

**VOLUME II: HEALTH AND HUMAN  
SERVICES**

**COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND  
HARD OF HEARING**

---

## 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

##### Mission

The Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RICDHH) strives to promote accessibility and improve the quality of life for the deaf and hard of hearing community. The Commission focuses on raising awareness and providing communication access through training and advocacy for agencies, organizations, and businesses. RICDHH is also tasked with conducting needs assessments to identify service gaps and recommending strategies for enhancing service delivery. The Commission also advocates for legislative changes that improve accessibility and quality of life for Rhode Islanders who are deaf or hard of hearing, while ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

##### Key Responsibilities

- Centralized Services: Provides statewide sign language interpreter services, including emergency referrals.
- Legislative Advocacy: Supports the enactment of laws that enhance access and equality for the deaf and hard of hearing community.
- Coordination and Training: Leads initiatives such as the statewide strategic plan for children with hearing loss and offers training programs to enhance communication access across various sectors.
- Compliance Oversight: Monitors state agency compliance with ADA regulations and advocates for improved services.

#### 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

	2023 Actuals	2024 Actuals	2025 Enacted Budget	2025 Revised Budget	2026 Recommended
<b>Expenditures by Program</b>					
Central Management	874,944	800,168	914,184	904,509	929,154
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>874,944</b>	<b>800,168</b>	<b>914,184</b>	<b>904,509</b>	<b>929,154</b>
<b>Expenditures by Object</b>					
Salary and Benefits	403,967	541,389	564,420	593,812	617,983
Contract Professional Services	323,512	146,874	201,200	201,200	202,200
Operating Supplies and Expenses	147,466	111,906	148,564	109,497	108,971
<b>Subtotal: Operating</b>	<b>874,944</b>	<b>800,168</b>	<b>914,184</b>	<b>904,509</b>	<b>929,154</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>874,944</b>	<b>800,168</b>	<b>914,184</b>	<b>904,509</b>	<b>929,154</b>
<b>Expenditures by Source of Funds</b>					
General Revenue	738,910	745,741	782,651	762,680	786,233
Restricted Receipts	136,034	54,428	131,533	141,829	142,921
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>874,944</b>	<b>800,168</b>	<b>914,184</b>	<b>904,509</b>	<b>929,154</b>
<b>FTE Authorization</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>

# Personnel Agency Summary

## Commission on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

	FY 2025		FY 2026	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Unclassified	4.0	347,119	4.0	361,002
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>347,119</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>361,002</b>
<b>Total Salaries</b>		<b>347,119</b>		<b>361,002</b>
<b>Benefits</b>				
Contract Stipends		497		497
FICA		26,554		27,618
Health Benefits		83,423		89,125
Payroll Accrual		2,032		2,104
Retiree Health		13,677		11,732
Retirement		110,442		115,436
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>236,625</b>		<b>246,512</b>
<b>Total Salaries and Benefits</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>583,744</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>607,514</b>
<b>Cost Per FTE Position</b>		<b>145,936</b>		<b>151,879</b>
Statewide Benefit Assessment		10,068		10,469
<b>Payroll Costs</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>593,812</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>617,983</b>
<b>Purchased Services</b>				
Clerical and Temporary Services		112,952		112,952
Other Contracts		88,248		89,248
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>201,200</b>		<b>202,200</b>
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>795,012</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>820,183</b>
<b>Distribution by Source of Funds</b>				
General Revenue	4.0	659,467	4.0	683,315
Restricted Receipts	0.0	135,545	0.0	136,868
<b>Total All Funds</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>795,012</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>820,183</b>

# Personnel

## Commission on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

### Central Management

		FY 2025		FY 2026	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
<b>Unclassified</b>					
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	0822 A	1.0	66,165	1.0	68,811
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS	0830 A	1.0	90,691	1.0	94,319
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	0832 A	1.0	97,986	1.0	101,905
PROGRAM MANAGER	0828 A	1.0	92,277	1.0	95,967
<b>Subtotal Unclassified</b>		<b>4.0</b>	<b>347,119</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>361,002</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>4.0</b>	<b>347,119</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>361,002</b>
<b>Total Salaries</b>			<b>347,119</b>		<b>361,002</b>
<b>Benefits</b>					
Contract Stipends			497		497
FICA			26,554		27,618
Health Benefits			83,423		89,125
Payroll Accrual			2,032		2,104
Retiree Health			13,677		11,732
Retirement			110,442		115,436
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>236,625</b>		<b>246,512</b>
<b>Total Salaries and Benefits</b>		<b>4.0</b>	<b>583,744</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>607,514</b>
<b>Cost Per FTE Position</b>			<b>145,936</b>		<b>151,879</b>
Statewide Benefit Assessment			10,068		10,469
<b>Payroll Costs</b>		<b>4.0</b>	<b>593,812</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>617,983</b>
<b>Purchased Services</b>					
Clerical and Temporary Services			112,952		112,952
Other Contracts			88,248		89,248
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>201,200</b>		<b>202,200</b>
<b>Total Personnel</b>		<b>4.0</b>	<b>795,012</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>820,183</b>
<b>Distribution by Source of Funds</b>					
General Revenue		4.0	659,467	4.0	683,315
Restricted Receipts		0.0	135,545	0.0	136,868
<b>Total All Funds</b>		<b>4.0</b>	<b>795,012</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>820,183</b>

---

## Performance Measures

---

### Commission on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

---

#### Central Management

---

##### 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 percent of interpreter requests received that were partially or fully filled. [Note: Measure language was updated in FY 2025 to reflect reporting methodology.]

	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>Target</b>	95%	80%	80%	80%	85%
<b>Actual</b>	83.7%	85.9%	81.6%	--	--

---

##### 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 percent of information requests that receive a response within seven business days.

	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>Target</b>	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
<b>Actual</b>	94%	95%	95%	--	--

---