hiring panel. Please also welcome new Commissioners Stephanie Harrod and Heather Barbour to the commission. We are excited to have you and thank you for your willingness to serve the people of Anchorage on the commission.

Congratulations to our lead investigator, Lanette Harley, for being named a “Muni Mountain Mover.” Mayor LaFrance awarded this employee merit award to Harley in recognition of the work she has done over the last 5 months during this period of transition. The chair of the employee incentive committee will present this award to Harley at the commission meeting in June.

Case Status

Inquiries and New Complaints

The agency received 29 inquiries and perfected 8 new complaints in May 2025.

Inquiries and New Complaints

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Inquiries	498	516	408	385	363	333	324	151
New Complaints	119	130	82	72	73	55	48	30

Pending Cases and Case Closures

The agency has 41 open cases.

Case Closures

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Closures	126	108	83	97	71	85	79	9

Cases over 240 days

AMC 5.50.010 requires the AERC to “promptly and impartially” investigate complaints and conduct fact finding procedures. The AERC shall, unless good cause is shown, issue its determination of whether the allegations are supported by substantial evidence within 240 days after the filing of the complaint. The agency currently has **three** cases that exceed 240 days for good cause.

- In one case, both sides are represented by counsel. The attorneys requested numerous continuances while they attempted to negotiate a settlement. Settlement has not yet been reached, and the investigator is actively investigating the case.
- In one case the investigator was unable to reach the complainant for several months but has re-established communication and is investigating the case.
- One case was transferred from a previous investigator before the investigator left the agency. The new investigator has been actively investigating the case.

One of the audit findings mentions how “good cause” is defined and communicated to the parties. The AERC is currently drafting templates to send out in every case beyond 240 days, which will notify the parties of the good cause to extend the investigation. Per the audit response, these are to be completed before the next commission meeting in July.

Budget Status

2025 Budget vs Actuals

	Current Budget	Encumbrance	Actuals	Difference	Utilization
Labor	\$ 641,830.00	\$	\$ 190,459.57	\$ 451,370.43	29.67%
Non-labor	\$ 13,175.00	\$ 58.00	\$ 4,491.87	\$ 8,625.13	34.53%
Travel	\$ 8,500.00	\$	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 3,700.00	56.47%
IG Charges	\$ 224,775.00	\$	\$ 411.36	\$ 224,363.64	0.18%
Revenue	\$ (49,800.00)	\$	\$ (0.00)	\$ (49,800.00)	0.00%
Total	\$ 838,480.00	\$ 58.00	\$200,162.80	\$ 638,259.20	23.88%

Purchases During May:

Posting Date	Amount	Text
5/31/25	-462.78	Refund for Amazon purchase – toner was defective
5/31/25	52.16	Pens, Post-it notes, and batteries
5/31/25	4.81	Language services – Spanish translator

Outreach

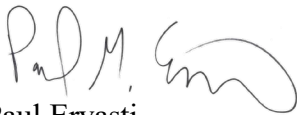
AERC staff conducted 6 outreach ventures in May. Investigator Harley did 3 presentations for Clark Middle School's Career Exploratory Class. During the various presentations, she and Maya distributed some remaining outreach items that are left in stock. Per our audit response, we are now tracking the items that are given out at each event, to ensure greater accountability in how any outreach items are distributed. (At Clark Middle School, Harley and Maya provided students with 7 bookmarks, 43 stickers, 25 slap bracelets, 36 shirts, 20 business cards, 36 brochures, 3 mouse pads, and 2 pairs of pants). The new executive director is responsible for developing an "Outreach and Education Plan," which will outline the cost and description of any outreach items, along with a plan for how they will be distributed, before any of these items are re-purchased.

Investigators Harley and Cade attended the Anchorage Police Relations Task Force meeting and handed out brochures for the AERC. Lastly, the AERC spent 3 days hosting the Virtual Dementia Tour by Alaska Commission on Aging and Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association.

Conclusion

I want to thank the commission and all AERC staff for allowing me to work with you and serve as interim director these last few months. Our audit response developed some procedures that will set the agency up for success over the next year. This would not have been possible without the amazing contributions from our staff. Harley, James, Cade, and Maya continue to do great work. Despite them all being new employees, they continue to make this agency more effective and efficient every day.

Very Respectfully,



Paul Ervasti
Acting Executive Director
Anchorage Equal Rights Commission