



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

## Commission for the Blind

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November 3, 2025

Senator Kate Lieber, Co-Chair

Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

900 Court Street NE

H-178 State Capitol

Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

### Overview of Agency Mission and Programs

The mission of the Commission for the Blind is to *empower Oregonians who are blind to fully engage in life*. We fulfill this mission by administering federally- and state-funded vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs that support Oregonians who are blind so they can go to work and live independently in their homes and communities. The Commission for the Blind operates under ORS 346.110 through 346.570 and through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the federal Randolph Sheppard Act.

The Commission for the Blind has six major program objectives in support of our mission:

1. Help Oregonians who are blind get and keep jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families.
2. Train Oregonians in skills related to dealing with blindness such as adaptive technology, white cane travel, braille, and activities of daily living.

3. Support in-school youth who are blind as they transition from high school to further education, training, and employment through the provision of pre-employment transition services.
4. Help senior citizens and individuals who experience vision loss acquire essential adaptive skills so that they may remain independent in their homes and active in their communities.
5. License and support business owners who are blind to operate food service and vending operations in public buildings throughout the state.
6. Assist Oregon businesses so they may attract and retain qualified job seekers who are blind as part of their overall hiring and diversity initiatives.

### **Approach to 2025-27 Reduction Options**

The agency objective is to maximize the services available to Oregonians who are blind and to meet our federal fund match obligations, while minimizing any impact of reductions to the citizens of Oregon. The match ratio of federal to state match/contribution is 4:1 for the agency's Vocational Rehabilitation Program; and 9:1 for the Independent Living Program. Reductions to the agency budget in general fund are compounded when factoring in the potential loss of federal funds due to insufficient match available to draw down the funds at the federal level.

The agency's budget is concentrated in two main areas: Personal Services and Special Payments. As the only agency in Oregon to deliver essential services to Oregonians who are blind, we utilize specialized staff (personal services) to deliver direct services/training to Oregonians who are blind, and we procure services on behalf of clients (special payments). We need a balance of available specialized staff and resources to procure services to maintain operations in a reduction environment. When facing reductions, we make every attempt to balance reductions in these two key areas of the budget.

Rehabilitation services are cost effective. Independent Living Services provide skills training and alternative strategies to safely perform activities of daily living have the potential of significant cost savings in other programs. If we can teach someone how to safely live in their own home, it will often delay or prevent requiring higher levels of care such as assisted living.

## **Other Fund Considerations**

The agency other funds are concentrated in the Business Enterprise Program, which are generated from funds paid to the agency from Vending Facility Managers that are “set aside” for five allowable purposes specific to the program. These funds are restricted and cannot be used for any other purpose. We identified the 5% target as instructed; however, implementation of this reduction would put the agency out of compliance with the rules and regulations in the Business Enterprise Program.

## **New or Expanded Programs**

The agency has not had any new or expanded programs since 2021.

If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dacia Johnson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dacia Johnson, MS, CRC

Executive Director

Commission for the Blind (OCB)																	
2025-27 Biennium																	
2025-27 LAB			9,522,624	-	1,149,704	-	22,158,954	-	32,831,282								
Detail of Reductions to 2025-27 Legislatively Adopted Budget																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Priority (ranked most to least preferred)	Agency	SCR or Activity Initials	Program Unit/Activity Description	GF	LF	OF	NL-OF	FF	NL-FF	TOTAL FUNDS	Pos.	FTE	Gov. Reduction Target Yes / No	One-Time Yes / No	Describe the reduction and associated impact on services and outcomes. Please identify the source of Other Funds reductions.		
																Dept	Prgm/ Div
First 2.5%																	
1	All	OCB	All	Supplies & services	30,301				111,957		\$	142,258		Yes	Yes	Shift Fall 2026 agencywide all staff from in person to virtual	
2	OCB	OCB	5	Personal services	12,834				47,420		\$	60,254		Yes	Yes	Delay Instructor / O&M replacement until January 2026	
3	IL-OIB	OCB	6	Personal services	56,865				511,785		\$	568,650		Yes	No	Special Payments are utilized to purchase goods and services for Oregonians who are blind to achieve their employment and independent living goals. This includes specialized equipment/technology, tuition and training funds, on the job supports, workplace adaptations, etc. Since the VR funds are utilized to match federal funds, the reduction would be compounded to produce a significant impact that would cause delays and disruptions to individuals preparing for employment or maintaining independence in their homes and communities. The estimated number of Oregonians impacted by this reduction would be 125/year that would be waiting to initiate services.	
1	VR	OCB	2	Reduction of Special Payments	148,803				549,803		\$	698,606		Yes	No	Special Payments are utilized to purchase goods and services for Oregonians who are blind to achieve their employment and independent living goals. This includes specialized equipment/technology, tuition and training funds, on the job supports, workplace adaptations, etc. Since the VR funds are utilized to match federal funds, the reduction would be compounded to produce a significant impact that would cause delays and disruptions to individuals preparing for employment or maintaining independence in their homes and communities. The estimated number of Oregonians impacted by this reduction would be 125/year that would be waiting to initiate services.	
2	BE	OCB	3	Reduction of Set-Aside Expenditures			28,743				\$	28,743		No	No	The agency other funds are concentrated in the Business Enterprise Program, which are generated from net proceeds/profits from Small Businesses operated by Vending Facility Managers who run food service/vending businesses in public buildings and locations throughout the state. These funds are "set aside" and utilized for five allowable purposes specific to the program, including maintenance and repair of equipment, training, etc. These funds are restricted by federal law and cannot be used for any other purpose.	
Second 2.5%																	
1	IL-OIB	OCB	6	Elimination of Rehabilitation Instructor for the Blind	227,328						\$	227,328	1.0	1.00	No	No	Elimination of a Rehabilitation Instructor for the Blind position would decrease our capacity to serve individuals who are blind by 150 Oregonians per year. For a small investment of in home training/consultation services, we can often times eliminate or delay the need for higher levels of care (adult foster care, assisted living, or nursing facility), saving the state thousands of dollars per year per client. OCB's cost to serve an older blind Oregonian averages \$1,442. Comparing that to the average yearly cost should that same individual need to leave their home, at \$32,380 per year the modest investment saves the state of Oregon \$4,641,809 per year. In addition to actually costing the state more, ther foreseeable outcomes include increased waiting time and the creation of "service deserts" where individuals in rural/remote areas would not have access to services or have a significant delay in services.
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											\$	-					
											\$	-					
											\$	-					
				TOTAL	476,131	-	57,485	-	1,220,964	-	\$	1,754,580	1	1.00			
Target (5%)				476,131	-	57,485	-	-	-	-	1,641,564	-	-	1	-		
Difference				(0)	-	(0)	-	-	-	-	113,016	1	-	1			

#### Calculating Non-Federal Share based on Grant Award Amount

Program	Grant Award Amount	Federal Share	State Share	Non-Federal Share (State Match)
State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program		0.787	0.213	\$ -
State Supported Employment Services - B program or Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program		0.9	0.1	\$ -

#### Calculating Maximum Amount of Federal Funds Potentially Available Based on Non-Federal Share Amount

Program	Non-Federal Share (State Match) Available	State Share	Federal Share	Maximum Amount of Federal Funds Potentially Available Based on Non-Federal Share Amount
State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program	\$ 30,301	0.213	0.787	\$ 111,957
State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program	\$ 12,834	0.213	0.787	\$ 47,420
State Supported Employment Services - B program or Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program	\$ 56,865	0.100	0.900	\$ 511,785
State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program	\$ 148,803	0.213	0.787	\$ 549,803

Senior and people with disabilities = SPD

ILOB Cost Savings- FFY 2025 (for CFO / LFO)

The following are based on the Oregon Senior & People with Disability rates in effect 7/1/2025.

Based on ILOB Total Expenditure costs					
	SPD rates		FFY 2025 avg total expenditure cost		
			per ILOB client	Annual savings	
Avg yearly adult foster home cost	\$	32,388.00	\$ 1,442.61	\$	30,945.39
Yearly nursing facility rate (@\$546.36/day)	\$	190,370.16	\$ 1,442.61	\$	188,927.55
Avg. yearly assisted living facility cost	\$	38,467.20	\$ 1,442.61	\$	37,024.59

(In the past we have used Total all funds when calculating ILOB savings on our Annual Economic Impact sheets instead of direct service costs.)

Report language on state savings  
when the agency is able to delay even  
the lowest level of care (foster home)  
for individuals served for only one year,  
the potential savings to the state is



150 clients x 1442.61 =216,391.50

150 clients x 32388=4,858,200-216,391.50=4,641,808

\$

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2	OCCB	OCB	5	Personal services	12,834				47,420		\$ 60,254			Yes	Yes	Delay Instructor / O&M replacement until January 2026. The reduction of general fund would impact our ability to draw our full federal federal match.
3	IL-OIB	OCB	6	Personal services	56,865				511,785		\$ 568,650			Yes	No	Delay OIB Instructors (2) and IL-OIB Program Director until November 2025. The reduction of general fund would impact our ability to draw our full federal federal match.
1	VR	OCB	2	Reduction of Special Payments	148,803				549,803		\$ 698,606			Yes	No	Special Payments are utilized to purchase goods and services for Oregonians who are blind to achieve their employment and independent living goals. This includes specialized equipment/technology, tuition and training funds, on the job supports, workplace adaptations, etc. Since the VR funds are utilized to match federal funds, the reduction would be compounded to produce a significant impact that would cause delays and disruptions to individuals preparing for employment or maintaining independence in their homes and communities. The estimated number of Oregonians impacted by this reduction would be 125/year that would be waiting to initiate services.
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