

## Oregon Commission for the Blind

	2013-15 Actual	2015-17 Legislatively Approved*	2017-19 Current Service Level	2015-17 Governor's Recommended
General Fund	1,582,598	3,693,316	3,602,734	3,152,344
Other Funds	1,667,196	1,183,547	1,020,372	1,334,434
Federal Funds	12,683,970	15,836,905	14,802,388	15,868,008
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$15,933,764</b>	<b>\$20,713,768</b>	<b>\$19,425,494</b>	<b>\$20,354,786</b>
Positions	50	56	56	64
FTE	46.21	52.21	52.21	61.50

\*Includes Emergency Board and administrative actions through December 2016

### Program Description

The Commission for the Blind's mission is to assist blind Oregonians in making informed choices and decisions to achieve full inclusion and integration in society through employment, independent living, and social self-sufficiency. The agency's programs are focused on two main objectives: employment and independence. The Commission is a consumer-controlled, seven-member board appointed by the Governor. The Board appoints the agency's executive director.

The Commission is funded with approximately 10% General Fund, 10% Other Funds, and 80% Federal Funds. General Fund and Other Funds are used to meet matching Federal Funds requirements.

Federal Funds are provided by formula and special grants from the U. S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) as authorized by the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (as amended). Vocational Rehabilitation basic support (Section 110) funds are the primary source of funding and have the following match rate:

1. Vocational Rehabilitation Basic Support: 78.7% federal, 21.3% state.
2. Independent Living (Older Blind and Part B), and In-Service Training Grants: 90 federal, 10% state.

In Oregon, the Department of Human Services receives 87.5% of Section 110 Vocational Rehabilitation basic support grant funding with the Commission receiving the remaining 12.5%. There is also a RSA maintenance of effort requirement that is based on the prior two years of funding. If funding is reduced, an equivalent amount of federal funding is lost. The RSA maintenance of effort agreement, however, is for the state as a whole, which again includes both the Department of Human Services and the Blind Commission RSA grant funding.

Other Funds include funds received through the Business Enterprise Set-Aside program and Randolph-Sheppard Vending Act, certain cooperative agreements with education providers, bequests and donations, the sale of aid devices to individuals who are blind, and interest income.

### CSL Summary and Issues

The agency has requested a current service level budget, without any enhancements. The agency phased out one-time costs of procuring vending machines for the Business Enterprise Program.

### Policy Issues

The Governor's budget includes an increase in federal revenue as a result of an update in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Commission for the Blind. This agreement redistributes the percentage of the federal award for Oregon for vocational rehabilitation that comes to the Commission for the Blind from 12.5% to 15.6% to reflect the national average ratio. With this \$2.5 increase in federal revenue, the agency would expand the vocational rehabilitation program in order to comply with new requirements under the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA). The agency would also leverage this federal funding to increase: (1) the number of third-party cooperative agreements with educational institution; and (2) its capacity to offer technology training, job site assessment, and workplace accommodations. To build the capacity to meet these requirements, the agency would re-organize and establish 10 new positions (12.39 FTE).

### Other Significant Issues and Current Discussions

The Governor's budget includes the following staffing reductions:

- Reduce one permanent full-time Business Enterprise Program Analyst.
- Abolish one permanent full-time Independent Living Instructors.
- Abolish one permanent full-time Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.
- Abolish two permanent full-time Orientation and Career Center Instructors.

The Governor's budget does not include the agency's request for \$639,788 General Fund and one limited-duration position (0.50 FTE) to upgrade its automated case management system used to capture federally required data reporting, and to facilitate case development and tracking of information of individuals who are participating in agency vocational rehabilitation, independent living, and business enterprise services. Due to recent changes as a result of passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the company currently providing the agency with this system software has announced that it will cease to support the existing case management system after December 2017. The agency has been working with the Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Department of Administrative Services Office of Procurement to facilitate the appropriate planning and staging of this migration.