

# **Greenbook**

## **LBO Analysis of Enacted Budget**

### **Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel**

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# LBO Greenbook

## Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

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### Quick look...

- Since the agency's inception in 1976, the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) has served as the advocate for Ohio's residential consumers before regulatory authorities.
- OCC is a self-supporting agency with no GRF appropriation. Funding for the agency's one appropriation line item is derived through assessments to utilities and deposited into a Dedicated Purpose Fund.
- OCC has 37 funded employee positions, in addition to the nine-member, bipartisan governing board.

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
<b>Fund 5F50 ALI 053601, Operating Expenses</b>					
\$5,387,800	\$5,562,059	\$6,087,540	\$6,151,017	\$6,720,220	\$6,972,030
% change	3.2%	9.4%	1.0%	9.3%	3.7%

### Agency overview

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) is the statewide legal representative for Ohio's residential consumers in matters related to their investor-owned electric, natural gas, telephone, and water services. The agency advocates for consumers in proceedings before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), federal regulatory agencies, appellate courts, and the Ohio General Assembly. Additionally, the agency monitors public utilities' compliance with regulatory standards for consumer protection. OCC also educates consumers about utility issues that affect their bills and quality of service.

The Consumers' Counsel is selected by a nine-member, bipartisan governing board representing family farmers, organized labor, and residential consumers. Each governing board member is appointed by the Ohio Attorney General to serve a three-year term.

### Analysis of FY 2026-FY 2027 budget

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Council (OCC) operating costs are funded by a single Dedicated Purpose Fund (DPF) appropriation item 053601, Operating Expenses. The FY 2026 appropriation amount, which is just over \$6.7 million, is \$569,203 (9.2%) greater than actual spending during FY 2025. The FY 2027 appropriation amount is \$251,810 (3.7%) more than the FY 2026 amount. The enacted budget exempts wireless service providers and resellers from the assessment that funds OCC. The exemption applies to facilities-based providers, mobile virtual network operators, other licensed operators, and resellers that offer wireless service under their own name using another provider's network.

OCC is funded through an assessment on the intrastate gross receipts of entities regulated by PUCO. Section 4911.18 of the Revised Code authorizes the annual assessment for OCC, and PUCO receives most of its operating funds from a similar assessment. 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. The total amount of the assessments each year equals the amount of the appropriation in this line item for that year. According to OCC, the typical consumer in Ohio pays less than 3¢ for every \$100 in utility bill expenses for the services of OCC; this cost is equivalent to less than a dollar a year for a typical utility customer.