



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office  
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March 11, 2013

Joint Ways and Means, General Government Subcommittee

Co-Chair Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair Smith, Sen. Johnson, Sen. Whitsett, Rep. Gomberg, and Rep. Nathanson:

OACO is requesting consideration for exemption from further budget reductions in the upcoming biennium. Thank you for considering this request. OACO takes its responsibility seriously for bearing its share of balancing the state budget. We are concerned that, while the Advocacy Commissions have breasted a number of budget reductions of the current and past biennium with creative approaches within S&S, OACO is running out of options for further budget reductions without loss to our statutory functions for 2 FTE staffing, maintaining an office, Commissioner support, and its operations.

**Staffing the work of the Advocacy Commissions:** Statutorily, the Advocacy Commissions Office maintains an Administrator and other staff to support the work of the Commissions. Since 2005, this has included a staff of 2 (1 FTE Admin/1 FTE Support.) Together they support the work of 4 Commissions/44 Commissioners/70+ regular and leadership meetings plus a number of joint meetings of the Commissions biennially. For 2013 – 15, two of OACO's 5% reduction scenarios for 2013 include reduction of staffing by 72 staff day reductions per increment for a total potential reduction of 29 staff weeks over the biennium. That is a potential of 14% reduction in staffing capacity. In terms of Commission meeting support, it would seriously reduce support for 10 regular Commission meetings and all the related coordination. We estimate that 90% of staff time is spent coordinating the daily work of the Commissions and responding to requests from the public. A list of instances of 12 types of support per Commission is attached that would be directly affected by 14% reductions in all areas.

**Reduction of Commissioner travel:** Commissioner travel has been decreased this biennium to \$650 per Commission for 2 years. The Advocacy Commissions have Commissioners in every part of the state, and in past years the average cost of travel per Commission meeting was \$550. While all Commissions now use teleconferencing for their meetings, we believe that at least 1 meeting per year of each Commission must be face to face in order to benefit from the networking, collaboration and relationship building between their members. Also, teleconferencing in the age of cell phones has created other challenges during with sound dropping out as Commissioners use unduplexed cell service to phone into meetings. Discussions lag as teleconferencing Commissioners must ask for sections of discussion to be repeated, or comments are missed from teleconferenced Commissioners

**OR Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs**

Stephen Ying, Chair  
Mari Watanabe, Vice Chair  
Legislative Liaisons:  
Sen. Jackie Dingfelder  
Rep. Gene Whisnant

**OR Commission on Black Affairs**

Isaac E. Dixon, Chair  
James Morris, Vice Chair  
Legislative Liaisons:  
Sen. Rod Monroe  
Rep. Lew Frederick

**OR Commission on Hispanic Affairs**

Andrea Cano, Chair  
Gilbert P. Carrasco, Vice Chair  
Legislative Liaisons:  
Sen. Chip Shields  
Rep. Chris Harker

**OR Commission for Women**

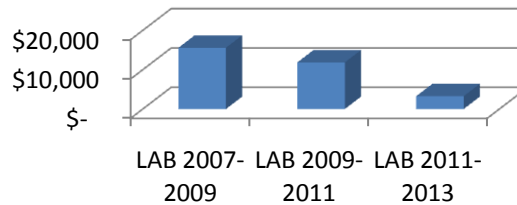
Stephanie Vardavas, Chair  
Jeanne Burch, Vice Chair  
Legislative Liaisons:  
Sen. Monnes Anderson  
Rep. Betty Komp

**Staff**

Lucy Baker, Administrator  
Nancy Kramer, Executive Assistant

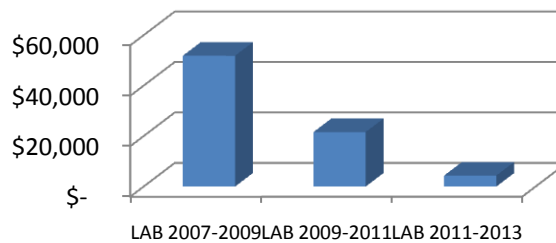
who were not heard above the in-room discussion. The current level of travel funding has challenged the Commissions wishing to meet outside the Portland/Salem area. We are proposing a policy option package be added to the 2013-15 budget for OACO to add back the ability for Commissioners to meet 1-2 times per biennium in outlying areas.

**OACO-General Fund-Travel Expenditures**



**Supporting an office:** Providing an office for OACO is part of its Statute and serves as the hub of support and coordination for the Advocacy Commissions and as a locus of community and partner engagement with the Advocacy Commissions. To meet budget reductions without reducing its 2 FTE staffing level, OACO worked within S&S to eliminate land lines in favor of less expensive cell service, negotiate a year of free rent with DAS to help cover unexpected charges from DOJ this biennium, drop expensive shuttle service for postage stamps, eliminate most design and printing, and eliminate most staff training. The effect of these reductions has reduced to near zero the funds available to OACO to meet its S&S needs that are not protected lines of government service charges, are not rent or telecom, to current levels shown below.

**OACO Discretionary S&S-General Fund**



The first 5% reduction proposed for the 2013 biennium would necessitate closing the OACO office and using State telecommuting policies for the staff to work from home. We feel that this reduction is too deep. We believe that a modest discretionary S&S budget is essential to support an office and that a physical location is important to the profile of OACO in the community and among our partners.

Stephen Ying, Chair, OCAPIA

Isaac Dixon, Chair, OCBA

Andrea Cano, Chair, OCHA

Stephanie Vardavas, Chair, OCFW

## Attachment A

### Types and instances of support per Advocacy Commission per biennium

In 2011, the OACO reviewed and analyzed instances of staff support per Commission and developed the following overview of actual practice. The Office uses the information to calculate cost of adding Commissions which may be proposed during legislative session or considering the effect of staff reductions on current levels of Commission support.

The following supports are provided by OACO staff to each Commission each biennium. To calculate the service that OACO provides to all 4 Advocacy Commissions per biennium, the data would be multiplied by four.

1. Coordinating logistics of Commission meetings. **Average of 15 regular Commission Meetings per biennium.**
2. Preparing agendas, taking and distributing minutes for the Commission meetings. **Creating 15-24 agendas, and attending/producing minutes for 15-24 meetings.**
3. Coordinating travel and reimbursement for Commission members; **70 processed travel reimbursements and 70 stipend requests processed.**
4. Respond to questions from the Commissioners, general public, and community partners via telephone, email or written mail or in person. **Average of 2600 responses to Commissioner requests (25 weekly), 520 responses to public requests (5 weekly), 240 responses to Commission partners (10 monthly)**
5. Make appropriate referrals to, or on behalf of, the Commissions. **192 referrals (2 weekly)**
6. Schedule appearances before the Commissions. **30 scheduled appearances (2 per mtg)**
7. Attend and support activities of the four Commissions as needed and directed by the Administrator. **4 press conferences, 20 press releases, 4 Commissioner orientation and training activities**
8. Assist with logistics for Commission fundraising events. **80 hours of support of mailings, e-mail list management, notices, materials, registration, deposits, check processing**
9. Update and monitor Commission websites using SharePoint system. **104 website updates**
10. Prepare correspondence/ communications on behalf of the Commissions. **120 documents or correspondence (5 monthly)**
11. Track legislation and prepare legislative updates on Commissions' priority bills. **40 legislative updates (4 monthly during session), 24 prepared testimony (12/session),**
12. Assist with maintenance of OACO listserv databases for Commissions' outreach. **3 listservs (public, media, partners) with approximately 2,000 contacts**