

Lead Agency: Tax Supervising &

Program Contact: Tom Linhares

Program Offer Type: Existing Operating

Related Programs:

Program Characteristics: In Target

Executive Summary

The Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission (TSCC) reviews the budget and tax levying authority of all taxing districts that have more real market value in Multnomah County than in any other county. Starting in FY 11, districts with a population under 200,000 have the ability to opt out of the Commission's jurisdiction. As of the 2013-14 fiscal year, 13 districts have chosen that option. Perhaps the most important duties of the Commission are to: 1) act as a technical resource to budget staffs for both large and small taxing districts, and 2) publish a comprehensive annual report.

Program Description

There are five commissioners, appointed by the Governor to four year terms. Administrative employees, currently 2.4 FTE, are appointed by the Commission.

The Commission serves citizens by providing an extensive review of the budgets of the 27 local governments under its jurisdiction. The reviews are both procedural and substantive in nature. 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 continues to assert influence beyond Multnomah County. Commission staff played a critical role in securing passage of HB 2425 (2011 Session) which updated Oregon's local budget law for the first time since 1963 affecting nearly 1,500 taxing districts. In December 2011 the Commission published a Recent History of Oregon's Property Tax System. This report has been very well received by officials from all 36 counties as well as legislative leaders and private citizens.

The commission conducts hearings on the largest taxing district's budget (population exceeding 200,000) and must certify any objections and/or recommendations for all districts prior to the district adopting the budget each year. The Commission also holds public hearings throughout the year on new local option levy or general obligation bond measure placed before the voters.

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.

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 entered and calculated accurately. TSCC's efforts seek to make the financial affairs of local governments at all levels more transparent and accountable to the citizens we serve.

Performance Measures

| Measure Type | Primary Measure | Previous Year Actual (FY11-12) | Current Year Purchased (FY12-13) | Current Year Estimate (FY12-13) | Next Year Offer (FY13-14) |
|--------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Output | Output; Provide training and technical assistance for districts' budget staff. | 13 | 15 | 11 | 15 |
| Outcome | Outcome; Reduce the number of objections and recommendations in TSCC Certification Letters. | 15 | 10 | 15 | 10 |
| Output | Output; Conduct public hearings on approved budgets and property tax measures for taxing districts. | 12 | 12 | 16 | 15 |

Performance Measure - Description

By reducing errors, 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. Public hearings provide TSCC commissioners as well as citizens an opportunity to learn about and ask questions about the financial affairs of taxing districts.

Legal/Contractual Obligation

TSCC is mandated by ORS 294.605 to 294.705. Counties with a 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 appropriation of \$280,000 (ORS 294.630). This amount increases by three percent per year starting in 2011-12. For FY 2014 the maximum appropriation is \$305,963 (280,000 x 1.03 x 1.03 x 1.03).

Revenue/Expense Detail

| | Proposed General Fund | Proposed Other Funds | Proposed General Fund | Proposed Other Funds |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Program Expenses | 2013 | 2013 | 2014 | 2014 |
| Personnel | \$279,398 | \$0 | \$290,025 | \$0 |
| Contracts | \$2,000 | \$0 | \$2,000 | \$0 |
| Materials & Supplies | \$9,900 | \$0 | \$8,050 | \$0 |
| Internal Services | \$4,706 | \$0 | \$4,613 | \$0 |
| Total GF/non-GF: | \$296,004 | \$0 | \$304,688 | \$0 |
| Program Total: | \$296,004 | | \$304,688 | |
| Program FTE | 2.40 | 0.00 | 2.40 | 0.00 |
| Program Revenues | | | | |
| Total Revenue: | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

Explanation of Revenues

There are no direct revenues. Expenditures of the Commission are included in the CAFFA Grant, bringing in an average of \$61,725 over the last four fiscal years. With the passage of HB 2074 (Chapter 596, Oregon Laws 2009), the County is reimbursed one-half of the net operating costs of the Commission from the districts under the Commission's jurisdiction. This change resulted in \$94,169 of new revenue for the County in 2009-10, \$97,393 in 2010-11, \$106,089 in 2011-12 and \$105,792 in 2012-13.

Significant Program Changes

Last year this program was: #10006, Tax Supervising & Conservation Commission