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DOJ OIG Releases Report on the Office of Justice Programs' Civil Rights Complaint Process

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report examining the Office of Justice Programs' (OJP) administration of its civil rights complaint process through OJP's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The OCR's mission is to ensure that recipients of financial assistance from DOJ's grant-making offices comply with civil rights laws and nondiscrimination provisions.

The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that the OCR has a multi-faceted approach to determining whether the civil rights complaints it receives are timely and valid. However, to more effectively respond to pressing civil rights violations and concerns, the OCR should take steps to improve how it solicits, receives, and reviews complaints throughout the process. The OIG's findings relate to:

- **Complaint Solicitation Awareness.** The grant-making offices' webpages and grant documents did not contain clear and consistent instructions about how to file a civil rights complaint against a DOJ grant recipient. Additionally, the OCR must clarify intake procedures to ensure proper review of civil rights complaints.
- **Collaboration and Information Sharing.** The OCR and Civil Rights Division have not fully implemented their current collaborative work agreement. Also, the OCR does not have a comprehensive method to track and analyze complaints which could improve its compliance review initiation process, and the OCR's Manual does not describe the indicators that should engender a review.
- **Complaint Process and Investigation Oversight.** The OCR's Manual is intended to guide Attorney Advisors as they investigate valid complaints, but it is outdated and contains several inaccuracies and inconsistencies that may have a negative effect on investigations.

The DOJ OIG made six recommendations to improve OJP's management of OCR's civil rights complaint process. OJP agreed with all six recommendations.

Report: Today's report can be found on the OIG's website at the following link:

<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/audit-office-justice-programs-civil-rights-complaint-process>
