

LSC Greenbook

Analysis of the Enacted Budget

Office of Consumers' Counsel

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ATTACHMENT:

Budget Spreadsheet By Line Item

Office of Consumers' Counsel

- The Office of Consumers' Counsel is funded by an annual assessment on utility companies; no GRF funding
- Funding of \$11.3 million for the biennium is 12.1% above spending in the previous biennium

OVERVIEW

Agency Overview

The Office of Consumers' Counsel (OCC), established in 1976, is the statutory advocate for residential utility customers. OCC has statutory responsibility to represent the interests of 4.5 million residential customers of Ohio's investor-owned electric, natural gas, telecommunications, and water companies. OCC represents residential customers before state and federal regulatory agencies and courts, including the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as well as the Supreme Court of Ohio.

Funding for the agency is derived solely from an assessment on utilities in Ohio. The amount appropriated in the main operating budget is apportioned between those utilities based on their intrastate gross revenues. OCC receives no funding from the General Revenue Fund.

Appropriation Overview

The budget provides funding of \$5.6 million in FY 2014, an increase of \$786,262 (16.2%) over FY 2013 spending. Am. Sub. H.B. 59 provides this funding by way of a single line item, drawn from the Consumers' Counsel Operating Fund (Fund 5F50) in the General Services Fund Group. The appropriation for FY 2015 is \$5.6 million, which is equal to FY 2014 funding. As a regulatory entity, personnel costs are OCC's biggest expense, accounting for 75% of its budget.

ANALYSIS OF ENACTED BUDGET

OCC's operations are funded by a single line item appropriation out of Fund 5F50. The table below shows the funding for the Counsel for the FY 2014-FY 2015 biennium.

Funding Amounts for the Office of Consumers' Counsel				
Fund	ALI and Name		FY 2014	FY 2015
General Services Fund Group				
5F50	053601	Operating Expenses	\$5,641,093	\$5,641,093
Total Funding: Office of Consumers' Counsel			\$5,641,093	\$5,641,093

Operating Expenses (053601)

The appropriated level of funding is designed to maintain the general operations of the Consumers' Counsel and provide support for legal representation of Ohio consumers and outreach and education to Ohio consumers.

The funded objectives of OCC are consumer advocacy, which entails advocacy, representation, outreach and education activities on behalf of the residential utility consumers, as well as in-depth technical analysis of utility filings, and legislative activity that includes analysis, testimony, and amendment proposals for legislation that may impact utility consumers.

R.C. 4911.18 authorizes the annual assessment that funds operating expenses for OCC; the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) receives most of its operating funds from a similar assessment. The assessment is applied to public utility companies based upon their intrastate gross revenues. The level of the annual assessment for each public utility company will vary based upon the number of public utilities, the amount of their intrastate gross revenues, and the amount of lapsed funds that are credited back to the utility companies. Any lapsed or unspent funds that were derived from the assessment supporting OCC or PUCO are credited ratably back to the utility companies. According to OCC, the typical consumer in Ohio pays less than 2.5 cents for every \$100 in utility bill expenses for the services of OCC.

OCC.docx/dp

FY 2014 - FY 2015 Final Appropriation Amounts

All Fund Groups

Line Item Detail by Agency

			Appropriation	FY 2013 to FY 2014	Appropriation	FY 2014 to FY 2015		
			FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	% Change	FY 2015	% Change
Report For Main Operating Appropriations Bill			Version: Enacted					
OCC Office of Consumers' Counsel								
5F50	053601	Operating Expenses	\$ 5,206,729	\$ 4,854,831	\$ 5,641,093	16.20%	\$ 5,641,093	0.00%
General Services Fund Group Total			\$ 5,206,729	\$ 4,854,831	\$ 5,641,093	16.20%	\$ 5,641,093	0.00%
Office of Consumers' Counsel Total			\$ 5,206,729	\$ 4,854,831	\$ 5,641,093	16.20%	\$ 5,641,093	0.00%