

USPIRG

External Review/Benchmark

Annually the US Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG) compares\rates State Transparency Websites.

The Oregon Transparency Website, Oregon.gov/transparency is currently viewed as a leading state website.

- 2012 USPIRG Report: 87 % B+
- 2013 USPIRG Report: 89 % B+
- 2014 USPIRG Report: 93.5 % A-
- 2015 USPIRG Report: 96.5 % A



State	Grade	2015 Score
Ohio	A+	100
Indiana	A	97
Wisconsin	A	96.5
Oregon	A	96.5
Louisiana	A	96
Connecticut	A	96
Massachusetts	A	95.5
Florida	A	95
Iowa	A-	94

**Transparency Program
Resource List**

Criteria	Resource
USPIRG (US Public Interest Research Group)	USPIRG Website
	<i>Executive Summary</i> - Following the Money 2015 Report
	Following the Money 2015 Report
	Report: Letting the Sunlight In: Oregon Quasi-public Agencies and the Need for Budget Transparency
	USPIRG Report: Revealing Tax Subsidies
	Good Jobs First: Show Us the Subsidized Jobs Report (Includes Oregon scoring details)
	Surdna Foundation: Resources & Reports
Center for Public Integrity	Oregon Report Public Access to Information
	Link to Methodology and Report Details
E-Government 2015 Survey of Oregon Residents	E-Government 2015 Survey of Oregon Residents
<u>Future Vision</u> Oregon Transparency Program - Future Vision Enhancement & Sustainability document	Oregon Transparency Program - Future Vision - Enhancement & Sustainability presentation to TOAC on 1/12/16.
<u>Prior Legislative Direction</u> Oregon Transparency Program - Program Status and Resource Discussion document	Oregon Transparency Program - Program Status and Resource Discussion document, presented to TOAC on 10/1/15.



[Link to: Detailed Resource List](#)

Oregon Transparency: Opening State Government to Everyone

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About Transparency

This Web site is a tool to help you get to know your state government. Its purpose is to show you how government works, what your taxes buy, and how purchasing decisions are made.

A good place to start is by reviewing [annual budget information](#), listings of [public meetings](#), and [agency key performance measures](#).



Questions & Information: Send us your questions or suggestions for this website by clicking on the [Inbox](#), using our [online form](#), or sending an email to us at oregon.transparency@oregon.gov. If you have agency-specific questions use this [agency contact link](#).

"New Feature" Subscribe to Oregon Transparency Updates: To receive monthly updates about the Transparency website and Oregon Transparency Program, click the **Subscribe** button or use this [Transparency Updates: Sign-up Link](#).



Disclaimer:

Unless otherwise specified, data throughout this Web site is current as of June 30, 2016. Most of the information is updated on an annual basis.

Please note that the data or information contained on the Oregon.gov/transparency Web site is raw and unaudited. The data or information does not link to any audited financial statement. Because no comprehensive review for accuracy has occurred, the data or information may contain errors, omissions or misstatements. Also, this Oregon.gov/transparency Website excludes data and information that is confidential, private or protected under state and federal laws. Users should not rely on the accuracy or completeness of this data or information for any purpose other than personal knowledge.

Public Meetings

Learn more about: [Oregon Public Meetings](#)

State Budget, Agencies and Performance



Learn about the Oregon [Budget Process](#).

Review information on state agency budgets and Key Performance Measures: [State Budget, Agencies and Performance](#)

Revenue Reports: Show Me the Money



Learn about the sources of [Money coming in - Revenue](#).

Expenditure Reports: Time to Pay the Bills



Learn more about where money is being spent: [Money Going Out - Expenditures](#)

Who is the State doing business with? (Contracts/Procurement)



Learn who the state is doing business through: [Contracts/Procurement](#)

State Workforce



Learn about the state workforce, employee salaries/benefits (compensation): [State Workforce](#)

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PDF FILE ACCESSIBILITY

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Oregon House bill targets budgeted state government jobs that go unfilled



By **Harry Esteve** | hesteve@oregonian.com

on March 02, 2011 at 9:03 PM, updated March 03, 2011 at 8:16 AM

SALEM -- Call them the phantom state workers -- hundreds and hundreds of positions on Oregon state agency books that go unfilled for months or even years. Agencies ask for them when they make their budget requests to the Legislature but sometimes keep the money without filling the job.

As of Jan. 31, the number of vacant but budgeted positions in state government stood at 4,475 according to state records. That's about 11 percent of the total workforce and does not include seasonal positions.

That's real money, says **Rep. Gene Whisnant, R-Sunriver**, who wants to change the way the state accounts for long-term vacancies. "I believe Oregon's current budget system allows agencies to use unfilled vacancies as slush funds that can be used for other purposes."

Whisnant is chief sponsor of **House Bill 3360**, which would require state agencies to report all positions open longer than six months and eliminate them if there isn't a good reason to keep the job open. The bill gets a hearing today in the House General Government Committee.

The state had 3,014 vacant positions on Dec. 31, the end of the last quarter. More typical quarterly reports show an average of 2,300 vacant positions, officials said.

"So many agencies are trying to save money they're letting vacancies stay open longer," says George Naughton, Gov. John Kitzhaber's main budget analyst.

Naughton cautioned against reading too much into the raw numbers, and said each agency has its own reasons for leaving positions vacant. In some cases, the open slots are the result of retirements or other turnover. Sometimes, the specific requirements of a job make it difficult to fill.

It's not accurate to call the money savings a slush fund, he says, but adds that Kitzhaber has tuned into the issue of unfilled state jobs and is interested in Whisnant's bill.

"It's a tool we want to explore," he says.

The **Department of Human Services** and **Oregon Health Authority**, which employ the largest number of state workers, had 1,648 vacant positions -- or about 14 percent of their authorized workforce, according to the Jan. 31 report.

A department spokeswoman declined comment on the matter Wednesday.

The **Department of Corrections** had 421 vacant positions -- or about 9 percent of its workforce -- as of Jan. 31. Again, agency officials were not available for comment.

Lawmakers with the most influence over state agency budgets sit on the Joint Ways and Means Committee, which drafts the final two-year state budget. **Sen. Richard Devlin, a Tualatin Democrat** and co-chairman of the committee, says he expects a get-tough position on state vacancies this year.

"We will be looking at every position that has been vacant for any period of time," Devlin said.

Staff analysts already have begun poring over agency budgets to determine which of the positions can be cut permanently. "In many of these cases, where they've had a position vacant, we'll be taking away the authority for the position," Devlin said.

Devlin said he expects some agency cuts to go beyond vacant positions and cause actual layoffs.

But **Rep. Peter Buckley, an Ashland Democrat** and one of the House Ways & Means co-chairs, says lawmakers should oversee agency budgets but not micromanage them.

"I'd rather spend my time making sure we have effective agency directors and giving them the tools and resources," he says, "rather than finding ways to tie their hands."

"This is not some sort of sinister way to create a slush fund. It's a way to balance the workload at their agencies given the financial situation their agencies face."

Whisnant said his bill is modeled on legislation drafted by the **American Legislative Exchange Council**, a non-profit group that advocates for limited government.

What bothers Whisnant is that some agencies use the vacancies as a budgetary cushion, or a hedge against possible cuts. For example, when Gov. Ted Kulongoski ordered 9 percent across-the-board cuts last June, many agencies simply used vacant positions to cover their share.

Whisnant's point: If the agencies don't need the workers, they shouldn't be in the budget in the first place. "If we're really going to make cuts, we have to address this situation."

-- **Michelle Cole**

-- **Harry Esteve**

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Phantom jobs in a broken budget



By [The Oregonian Editorial Board](#)
[Email the author](#) | [Follow on Twitter](#)
on March 04, 2011 at 8:52 PM

At any given time, the public agencies conducting Oregon's business -- from law enforcement to social services -- show more than 2,000 jobs on their books that go unfilled. The jobs are real and a hefty part of agencies' requests for taxpayer money, but warm bodies do not fill them to do the work. Yet the agencies win appropriations from the Legislature based in part on these phantom positions.

This is the tricky situation now being addressed by [Rep. Gene Whisnant](#), R-Sunriver, who wants the jobs off the books -- read: eliminated -- if they go unfilled for six months or more. He is plain in saying too much money is spent for nothing in vacant positions, which are used to inflate an agency's needs and may allow for the creation of agency slush funds.

But it's more complicated than that. A House hearing scheduled for Tuesday must probe deeply into what the vacant positions really mean and where our money really goes.

Take the [Department of Human Services and Oregon Health Authority](#), a titan of public spending. Roughly 14 percent of its authorized workforce -- or more than 1,600 positions -- is merely an idea. They're unfilled positions. But most of those jobs are unfilled not because DHS brass connive to spend the salaries otherwise, but because they never actually got the money for them in the first place.

That's what happens when revenue falls. It is not uncommon, particularly in hard economic times, that an agency with an approved budget sails months later into an economic downturn. When that happens, state revenue falls, and with it the agency's funding. The budget on the books can be as phantom as the phantom jobs it contains.

This gets nobody off the hook, though. Oregon's system of financing its operations is antique. It stymies planning and makes it impossible for agencies to react nimbly to changing conditions. That's particularly true in the case of DHS, whose business model is the inverse of most: As revenue falls, the need for its social services rises.

Our system of budgeting creates confusion and mistrust where we can afford it least: in the minds of the Oregonians underwriting it.

Gov. John Kitzhaber wisely plucked [Michael Jordan](#), Metro's top-flight manager, to bring legible, systems-based budgeting to Salem. However Jordan proceeds, his efforts should work in concert with Whisnant and others who quite reasonably demand that the budget make sense and carry with it the guarantee we're spending only what it takes to meet real needs.

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