

Redbook

LBO Analysis of Executive Budget Proposal

State Vision Professionals Board

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LBO Redbook

State Vision Professionals Board

Quick look...

- The State Vision Professionals Board employs a staff of four and licenses optometrists, ocularists, and opticians.
- The Board is governed by seven members appointed by the Governor.
- As a regulatory agency, the Board is fully supported by fees and receives no GRF funding.
- No proposed fee changes for the FY 2024-FY 2025 biennium.
- Executive budget recommendations total approximately \$1.2 million over the biennium.
 - The proposed budget will allow the Board to maintain current service levels and staff.
 - Approximate uses of the budget: 75% for personnel costs; 24% for supplies, maintenance, and equipment; and 1% for purchased personal services.

FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Introduced	FY 2025 Introduced
Fund 4K90 ALI 129609, Operating Expenses					
\$553,118	\$534,490	\$538,930	\$670,121	\$608,684	\$619,684
% change	-3.4%	0.8%	24.3%	-9.2%	1.8%

Agency overview

The State Vision Professionals Board (VPB) was established by H.B. 49 of the 132nd General Assembly, which combined the regulatory duties of the former State Board of Optometry (OPT) and Ohio Optical Dispensers Board (ODB). The Board began operations on January 21, 2018. The Board issues optometry and optical dispenser licenses and certifications, conducts investigations of complaints, enforces continuing education requirements, and approves continuing education programs.

The Board's governing authority consists of seven members appointed by the Governor, including four optometrists, two dispensing opticians, and one public member. Members are appointed for three-year terms and are limited to three consecutive terms on the Board. The Board meets at least four times per year. In addition to travel reimbursement, board members are paid a per diem for time spent conducting board business.

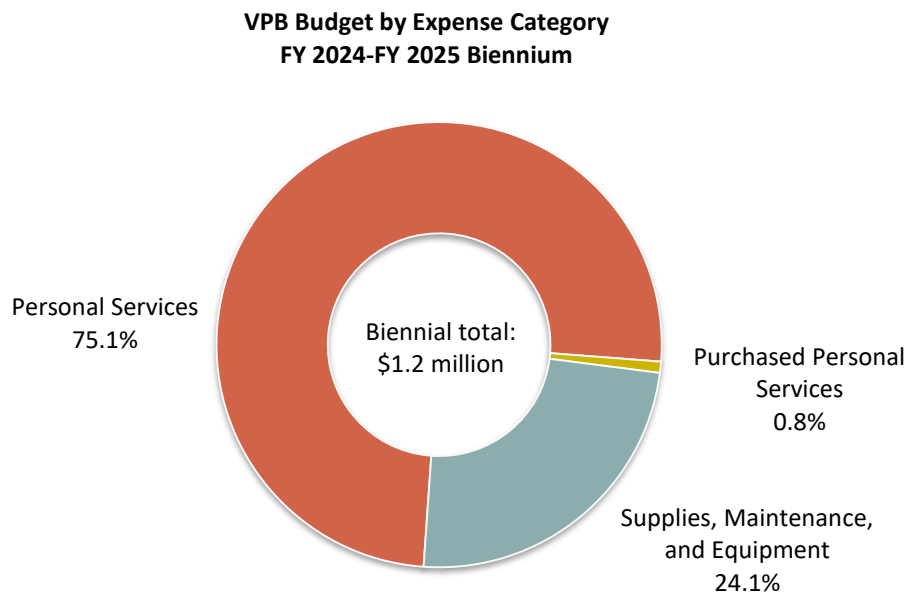
The Board's daily operations are the responsibility of an executive director appointed by the seven-member governing authority. Including the Executive Director, the Board has four full-time employees. The Board receives no General Revenue Fund (GRF) dollars; it is entirely supported by fees.

Analysis of FY 2024-FY 2025 budget proposal

The State Vision Professionals Board’s operations are funded by a single line item appropriation from the Dedicated Purpose Fund Group. Through this one line item, the Board pays all of its expenses. The proposed budget provides an appropriation of \$608,684 in FY 2024, a 9.2% decrease from FY 2023 estimated expenditures, and \$619,684 in FY 2025, a 1.8% increase over FY 2024.

Executive recommendations by expense category

As a regulatory agency, personal services is the Board’s largest expense category. As shown in the chart below, 75.1% of the proposed budget for the FY 2024-FY 2025 biennium is for personal services; 24.1% for supplies, maintenance, and equipment; and 0.8% for purchased personal services.



Operating revenues and expenses

The Board issues and renews optometry and optical dispenser licenses, as well as other related registrations and certifications. The renewal fee is waived for optometrists on active duty in the military; 13 optometrists were on active duty in FY 2022. Licenses are currently issued annually by the Board. Table 1 below shows the current fee amount for each type of license. There are additional fees for late submission and license reinstatement. H.B. 509 of the 134th General Assembly makes numerous changes to the Board’s licenses and fees. These changes are described in more detail below.

Table 1. Current License Fees by Type	
License Type	Fee
Optometrists	
Optometrist License*	\$130
Therapeutic Pharmaceutical Agents Certificate*	\$45
Optical Dispensers and Ocularists	
Optician and Ocularist Initial License	\$50
License Renewal	\$100
Registered Apprentice*	\$20

*Initial and renewal fees are the same.

H.B. 509 of the 134th General Assembly

H.B. 509 of the 134th General Assembly makes a number of changes impacting the Board. The bill is effective on April 6, 2023. Some of the provisions include:

- Requiring licenses to practice optometry and dispensing optician licenses to be renewed biennially rather than annually as required under current law and extending the duration of licenses issued or renewed on or after the bill's effective date to (1) December 31, 2024 for optometrists or (2) December 31, 2025 for opticians.
- Eliminating the separate topical ocular pharmaceutical agents certificate and therapeutic pharmaceutical agents certificate that are issued with a certificate of licensure to practice optometry, and specifying that a licensed optometrist has prescribing authority without holding a separate certificate.
- Eliminating contact lens dispensing optician licenses and the ocularist license (an individual holding a contact lens dispensing optician license or an ocularist license is allowed to maintain and renew the license until December 31, 2024, and the Board may also issue these initial licenses until that date).

In conjunction with the bill's renewal cycle changes and certificate eliminations, the bill establishes a \$350 fee for issuance and renewal of a biennial optometrist license and establishes a \$195 fee for issuance and renewal of a biennial dispensing optician license. The bill also eliminates the fee for a dispensing optician apprentice to renew the apprentice's registration.

Revenues and expenditures

Fee revenues collected by the Board are deposited into the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K90). Many occupational licensing and regulatory boards and commissions, including the Board, use Fund 4K90 as an operating account into which receipts are deposited and from which expenses are paid. Each licensing board or commission is generally expected to be self-sufficient, i.e., generating enough revenues to cover its expenses.

Table 2 below shows the Board's annual revenues and expenditures from FY 2019 through FY 2022 as well as the net of revenues less expenditures.

Table 2. Revenues and Expenditures, FY 2019-FY 2022

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Revenue	\$786,806	\$770,347	\$739,715	\$768,375
Expenses	\$487,671	\$553,118	\$534,490	\$538,930
Net	\$299,135	\$217,229	\$205,225	\$229,445

Licensure

To carry out its regulatory responsibility, the Board establishes standards of practice and issues optometry and optical dispenser licenses, certifications, and registrations. The Board also renews diagnostic optometry certifications.¹ Table 3 below shows the number of active licenses between FY 2020 to FY 2022.

Table 3. Active Licenses by Type, FY 2020-FY 2022

License Type	FY 2020	FY 2021	Percent Change	FY 2022	Percent Change
Therapeutic Optometrist	2,334	2,354	0.9%	2,333	-0.9%
Diagnostic Optometrist	10	10	0.0%	7	-30.0%
Optometrist Only	12	12	0.0%	11	-8.3%
Military	14	14	0.0%	13	-7.1%
Optician	2,951	3,136	6.3%	2,877	-8.3%
Ocularist	8	8	0.0%	7	-12.5%
Apprentice Registration*	1,756	1,221	-30.5%	1,279	4.8%
Total	7,085	6,755	-4.7%	6,527	-3.4%

*Includes multiple registrations. Numbers from Board.

The Board utilizes the online eLicensing system, which is administered through the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). Currently, the boards are assessed a charge for eLicensing operational costs. This charge is deposited into the Professionals Licensing System Fund (Fund 5JQ0), administered by DAS and expended through line item 100658, Professionals Licensing System. In the proposed budget, funding for eLicensing will instead come from new Fund 4K90 line item 100673, Professionals Licensing System, which will also be under DAS. Thus, eLicensing operational costs will not be reflected directly in the board budgets, but will instead

¹ This type of certification is no longer available to optometrists licensed after 1992. An optometrist who received a diagnostic certification prior to 1992 may administer topical ocular pharmaceutical agents for evaluation purposes only. Optometrists licensed prior to 1992, with or without diagnostic certification, may continue to practice and renew the license and certification they currently hold until they retire or stop practicing.

be directly billed out of this new line item. However, a board may still be directly assessed a charge for any unanticipated licensing upgrades or enhancements.

Investigations and enforcement

The Board's regulatory obligations also include investigating complaints about issues of incompetent, unethical, and impaired practitioners. According to the Board, in 2022, the Board investigated 54 formal complaints, all of which were closed. The Board also conducts unannounced onsite inspections to check for compliance with the Board's laws and rules.

Continuing education

For license renewal, the Board requires that optometrists currently complete 25 continuing education hours; ten of those hours must be related to pharmacology. Ocularists are required to complete four hours of continuing education. Of this amount, one hour must cover communicable diseases. The requirements for opticians are as follows: six hours for spectacle dispensers, 12 hours for spectacle contact lens dispensers, and eight hours for contact lens dispensers. Continuing education programs must be approved by the Board. As mentioned above, H.B. 509 provides for a biennial renewal cycle instead of an annual cycle and also eliminates ocularist and contact lens dispensing optician licensure. As such, the bill doubles the continuing education hours for both optometrists and spectacle dispensing opticians to be completed over the two-year cycle.