

The Agency

Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Agency Operations

The Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing advocates and coordinates the promotion of an environment in which deaf and hard of hearing persons in Rhode Island are afforded equal opportunity in all aspects of their lives. The commission develops policy and recommends appropriate programs and legislation to enhance cooperation and coordination among agencies and organizations now serving, or having the potential to serve, the deaf and hard of hearing. The commission also provides direct services in its operation of the Sign Language Interpreter Referral Service, and general information and referrals. Beginning in FY 2006, it will also administer an Emergency Interpreter Referral Service for hours when the commission is closed. The commission is composed of 13 members, of whom nine are deaf and hard of hearing consumers.

Agency Objectives

To promote greater accessibility to services for the deaf and hard of hearing by developing awareness programs.

To conduct an ongoing needs assessment to identify and prioritize the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing populations in Rhode Island.

To provide 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, teletypewriters, and interpreters.

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.

Statutory History

R.I.G.L. 23-1.8 includes provisions relating to the Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The current commission results from the 1992 restructure of the former Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, originally established in 1977.

The Budget

Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Revised	FY 2007 Recommended
Expenditures By Object				
Personnel	210,819	231,881	331,969	353,841
Other State Operations	25,796	30,439	20,115	19,888
Aid To Local Units Of Government	-	-	-	-
Assistance, Grants and Benefits	-	-	-	-
Subtotal: Operating Expenditures	\$236,615	\$262,320	\$352,084	\$373,729
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-
Capital Debt Service	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	\$236,615	\$262,320	\$352,084	\$373,729
Expenditures By Funds				
General Revenue	236,615	262,320	337,084	358,729
Federal Funds	-	-	15,000	15,000
Total Expenditures	\$236,615	\$262,320	\$352,084	\$373,729
FTE Authorization	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.8
Agency Measures				
Minorities as a Percentage of the Workforce	-	-	-	-
Females as a Percentage of the Workforce	50.0%	50.0%	33.0%	33.0%
Persons with Disabilities as a Percentage of the Workforce	67.0%	67.0%	67.0%	67.0%
Program Measures				
Percentage of Interpreter Requests Filled with at Least 72 Hours Notice	93.0%	95.0%	90.0%	90.0%
Percentage of Information Requests Responded to with Relevant Information or Referral within One Week	82.0%	91.0%	95.0%	95.0%
Percentage of Legislation Affecting Deaf and Hard of Hearing Citizens Favorably Disposed	67.0%	67.0%	75.0%	75.0%