



## **Mission**

The Commission on State Mandates was established as a quasi-judicial agency to resolve disputes between state and local government regarding reimbursement for state-mandated local programs, in compliance with article XIII B, section 6 of the California Constitution, to relieve unnecessary congestion of the courts.

## **Vision**

The Commission on State Mandates fairly and impartially resolves complex legal questions in a deliberative and timely manner, using innovation and collaboration.

## **Values**

We value:

- Courtesy and respect
- Fairness, honesty, and ethical behavior
- A safe and healthy work environment for Commission staff
- Cooperation and collaboration
- Personal and professional development of Commission staff
- Practices that are protective of the environment and human health and are energy and resource efficient
- Efficient and high-performing governmental operations
- Transparency, accessibility, and public participation in Commission processes

## Goals and Implementing Objectives

### A. Engage state and local agencies in the mandates process through regular outreach and training.

1. Continue to provide updates, as needed, to the “Mandate Chronicles” mailing list including mandate-related educational materials posted on the Commission’s website.
2. At least annually, prepare and provide live training to state and local agencies and legislative staff on a variety of mandates-related issues via Zoom; specifically
  - a) By June 2024, on how to file a test claim.
  - b) By June 2025, on preparing and filing comments on proposed parameters and guidelines, proposing reasonably necessary activities, and including a well-supported reasonable reimbursement methodologies (RRMs). This training on RRM’s will help to streamline the reimbursement claiming process for mandated programs, reduce the burden of documenting actual mandate costs, increase cost-efficiency for mandated activities, and improve predictability of annual statewide costs.
  - c) By September 2025, on how to file an incorrect reduction claim.
  - d) By June 2026, on how to determine whether to file a mandate redetermination request or parameters and guidelines amendment.

### B. Ensure the Commission’s information technology systems are committed to data security and integrity, while also providing an efficient and effective end-user experience.

1. Proactively perform daily checks for available upgrades, patches, and security fixes for all software and hardware currently in use.
2. Provide quarterly training to staff on security best practices and emerging or trending threats.
3. Biannually perform external system penetration testing to verify perimeter system security.
4. Verify data backups by performing monthly restores of sample data sets.
5. Solicit staff feedback quarterly for suggestions of technology improvements to increase efficiency and productivity.
6. Create awareness in staff for IT security threats to enable them to avoid clicking on inappropriate links and activating malware by providing monthly training for staff on current threats.
  - a) Share information released by the Department of Technology pertaining to security breaches and best practices with all Commission staff, as it becomes available.
  - b) Due to rapid evolution of cyber security issues, at least biannually perform random phishing campaigns on staff followed by all-staff training on how to best handle the sent campaign. This will ensure staff education and enhance the Commission’s IT security posture.
7. With the goal of more efficient helpdesk service and response and resolution times, using Office 365, the Commission’s IT staff will develop a helpdesk tracking system by June 30, 2024. Staff will then continuously log and monitor all helpdesk requests as either “break fix” or “service” requests for trend analysis. This will allow staff to better leverage historical information about a system or user to help us understand the scope of an issue. It

will also enable staff to better track trends, such as rises in incidents or service requests and the reasoning behind such trends.

C. Promote staff development to retain leadership continuity, ensure critical knowledge (including mandates expertise) is not lost, and bolster professional development.

1. Take appropriate steps to recruit and retain a diverse and skilled workforce by utilizing diverse recruitment tools including creating a LinkedIn account by March 2024, and contacting potential employees through university career centers.
2. Take appropriate steps to retain a skilled workforce by providing a welcoming workplace and a robust wellness program that encourages healthy eating, exercise, stress management, and work-life balance.
  - a) The Health and Wellness Coordinator will continue to maintain a well-rounded wellness program with regular healthy eating, exercise, and stress management events for staff and will provide updates and information at weekly all-staff meetings and via emails.
  - b) Commission management will continue to ensure that staff regularly take time off and avoid accruing more than the maximum allowable hours of vacation/annual leave time; hourly staff work no more than their allotted hours; and exempt staff work an average of 40 hours per week while working all hours necessary to accomplish their assignments and fulfill their responsibilities.
  - c) Improve office culture by:
    - i. Recognizing employees during all-staff meetings for exceptional work and contributions to the Commission strategic mission.
    - ii. Holding one-on-one meetings with individual staff to discuss any matter either work-related or not in a judgement-free environment.
    - iii. Creating an inclusive environment where employee feedback is valued by inviting staff recommendations on how to improve office culture or any other matter that relates to Commission goals, strategic plan, procedures and policies.
    - iv. Holding office celebrations around major holidays to improve team morale and to promote strong coworker relationships.
    - v. Encouraging staff to take training for upward mobility and to better perform job functions.
3. Continue to work with appropriate staff to develop the skills necessary to succeed the current members of the management team and the information security officer, upon their retirement or separation, as part of succession plan implementation.
4. At least annually review and update all desk manuals and training tools for each Commission position by January 1 of each year and on an ongoing basis.
5. Review the records of old Board of Control and Commission matters to properly close out paper files and upload them to the Commission's website by December 2024.
6. As part of the Commission's continuing cross-training effort, continue to identify staff who want to learn and work in a career path of interest to them, other than their current path, as a way to transition into a new career path or to learn new skills and prevent burnout while performing the work of the Commission, and announce those opportunities by June 30 of each year.