

Priority: Accountability
Program Offer Type: Existing Operating
Related Programs:

Lead Agency: Tax Supervising &
Program Contact: Tom Linhares

Program Characteristics:

Executive Summary

The Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission (TSCC) reviews the budget and tax levying authority of all Multnomah County taxing districts. The Commission holds hearings on the largest taxing district's budget and must certify the budgets of all districts under its jurisdiction prior to the governing body adopting the budget.

Program Description

There are five commissioners, appointed by the Governor. Administrative employees, currently 2.6 FTE are appointed by the Commission.

The Commission serves citizens by providing an extensive review of the budgets of the 37 local governments within its jurisdiction. The reviews are both procedural and substantive in nature. Procedural checks establish compliance with local budget law. They include such steps as verifying that the approved tax levies are within the constitutional limits and substantiated by budgets, ensuring that public notice requirements have been met and validating that financial information provides adequate detail. A substantive review of program content, the reasonableness of estimates and coordination of financial planning among various units of government is also performed. These types of review and the certification process distinguish TSCC from other regulatory bodies which do not receive copies of the budget document. TSCC's review also differs from the comprehensive audit in that our review is conducted prior to the adoption of the budget and can therefore prevent errors from occurring.

The Commission is required by law to publish an annual report of local governments' budgets, indebtedness, property taxes and other financial information. The report is often cited by citizen activists, news media and government officials as the most comprehensive source of budget and property tax information available in the entire state.

Program Justification

The Commission provides an independent and objective forum, by way of public hearings, at which citizens may obtain information and express their views regarding the budgets of government at all levels in the County. Commission members represent the public at these hearings by asking questions indicative of the community at large. The Commission holds additional public hearings throughout the year on supplemental budgets of the districts and on every new local option levy or bond issue measure placed before the voters. Many citizens and public officials rely on TSCC's annual report for budget and property tax information that is clear, concise and objective.

TSCC ensures that violations of local budget law are minimized, especially if the error results in a property tax levy that exceeds authority. TSCC works closely with the county assessor's office as a double check that property tax levies are completed accurately. TSCC's efforts seek to make the financial affairs of local governments at all levels more accountable to the citizens we serve.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	Previous Year Actual (FY05-06)	Current Year Purchased (FY06-07)	Current Year Estimate (FY06-07)	Next Year Offer (FY07-08)
Output	Provide training including one on one with district's budget staff	7	10	8	12
Outcome	Reduce number of objections and recommendations in TSCC Certification Letter	32	16	14	10
Output		0	0	0	0
Outcome		0	0	0	0

Performance Measure - Description

✔ **Measure Changed**

By reducing the number of errors that are made taxing districts gain credibility with the citizens that they serve. The ideal result would be to have all taxing districts under TSCC's jurisdiction complete their budget process with no objections or recommendations included in the TSCC Certification Letter.

Legal/Contractual Obligation

TSCC is mandated by ORS 294.605 to 294.705. Counties with a tax supervising and conservation commission are required to establish an account in the general fund for purposes of funding the expenditures of the commission, "as submitted", up to a maximum of \$280,000 (ORS 294.630).

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
Program Expenses	2007	2007	2008	2008
Personnel	\$265,152	\$0	\$258,696	\$0
Contracts	\$1,400	\$0	\$7,500	\$0
Materials & Supplies	\$10,235	\$0	\$10,150	\$0
Internal Services	\$2,564	\$0	\$2,547	\$0
Subtotal: Direct Exps:	\$279,351	\$0	\$278,893	\$0
Administration	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Program Support	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal: Other Exps:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total GF/non-GF:	\$279,351	\$0	\$278,893	\$0
Program Total:	\$279,351		\$278,893	
Program FTE	2.70	0.00	2.60	0.00
Program Revenues				
Program Revenue for Admin	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Explanation of Revenues

This is a General Fund-supported program.

Significant Program Changes

Last year this program was: #10008, Tax Supervising & Conservation Commission

TSCC will be involved in several initiatives this coming year. We will be working closely with Multnomah County and the City of Portland to ensure that there is no errors in the categorization of the property tax levy as "general government" under the limits of Ballot Measure 5 given the recent Oregon Supreme Court Case Urhausen v. City of Eugene. Another issue that we will be paying close attention to is the new GASB requirements to report liabilities for "other post employment benefits" or OPEB. Finally, TSCC is taking the lead in updating local budget law by sponsoring two bills for consideration by the Oregon Legislature to correct ORS 294.381 (calculation of resources from property tax levies) and ORS 294.437 to allow newly approved tax levies to be certified during the second year of a biennial budget period.