
Agency Summary

COMMISSION ON THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

Agency Mission

To promote greater accessibility to services for the deaf and hard of hearing by developing awareness, communication access, and training programs to agencies, organizations, and businesses. To conduct an ongoing needs assessment to identify gaps and recommend changes to improve the quality of living for the deaf and hard of hearing populations in Rhode Island. To provide statewide centralized sign language interpreter referral services, including emergency referrals. To advocate for the enactment of legislation that will promote accessibility of services. To develop a statewide coordinating council to implement the comprehensive statewide strategic plan for children who are deaf or have hearing loss. To oversee state agency compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act regulations related to deaf and hard of hearing access issues through monitoring, training, and advocating. To work with federal, state, and local organizations and agencies to improve the quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing persons in Rhode Island. To coordinate sign language and equipment interpreter services between agencies and organizations with the goal of centralizing services.

Agency Description

The Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RICDHH) is a service-providing, coordinating, and advocating entity committed to promoting an environment in which more than 200,000 deaf and hard citizens in Rhode Island are afforded equal opportunity in all aspects of their lives. The RICDHH is independent of any existing agency or department within the state according to R.I. General Laws 23-1.8-2. The legislative mandates of the commission include engagement in advocacy to promote accessibility of services as well as providing general training and technical assistance on various topics such as technology, accommodations, culture, legal, education, all related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.

Statutory History

The Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was established by Law (1977-Senate Bill 882) signed by Governor J. Joseph Garrahy on May 9, 1978 after the original bill was introduced in the 1977 Legislative session. The Commission is to address the needs and concerns of Rhode Island's Deaf and Hard of Hearing population. The name of the Commission was the Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired with 21 Commissioners. In 1992, the bill, House Bill 8245, was introduced on February 12, 1992 to restructure the Commission, down from 21 Commissioners to 9 Commissioners and changed from Hearing Impaired to Hard of Hearing. This bill was signed into law by Governor Bruce Sundlun on July 13, 1992. This is now known as R.I. General Laws § 23-1. Emergency and Public Communication Access Program (EPCAP) is established by Article 17 of HB 5127 signed by Governor Lincoln Chafee on July 3, 2013. It is now known as RIGL § 39-1-42(d) and § 23-1.8-4.

Budget

Commission On The Deaf & Hard Of Hearing

	2018 Actuals	2019 Actuals	2020 Enacted Budget	2020 Revised Budget	2021 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	500,346	521,004	663,338	656,326	600,270
Total Expenditures	500,346	521,004	663,338	656,326	600,270
Expenditures by Object					
Salary And Benefits	336,579	380,359	473,048	435,515	485,663
Contract Professional Services	88,279	96,098	99,608	121,606	30,000
Operating Supplies And Expenses	74,977	44,548	57,682	66,205	51,607
Subtotal: Operating	499,835	521,004	630,338	623,326	567,270
Capital Purchases And Equipment	511	0	33,000	33,000	33,000
Subtotal: Other	511	0	33,000	33,000	33,000
Total Expenditures	500,346	521,004	663,338	656,326	600,270
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
General Revenue	428,285	447,101	533,338	524,519	537,816
Restricted Receipts	72,061	73,904	130,000	131,807	62,454
Total Expenditures	500,346	521,004	663,338	656,326	600,270
FTE Authorization	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0

Performance Measures

Commission On The Deaf & Hard Of Hearing

Timeliness of Fulfilled Interpreter Requests

One of the Commission's legislative mandates (RIGL 23-1.8-2(6)) is to administer the interpreter referral service. The Statewide Interpreter Referral Service locates and secures freelance interpreters for assignments requested by the paying parties (such as hospitals, civil and criminal courts, etc.) to ensure communication access is being provided. The figures below represent the percentage of interpreter requests received more than three business days in advance that are filled.[Notes: The 2019 target has been revised. Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	92.00%	95.00%	92.00%	85.00%	85.00%
Actual	80.00%	84.00%	69.00%	0.00%	

Timeliness of Information Request Response

Individuals with hearing loss, parents, businesses, and other members of the general public regularly contact the office seeking resources and information. One of the Commission's legislative mandates (RIGL 23-1.8-2(4)) is to promote public awareness and to provide information and referral on the subject of deafness and hearing loss. The Commission aims to be Rhode Island's one-stop resource center for deafness and hearing loss-related inquiries. The figures below represent the percentage of information requests that receive a response within seven business days. [Note: Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Actual	97.00%	95.00%	95.00%	0.00%	

Personnel

Agency: Commission On The Deaf & Hard Of Hearing

Central Management

		FY 2020		FY 2021	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Unclassified					
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	00822A	1.0	56,805	1.0	57,088
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS	00830A	1.0	72,002	1.0	75,326
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	00832A	1.0	57,395	1.0	84,543
PROGRAM MANAGER	00828A	1.0	79,222	1.0	79,616
Subtotal Unclassified		4.0	265,424	4.0	296,573
Subtotal		4.0	265,424	4.0	296,573
Total Salaries			265,424		296,573
Benefits					
FICA			20,305		22,687
Health Benefits			47,206		50,708
Payroll Accrual			1,547		1,733
Retiree Health			17,651		17,408
Retirement			72,898		84,839
Subtotal			159,607		177,375
Total Salaries and Benefits		4.0	425,031	4.0	473,948
Cost Per FTE Position			106,258		118,487
Statewide Benefit Assessment			10,484		11,715
Payroll Costs		4.0	435,515	4.0	485,663
Purchased Services					
Clerical and Temporary Services			65,723		30,000
Other Contracts			55,883		0
Subtotal			121,606		30,000
Total Personnel		4.0	557,121	4.0	515,663
Distribution by Source of Funds					
General Revenue		4.0	481,972	4.0	503,953
Restricted Receipts		0.0	75,149	0.0	11,710
Total All Funds		4.0	557,121	4.0	515,663