

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**



Responses to Questions
on
Emancipation Commemoration Commission

Kimberly A. Bassett
Secretary of the District of Columbia

Submission to
Committee on Government Operations and Facilities
Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Robert C. White, Jr., Chair

John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Please provide the agency's mission statement.

Response:

The mission of the Office of the Secretary is to provide protocol, authentication and public records management services to the Mayor and District government agencies.

The Emancipation Commemoration Commission was established to advise the Mayor on programs and activities to celebrate the public holiday on April 16, the DC Compensated Emancipation Act.

2. Please list all reporting requirements in the District of Columbia Code or Municipal Regulations that the agency is required to complete in FY 20 and FY 21, to date. For each requirement, please list the date the report was required and the date it was produced. If the agency did not produce the report on the mandated timeline, please explain why.

Response:

D.C. Official Code Section 1-183(c) requires the Secretary to submit a report to the Council by August 1 of each year that shall include a specific accounting of the expenditure of money in the Emancipation Day Fund and any remaining balance. This provision includes the specific items that should be reported.

Since FY 15, the Emancipation Day Fund was allocated in the Executive Office of the Mayor, and the Community Affairs Office manages the overall Emancipation Day activities to commemorate the Emancipation Day celebration.

3. What are the agency's top five priorities? Please explain how the agency expects to address these priorities in FY 21.

Response:

Not Applicable.

4. Please describe any new initiatives or programs that the agency implemented in FY 20 and FY 21, to date, to improve the operations of the agency. Please describe any funding utilized for these initiative or program and the results, or expected results, of each initiative.

Response:

Not Applicable.

5. Please list all pending lawsuits that name the agency as a party. Identify which cases on the list are lawsuits that potentially expose the District to financial liability or will result in a change in agency practices and describe the current status of the litigation. Please provide the extent of each claim, regardless of its likelihood of success.

Response:

None.

6. ***Please list all settlements entered into by the agency or by the District on behalf of the agency in FY 20 or FY 21, to date, and provide the parties' names, the amount of the settlement, and if related to litigation, the case name and a brief description of the case. If unrelated to litigation, please describe the underlying issue or reason for the settlement (e.g. administrative complaint, etc.).***

Response:

None.

7. ***Please provide the number of FOIA requests for FY 20, and FY 21, to date, that were submitted to your agency. Include the number granted, partially granted, denied and pending. In addition, please provide the average response time, the estimate number of FTEs required to process requests, the estimated number of hours spend responding to these requests, and the cost of compliance.***

Response:

Not Applicable.

8. ***Please list and describe any ongoing investigations, audits, or reports on the agency or any employee of the agency that were completed during FY 20 and FY 21, to date.***

Response:

None.

9. ***Please provide a list of all studies, research papers, reports, and analyses that the agency prepared or funded during FY 20 and FY 21, to date. Please submit a hard copy to the Committee of any study, research paper, report, or analysis that is complete.***

Response:

None.

EMANCIPATION COMMEMORATION COMMISSION

10. ***Mayor's Order 2008-37, which most recently re-established the Commission, requires that 11 of the maximum 14 members of the Commission be the Director or a designee of the Director of several District agencies.***
 - a. ***Please provide a current list of all District agency Directors or designees currently serving on the Commission, including their date of appointment and the number of meetings attended by each since they were appointed. Please indicate whether any agencies have declined participation.***

Response:

Mayor's Order 2017-165, dated July 20, 2017, is the current Order that impacts the Emancipation Day Commission. The Mayor appointed the following persons as public members of the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Commission:

- a. Dr. Helga Baskett-Tippett
- b. Christine Haley
- c. Mary Ivey
- d. Junel Jeffrey
- e. Howard Marks
- f. Dorjan Short
- g. Frank Smith
- h. Cassandra Whitt
- i. Ann Wicker

The following persons were appointed to the Commission as representatives from the District government as ex officio members:

- a. Lamont Akins, from the Executive Office of the Mayor
- b. Ebony Brown, from the Commission on the Arts and Humanities
- c. Sheryl Newman, from the Council of the District of Columbia
- d. Lauren Vaughan, as the Secretary of the District of Columbia (Replaced by Kimberly Bassett)
- e. Derek Younger, from the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment (Replaced by Angie Gates)

11. *The Mayor's Order from 2008 also appointed three historians to the Commission, for two-year terms. Please provide a list of the current non-District agency members of the Commission, including their date of appointment, the date their term expires, the Ward in which they reside, the organization they represent, and the number of meetings attended by each since their appointment. Please indicate whether there are any vacancies.*

Response:

Not Applicable. The Mayor's Order 2016-061 re-established the Commission which appoints the maximum 10 members from residents of the District or have some resident business, educational, social or cultural nexus to the District. The Mayor also appoints representatives from District Government as ex-officio members of the Commission.

12. *Please provide the dates of any Commission meetings held in FY 20 and FY 21, to date.*

Response:

The dates of Commission meetings held in FY 20 and FY 21, to date:

- February 5, 2020

13. *Please list who the current Vice Chair of the Commission is and any other officers the Commission has elected.*

Response:

Not Applicable. As outlined in Mayor’s Order 2016-061, Secretary of the District of Columbia shall serve as ex-officio member and Chairperson of the Commission.

14. Please list any subcommittees the Commission has created, along with who chairs each subcommittee, and the members composing each committee, including any non-commission District residents, along with their Ward of residence.

Response:
None.

15. For every meeting of the Commission in FY 20 and FY 21, to date, please provide the agenda, the minutes, a list of all voting members in attendance, and whether a quorum was present.

Response:

- Meeting on February 5, 2020 – No quorum
Agenda and minutes are in Attachment 1.

16. Please provide any rules of procedure that have been adopted by the Commission.

Response:
None.

17. Please list any public hearings or community meetings on Emancipation Day celebrations attended by voting Commissioners in FY 20, or FY 21, to date.

Response:
None

18. Please describe the Emancipation Day activities and events the Commission supported implementation of in FY 19 and FY 20.

Response:
Activities in FY 19:

Date	Event	Location
April 8, 2019	Reflecting on DC Emancipation Day and the Civil War. Panelists: C.R. Gibbs, Frank Smith, Roger Davidson, and Elizabeth Clark Lewis.	African American Civil War Memorial, 1925 Vermont Ave., NW
April 12, 2019	Full Democracy Champions Breakfast	Willard Hotel

April 13, 2019	DC Emancipation Day Commemoration Wreath Laying Program. Co-sponsored by DC Reading Is Fundamental, Inc., and the African American Civil War Museum.	African American Civil War Memorial, 1925 Vermont Ave., NW
April 13, 2019	African American Civil War Memorial Museum Presents: The Reading of the Names. Honoring the 209,145 African Americans who fought for freedom and to preserve the union during the Civil War, 23 winning the Congressional Medal of Honor.	African American Civil War Memorial, 1925 Vermont Ave., NW
April 13, 2019	Mayor Bowser's Emancipation Day Parade	14th Street NW and Pennsylvania Avenue NW
April 15, 2019	Food for Thought: Displaying the DC Emancipation Day Act – Display the DC Emancipation Day Act.	John A. Wilson Building, Mayor's Ceremonial Room 509
April 16, 2019	The Historic Israel Metropolitan Lyceum (formerly Israel Bethel Lyceum) - D.C. Emancipation Day Lyceum, lecture by Alonza Tehuti Evans (Author and Special Grand Historian of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge, District of Columbia).	Israel Metropolitan CME (formerly Israel Bethel) Church
April 16, 2019	DC Emancipation Day and the Emancipation Proclamation. Panelists: Bowie State University Professor Roger Davidson; historian and author C. R. Gibbs; and Howard University Professor, Elizabeth Clark-Lewis.	National Archives, William G. McGowan Theater
April 17, 2019	University of the District of Columbia's DC Emancipation Day Celebration	UDC Student Center
April 19, 2019	Lunch and Learn: The History of DC Emancipation Day, with keynote speaker C.R. Gibbs.	1050 First Street, NE

Activities in FY 20:

Date	Event	Location
April 16, 2020	DC Emancipation Day On-Line Commemoration Program – the collaboration between the Commission and The Friends of DC Emancipation Day, with panelists included Ayo Handy-Kendi, Lucy Murphy, C.R. Gibbs, Peter Hanes, Anise Jenkins, Frank Smith and Kimberly Bassett	Zoom Platform
April 16, 2020	Rebroadcast the FY19 DC Annual Parade and fireworks	Channel 16

19. Please describe any other Commission achievements in FY 19, FY20, and FY 21, to date.

Response:

- A successful Full Democracy Champions Breakfast on April 12, 2019.
- Secured prominent speakers for lecture series to celebrate the DC Emancipation Day every year, with the exception in 2020 when the events were cancelled.

20. Has the Mayor assigned any specific duties for the Commission to undertake that are not already outlined in Mayor’s Order 2008-37?

Response:

Mayor’s Order 2016-061 supersedes previous Mayor’s Orders outlines the same functions for the Commission to develop and implement plans, programs, projects, and activities to celebrate the commemorative history, culture, heritage, customs, and traditions, by highlighting the struggle to overcome the institution of slavery, and to profile the African American experience in the struggle for freedom, justice, and equality; while Mayor’s Order 2008-37 encouraged educational programs to increase awareness of the importance of District of Columbia Emancipation Day.

21. Please provide the Commission’s action plan for the upcoming 2021 Emancipation Day?

Response:

The Office of the Secretary and the Commission are in collaboration with the Executive Office of the Mayor to plan the Emancipation Day celebration this year. However, due to current Covid-19 public health emergency, the events this year will be in virtual platform, and it is currently in the planning phase.

22. Please describe the level of staff support the Commission currently receives from the Office of the Secretary.

Response:

The staff at the Office of Public Records and Archives will provide administrative support to the Commission in organizing activities to celebrate the Emancipation Day.

23. Please describe any challenges that the Commission has that is impacting its ability to meet its goals.

Response:

In FY 20, due to Covid-19 public health emergency, the Commission had to cancel events and activities planned to celebrate the DC Compensated Emancipation Act.

In collaboration with The Friends of DC Emancipation Day, on April 16, 2020, we had a virtual event to celebrate the DC Emancipation Day. *See Responses to Question 18.*