

- Commission views cuts in service delivery likely
- Uncertain future for School Conflict Management Program

Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management, Commission on

Laura A. Potts, Budget Analyst

ROLE

The mission of the Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management is to provide Ohioans with constructive, nonviolent forums, processes, and techniques for resolving disputes. The Commission focuses on four program areas – schools, communities, courts, and state and local government – providing dispute resolution and conflict management training, facilitation and mediation services, consultation, and technical program assistance. The Commission pursues this broad mandate, partnering with other institutions to leverage resources and to develop a statewide conflict resolution capacity. The Commission, established in November 1989, is guided by 12 volunteer commissioners – four appointed by the Governor, four by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and two each by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House – who serve staggered three-year terms.

Agency In Brief					
Number of Employees*	Total Appropriations-All Funds		GRF Appropriations		Appropriation Bill(s)
	2004	2005	2004	2005	
6	\$780,000	\$780,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	Am. Sub. H.B. 95

*Employee head count obtained from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) payroll reports as of June 28, 2003.

OVERVIEW

In terms of annual GRF funding, the Commission originally requested \$594,816 for FY 2004 and \$654,297 FY 2005. This requested amount of GRF funding reflected what the Commission calculated its annual cost of doing business in FY 2003 would be in the FY 2004-2005 biennium, including rising expenses passed along by the Department of Administrative Services' Central Services Agency to boards and commissions for the provision of fiscal, payroll, and computer and technology support. The Commission planned to undertake no program expansions or new initiatives.

The enacted budget fell short of the Commission's requested level of annual GRF funding by \$94,816, or 15.9%, in FY 2004, and by \$154,297, or 23.6%, in FY 2005. As of this writing, the magnitude of the effect that the enacted level of annual level of GRF funding will have on the future delivery of state-financed dispute resolution and conflict management services provided by the Commission is uncertain. That said, in light of the fiscal constraints created by the level of annual GRF funding contained in the enacted budget, the Commission's actions include:

- Reworking its strategic plan for the FY 2004-2005 biennium
- Searching for other sources of revenue, presumably including federal grants
- Cutting the delivery of dispute resolution and conflict management training, facilitation and mediation services, consultation, and technical program assistance, particularly in relation to the delivery of such services intended to assist schools
- Maintaining, if possible, its existing staffing level of 6 full-time equivalents (FTEs)

BUDGET ISSUES

SCHOOL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The School Conflict Management Program was launched in FY 1995 as a partnership between the Commission and the Ohio Department of Education for the purpose of annually awarding competitive grants to elementary, middle, and high schools to implement comprehensive conflict management programs. The program's funding has essentially been split between the Commission (GRF line item 145-401) and the Ohio Department of Education (GRF line item 200-432), with the majority of the funding housed in the latter's budget for the purpose of distributing annually awarded competitive grants to elementary, middle, and high schools to implement comprehensive conflict management programs. The Commission's role typically included the provision of evaluation and technical support services.

The Department of Education's FY 2004-2005 biennial budget as enacted does not appear to contain any moneys explicitly intended to fund the School Conflict Management Program. As of this writing, the future of the program, particularly the availability of funds to be distributed as grants to local schools, is very uncertain.

TASK FORCE TO ELIMINATE HEALTH SERVICES DUPLICATION

Pursuant to Section 153 of Am. Sub. H.B. 95, the Commission is required to provide technical and support services to the Task Force to Eliminate Health Services Duplication, which that section also creates for the purpose evaluating the feasibility of combining the Commission on Minority Affairs and the Departments of Aging, Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Health, Mental Health, and Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and creating a centralized services procurement point. The Task Force, subsequent to submitting a required report of its findings and recommendations to the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the President and Minority Leader of the Senate by March 31, 2004, then ceases to exist.

As of this writing, the Commission has not given any indication that the provision of these technical and support services to the Task Force will be in any way problematic. ■■■

FY 2004 - 2005 Final Appropriation Amounts

All Fund Group

Line Item Detail by Agency

FY 2001: *FY 2002:* *FY 2003:* **FY 2004** *% Change* **FY 2005** *% Change*
Appropriations: *Appropriations:* *Appropriations:* *2003 to 2004:* *Appropriations:* *2004 to 2005:*

Report For: Main Operating Appropriations Bill

Version: Enacted

CDR Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management Commission

GRF	145-401	Commission on Dispute Resolution/Ma	\$ 573,115	\$ 534,539	\$439,075	\$ 500,000	13.88%	\$ 500,000	0.00%
General Revenue Fund Total			\$ 573,115	\$ 534,539	\$ 439,075	\$ 500,000	13.88%	\$ 500,000	0.00%
4B6	145-601	Gifts and Grants	\$ 39,357	\$ 35,625	\$53,797	\$ 140,000	160.24%	\$ 140,000	0.00%
General Services Fund Group Total			\$ 39,357	\$ 35,625	\$ 53,797	\$ 140,000	160.24%	\$ 140,000	0.00%
3S6	145-602	Dispute Resolution: Federal	\$ 39,019	\$ 107,957	\$148,962	\$ 140,000	-6.02%	\$ 140,000	0.00%
Federal Special Revenue Fund Group Total			\$ 39,019	\$ 107,957	\$ 148,962	\$ 140,000	-6.02%	\$ 140,000	0.00%
Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management Commis			\$ 651,491	\$ 678,121	\$ 641,834	\$ 780,000	21.53%	\$ 780,000	0.00%