

**VOLUME II: HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES**

**GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON
DISABILITIES**

Agency Summary

Governor's Commission on Disabilities

Agency Mission

The Commission's mission is to ensure "that people with disabilities are afforded the opportunities to exercise all the rights and responsibilities accorded to citizens of this state". {RIGL 42-51-6(1)} The Commission's goals are: 1) The adoption of state government policies that will ensure every person with a disability: a) Is able to work; b) Is able to live on her / his own; with the right services, at the right time, and in the right place; and c) Is involved in her / his neighborhood and community. 2) That every person with a disability is able to exercise all the rights and responsibilities accorded to citizens of this state. 3) That every working age person with disability has the opportunity to work with supports and / or accommodations if needed. 4) That entrepreneurship opportunities and supports are available for working age persons with disabilities. The Commission's vision for Rhode Island is that every Rhode Islander with a disability is able to accomplish their maximum potential in independence, human development, productivity and economic self-sufficiency.

Agency Description

The Commission has 18 volunteer Commissioners, appointed by the Governor; numerous volunteers who: serve on several committees; mediate disability discrimination complaints; monitor polling place accessibility on Election Day; and mentor young adults in the Mary Brennan Fellowships. Much of the Commission's work is conducted by volunteers serving on: working with state agencies and municipalities to coordinate compliance with state and federal disability rights law, for removing access barriers in state owned buildings, schools, colleges, beaches, and parks; the Disability Business Enterprise Committee certifying small businesses owned by person(s) with a disability to receive preferential points when bidding on state contracts for goods and services; the Employment Committee overseeing the ADA employment outreach and training and promoting work and work incentives; the Legislation Committee, conducting forums to understand the concerns of people with disabilities and their families, drafting bills that will improve the lives of people with disabilities; and issuing legislative impact statements on pending legislation to General Assembly and the Governor; the Public Awareness Committee developing and implementing a broad public awareness campaign.

The Commission's five (5) staff are responsible for (1) Promoting on behalf of the people with disabilities and assuring, on behalf of the state, that people with disabilities are afforded the opportunities to exercise all of the rights and responsibilities accorded to citizens of this state; (2) Arousing community interest in the concerns of people with disabilities through the utilization of whatever community and state resources the commission may deem necessary to accomplish the maximum in independent living and human development; (3) Coordinating compliance with federal and state laws protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities by state agencies; (4) Providing technical assistance to public and private agencies, businesses, and citizens in complying with federal and state laws protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities; (5) Survey all polling places prior to and on every election day; (6) Administering the Mary Brennan fellowship program for students and young adults with disabilities; (7) Managing the Livable Home Modification grant program for home modification and accessibility enhancements to construct, retrofit, and/or renovate residences to allow individuals with significant disabilities to remain in community settings; and (8) Administer the federal Independent Living Services State Grant.

Statutory History

The Commission's responsibilities are defined in RI General Laws: 42-51; 42-87; 37-8-15 & 15.1; 42-46-5(b); 42-46-13(f); 37-2.2; 30-15-6; 28-5.1-9; 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); Section 705(e) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. § 796c); 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).

Budget

Governor's Commission on Disabilities

	2024 Actuals	2025 Actuals	2026 Enacted Budget	2026 Revised Budget	2027 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	1,638,906	1,922,581	1,806,042	2,707,966	1,829,581
Total Expenditures	1,638,906	1,922,581	1,806,042	2,707,966	1,829,581
Expenditures by Object					
Salary and Benefits	509,900	598,370	662,720	640,042	674,314
Contract Professional Services	58,162	98,260	154,500	168,228	168,228
Operating Supplies and Expenses	78,943	79,915	101,531	91,840	99,748
Assistance and Grants	990,874	1,145,892	886,379	1,806,944	886,379
Subtotal: Operating	1,637,880	1,922,437	1,805,130	2,707,054	1,828,669
Capital Purchases and Equipment	1,026	144	912	912	912
Subtotal: Other	1,026	144	912	912	912
Total Expenditures	1,638,906	1,922,581	1,806,042	2,707,966	1,829,581
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
General Revenue	1,298,969	1,588,367	1,386,032	2,300,684	1,422,299
Federal Funds	329,086	331,443	340,067	340,092	340,092
Restricted Receipts	10,852	2,771	79,943	67,190	67,190
Total Expenditures	1,638,906	1,922,581	1,806,042	2,707,966	1,829,581
FTE Authorization	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0

Personnel Agency Summary

Governor's Commission on Disabilities

	FY 2026		FY 2027	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified	1.0	97,830	1.0	104,711
Unclassified	4.0	287,892	4.0	305,092
Subtotal	5.0	385,722	5.0	409,803
Total Salaries		385,722		409,803
Benefits				
FICA		29,508		31,350
Health Benefits		75,761		81,101
Payroll Accrual		2,248		2,363
Retiree Health		12,535		12,621
Retirement		123,082		124,783
Subtotal		243,134		252,218
Total Salaries and Benefits	5.0	628,856	5.0	662,021
Cost Per FTE Position		125,771		132,404
Statewide Benefit Assessment		11,186		12,293
Payroll Costs	5.0	640,042	5.0	674,314
Purchased Services				
Clerical and Temporary Services		100,870		100,870
Design and Engineering Services		22,915		22,915
Management & Consultant Services		24,565		24,565
Other Contracts		19,878		19,878
Subtotal		168,228		168,228
Total Personnel	5.0	808,270	5.0	842,542
Distribution by Source of Funds				
General Revenue	5.0	777,225	5.0	811,497
Restricted Receipts	0.0	31,045	0.0	31,045
Total All Funds	5.0	808,270	5.0	842,542

Personnel

Governor's Commission on Disabilities

Central Management

		FY 2026		FY 2027	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified					
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES	0134 A	1.0	97,830	1.0	104,711
Subtotal Classified		1.0	97,830	1.0	104,711
Unclassified					
ASSISTANT ADA COORDINATOR	0824 A	2.0	138,338	2.0	148,053
PROGRAM MANAGER	0828 A	1.0	79,944	1.0	85,341
SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE	0821 A	1.0	69,610	1.0	71,698
Subtotal Unclassified		4.0	287,892	4.0	305,092
Subtotal		5.0	385,722	5.0	409,803
Longevity Pay			3,315		3,414
Regular Wages			382,407		406,389
Total Salaries			385,722		409,803
Benefits					
FICA			29,508		31,350
Health Benefits			75,761		81,101
Payroll Accrual			2,248		2,363
Retiree Health			12,535		12,621
Retirement			123,082		124,783
Subtotal			243,134		252,218
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Performance Measures

Governor's Commission on Disabilities

Central Management

Promoting Barrier Free Elections

The Commission seeks to ensure voters with disabilities are able to cast votes independently, by secret ballot, and at the same polling location as their neighbors. The figures below represent the percent of polling places barrier-free on Election Day. Measure includes data from special elections that take place in Rhode Island. [Note: Targets or actuals are not available in years when statewide elections are not held.]

	<i>Frequency: Annual</i>		<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>		
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Target	100%	90%	95%	--	95%
Actual	89%	89%	90%	--	--

Advocating on Behalf of People with Disabilities

The Commission's goal is to ensure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to exercise all rights and responsibilities accorded to Rhode Island citizens and are able to reach their maximum potential. The Commission's legislative committee reviews bills significant to the rights of individuals with disabilities and drafts policy statements expressing the Commission's viewpoint. The Commission also provides comments on new regulations filed. The figures below represent the number of written policy statements and comments written by the Commission on bills and regulations impacting people with disabilities. [Note: This performance measure was established in FY 2025, and therefore some historical targets and actuals are not available.]

	<i>Frequency: Annual</i>		<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>		
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Target	--	--	40	50	60
Actual	--	24	48	--	--

Technical Assistance Provided on the Americans with Disabilities Act

The Commission is responsible for providing technical assistance to public and private agencies, businesses, and citizens in complying with federal and state laws protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act. This technical assistance is provided through phone calls, emails, and in-person meetings. The figures below represent the number of contacts who have received technical assistance from the Commission related to the Americans with Disabilities Act. [Note: This performance measure was established in FY 2025, and therefore some historical targets and actuals are not available.]

	<i>Frequency: Annual</i>		<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>		
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Target	--	--	1,761	1,800	2,500
Actual	--	--	2,312	--	--

Promoting Safe and Livable Homes

The Commission seeks to assist people with significant disabilities by helping with the cost of specific home modification needs to allow them to stay in their homes and apartments, instead of being diverted to nursing homes. The figures below represent the number of beneficiaries who received a Livable Homes grant. [Note: This performance measure was established in FY 2023, and therefore a historical target is not available. Measure language has been adjusted to reflect collected data.]

	<i>Frequency: Annual</i>		<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>		
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Target	--	200	200	260	260
Actual	210	260	259	--	--