

The Agency

Governor's Commission on Disabilities

Agency Operations

The commission advocates for the concerns of people with disabilities, expands economic opportunities for businesses owned by or employing people with disabilities, increases the general awareness of the rights and concerns of individuals with disabilities and their families, and ensures that people with disabilities have access to their government.

The commission is responsible for coordinating compliance by state agencies with federal and state disability rights laws. It also approves or modifies state and local government agency's Open Meeting Accessibility for persons with disabilities transition plans. The commission assists local boards of canvassers to ensure all polling places are accessible and approves or rejects requests to waive the state building code's standards for accessibility at facilities to be leased by state agencies. The agency investigates disability discrimination complaints involving physical barriers at public or private facilities and ordering corrective action. Small disadvantaged businesses owned and controlled by persons with disabilities or where sixty percent (60%) of the employees are persons with disabilities, or non-profit rehabilitation facilities with state funded and state-directed public construction contracts and state contracts for goods and services are assisted. Recommendations are made for improvements for enhancing enforcement of disability parking laws.

The Commission consists of 24 gubernatorial appointed Commissioners, a staff of 6.6 persons, several college fellows and many volunteers. The Commission's volunteers produce a weekly cable TV program **ABLE TOO...**, which airs Sunday afternoons at 2:30 and Friday evenings at 8:00 on RI's Interconnect Channel C.

The Commission's Mary Brennan Fellowship Program for college students with disabilities provides career experiences for students including editing the "Legislative Letter," (a weekly newsletter on legislation affecting people with disabilities), developing and updating the Commission's website: www.disabilities.ri.gov, and providing information regarding rights and services.

Agency Objectives

The Commission's objective is to ensure that all people with disabilities are afforded the opportunities to exercise all the rights and responsibilities accorded to citizens of this State and each person with a disability is able to reach his/her maximum potential in independence, human development, productivity and self-sufficiency.

Statutory History

The Commission's responsibilities are defined in RI General Laws: 42-51; 42-87; 37-8-15 & 15.1; 42-46-13(f); 23-6-22; 27-2.2; 30-15-6; 28-5.1-9; 31-28-7.3; 42-102-2(e) and 17-9.1-31, Article I § 2, RI Constitution and federal laws: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability (29 USC 794); the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USC 12101 et. seq.); and Section 261 of the Help America Vote Act, Election Assistance to Individuals with Disabilities (42 USC 15461).

The Budget

Governor's Commission on Disabilities

	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Revised	FY 2007 Recommended
Expenditures By Object				
Personnel	537,903	566,575	665,248	684,569
Other State Operations	30,302	130,695	40,795	44,663
Aid To Local Units Of Government	-	-	100,000	28,291
Assistance, Grants and Benefits	-	(356)	55,049	66,111
Subtotal: Operating Expenditures	\$568,205	\$696,914	\$861,092	\$823,634
Capital Improvements	17,000	9,405	200,000	200,000
Capital Debt Service	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	\$585,205	\$706,319	\$1,061,092	\$1,023,634
Expenditures By Funds				
General Revenue	538,148	535,199	548,321	602,509
Federal Funds	17,568	39,209	226,439	195,681
Restricted Receipts	12,489	22,634	86,332	25,444
Other	17,000	109,277	200,000	200,000
Total Expenditures	\$585,205	\$706,319	\$1,061,092	\$1,023,634
FTE Authorization	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.3
Agency Measures				
Minorities as a Percentage of the Workforce	45.4%	35.1%	35.1%	35.1%
Females as a Percentage of the Workforce	24.2%	42.9%	42.9%	42.9%
Persons with Disabilities as a Percentage of the Workforce	68.7%	59.7%	59.7%	59.7%
Program Measures				
Percentage of State Legislation Affecting Persons with Disabilities that is Favorably Disposed	39.0%	55.8%	50.0%	50.0%
Amount of Contracts Awarded to Disability Business Enterprises and Rehabilitation Facilities	NA	\$505,000	\$555,500	\$611,050