

**Housing and Community Services Department
Commission for Voluntary Action and Service**

On February 9th, the Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee voted to recommend acknowledging receipt of a report from the Housing and Community Services Department and the Oregon Commission for Voluntary Action and Service. Housing was directed via budget note to report to the February 2016 Legislative Assembly on the current financial status of the Oregon Commission for Voluntary Action and Service, and how it compares to similar entities in other states. The agency was further directed to develop a plan for fiscal sustainability absent continued subsidy from Housing, and recommendations for alternative administrative models for the Commission.

The Commission serves as applicant and administrative entity for federal VISTA and AmeriCorps grants on behalf of local entities, including cities and not-for-profits. The Commission also administers funds to local Court Appointed Special Advocates programs pursuant to population and funding formulas. This report chronicles the history of volunteer coordination efforts and notes that appropriate administrative models have been studied before. Housing received a one-time, \$250,000 General Fund appropriation specifically for support for the Commission, and estimates that the cost to continue providing services to the Commission at the current service level is \$492,258. The Commission's preference is to become an independent state agency, a move that would necessitate additional staff and attendant funding to ensure the Commission's capacity to meet basic financial reporting standards and operational sufficiency. If the Commission were relocated to another agency, additional investment would still be needed to maintain existing operations, as the Commission would still have expenses related to its new host for overhead and shared client services. Should the Legislature determine that

additional funding cannot be accommodated, the option exists to dismantle the commission, which would result in the loss of approximately \$6.6 million in federal grants, attendant local match and post service education awards for volunteers. A new administrative entity would also need to be found for the Court Appointed Special Advocates program.

The Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee recommends acknowledging receipt of the report.