

Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office

	2015-17 Actual	2017-19 Legislatively Adopted	2017-19 Legislatively Approved *	2019-21 Current Service Level	2019-21 Governor's Budget
General Fund	623,646	720,802	720,802	760,506	861,675
Other Funds	2,640	9,481	9,481	9,841	9,841
Total Funds	626,286	730,283	730,283	770,347	871,516
Positions	3	3	3	3	3
FTE	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	3.00

* Includes Emergency Board and administrative actions through December 2018.

Program Description

The Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO) supports the statutory work of the four Advocacy Commissions and their missions to bring the voice and equity focus of underrepresented communities statewide to the policy table. They study and research issues; inform and provide advice for state policy makers and decision makers, in all governmental branches, on ways to build success and reduce barriers for Asian Pacific, Black, and Hispanic Oregonians and for Women.

The OACO provides staff support for equity focused policy and analysis work, staffing meetings, and providing the support for the Commissions' policy and stakeholder workgroups. This includes applying intersectionality and analysis across Commissions for key issues affecting OAC's stakeholder groups; engaging the OAC's across the full policy arc in pursuit of equitable remedies and multiyear strategies for addressing complex issues; conducting rural and urban policy analysis affecting communities of color and women statewide; develop and manage collaborations with community stakeholders, policy makers and formal research partnerships, and providing analysis and coordinating the legislative advocacy of the Commissions.

CSL Summary and Issues

The agency is projected to close out the 2017-19 budget cycle with an estimated \$631,000 in expenditures, which is approximately 18% below the 2019-21 CSL calculation.

Policy Issues

The OACO requests the following policy option packages for 2019-21:

- Package 100 - Increases the agency's Operations and Policy Analyst 3 (OPA3) position to full-time (0.50 FTE) for a cost of \$103,697 General Fund. The OPA3 works with the Commissions on effective policy work during session, policy research projects, talking points, and briefing sheets on legislative issues.

Other Significant Issues and Background

Given the increasing demands on the General Fund, concerns continue to grow every budget cycle regarding the most economically efficient way to provide the highest quality services to the Advocacy Commissions.

At the beginning of the 2019 Session, in an attempt to develop solutions to these budgetary concerns, the OACO was asked to provide feedback regarding the idea of a 2019-21 budget note which would request a report by OACO to evaluate the pros/cons of merging the agency with the Legislative Policy and Research Office (LPRO). The results of the report were anticipated to influence the 2021-23 OACO budget development process. After initial feedback from the Commissions, the potential budget note, was considered to be too narrow of a solution to research. The Commissions are quite cognoscente of their ability to maintain an independent voice for the communities for which they represent; broadening the list of potential state agencies to merge with allows for greater flexibility in determining a best fit for the commissions' needs.

To provide the most economically feasible option, it is assumed that the Commissions would evaluate existing and therefore already funded state resources. The potential characteristics needed from an existing government body to best leverage current Advocacy Commission services might include:

- Existing policy and research expertise
- Existing budget and accounting staff
- Existing capacity to house an additional 3 OACO staff members & equipment
- Existing space for Commission meetings

Potential characteristics needed from an existing government body to propel future Advocacy Commission work:

- Existing IT staff expertise (preferably with experience setting-up and maintaining data sharing agreements)
- Existing economist or data analysis expertise
- In-house counsel or legal advisory

It is still yet to be determined if a formal budget note is necessary, or if the OACO should just be requested to report back to an interim committee of the Legislature at a future time. Furthermore, the staff workload, associated with researching potential OACO mergers, will be driven by the scope and level of detail requested of the agency in its endeavor to find the most economically efficient way to provide the highest quality services to the Commissions.