

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

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

	2020 Actuals	2021 Actuals	2022 Enacted Budget	2022 Revised Budget	2023 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	674,000	755,073	818,664	780,085	816,876
Total Expenditures	674,000	755,073	818,664	780,085	816,876
Expenditures by Object					
Salary And Benefits	454,476	508,984	514,231	526,050	524,300
Contract Professional Services	144,008	159,149	182,806	177,665	197,864
Operating Supplies And Expenses	70,278	86,940	88,627	76,370	94,712
Subtotal: Operating	668,763	755,073	785,664	780,085	816,876
Capital Purchases And Equipment	5,238	0	33,000	0	0
Subtotal: Other	5,238	0	33,000	0	0
Total Expenditures	674,000	755,073	818,664	780,085	816,876
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
General Revenue	496,574	575,032	655,862	699,765	716,876
Federal Funds	46,056	(0)	0	0	0
Restricted Receipts	131,369	180,041	162,802	80,320	100,000
Total Expenditures	674,000	755,073	818,664	780,085	816,876
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 2019/2020 target has been revised. Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target	95.00%	85.00%	87.50%	95.00%	95.00%
Actual	95.00%	82.22%	94.00%	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>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Actual	95.00%	97.86%	94.00%	0.00%	

Personnel

Agency: Commission on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Central Management

	FY 2022		FY 2023		
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	
Unclassified					
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	00822A	1.0	59,977	1.0	61,476
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS	00830A	1.0	82,208	1.0	84,263
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	00832A	1.0	88,821	1.0	91,041
PROGRAM MANAGER	00828A	1.0	83,645	1.0	85,736
Subtotal Unclassified		4.0	314,651	4.0	322,516
Subtotal		4.0	314,651	4.0	322,516
Overtime			131		0
FY 2021 Retro COLA Payment			7,662		0
Total Salaries			322,444		322,516
Benefits					
FICA			24,640		24,673
Health Benefits			53,640		56,146
Payroll Accrual			1,837		0
Retiree Health			17,034		14,449
Retirement			93,681		93,777
Subtotal			190,832		189,045
Total Salaries and Benefits		4.0	513,276	4.0	511,561
Cost Per FTE Position			128,319		127,890
Statewide Benefit Assessment			12,774		12,739
Payroll Costs		4.0	526,050	4.0	524,300
Purchased Services					
Clerical and Temporary Services			112,952		112,952
Other Contracts			64,713		84,912
Subtotal			177,665		197,864
Total Personnel		4.0	703,715	4.0	722,164
Distribution by Source of Funds					
General Revenue		4.0	623,395	4.0	622,164
Restricted Receipts		0.0	80,320	0.0	100,000
Total All Funds		4.0	703,715	4.0	722,164