

## OHA Responses RE: FY 26/27 Budget Questions From Ranking Member Nuccio

### Headcount Questions:

1. What is your current headcount?
  - a. Total headcount: 20
  - b. Funded headcount: 19
  - c. Actual headcount: 18
  - d. Open/vacancies headcount: 1
    - i. Are these opens part-time or full-time resources? Full-time = 1

\*These numbers should tie (example):

- a. Total headcount: 100
  - b. Funded headcount: 90
  - c. Actual headcount: 80
  - d. Open headcount: 10
    - Full-time = 8
    - Part-time = 2
- (Funded) 90 – (Actual) 80 = (Open) 10

**OHA is currently (FY 25-26) authorized for a total of 20 full-time positions and funded for a total of 19 full-time positions, 18 of which are filled. OHA recently completed recruitment for a Paralegal Specialist to fill the lone funded vacancy and expects the new employee to start state service on February 6, 2026.**

2. Is there is change in headcount (either up or down) for this budget ask? **Yes, OHA is requesting an increase by 3 full-time positions, for a total of 23, for FY 26-27.**
  - a. If there is a positive change in headcount, please explain what the positions are and what is driving the need for the positions
    - i. If these adds are legislatively driven, what piece of legislation is driving the increase?
    - ii. If they are not legislatively driven, please indicate which program is increasing if there is one

**OHA is requesting that the first additional position be reflected in its budget as a result of the position being returned to OHA from OHS. A Memorandum of Agreement between the agencies, dated April 11, 2018, which assigned the OHA position to OHS on a temporary basis, recently expired. OHA anticipates that this would result in a budget-neutral reduction in the OHS budget to offset the increase in the OHA budget associated with the transfer of this position. OHA anticipates that this position will support data science and analysis of OHA activity, promote further operational efficiencies, and expand its public outreach and education activities. Currently, OHA staff provide primarily direct service or data reporting functions. The additional position will allow for necessary consumer services, including but not limited to in-person outreach activities, creation, publication and maintenance of online and written self-help tools, increased social media presence, etc., as well as support for OHA's internal data collection and analysis activities to assist with the identification and tracking of trends in the healthcare and health insurance markets that require legislative or regulatory attention. Due to recent legislation requiring OHA to maintain an online hospital financial**

assistance portal (P.A. 25-168, Sec. 5 & 182), assigning OHA to receive and monitor wheelchair repair complaints (P.A. 24- 58), and proposed legislation that would require health systems and other providers to increase referrals to OHA, the agency anticipates that the additional position will further absorb responsibilities related to these newest initiatives.

OHA is also requesting additional positions to add case management capacity to absorb an increase in case volume that has persisted since approximately January 2023, when insurance denials began drawing more attention to OHA contact information and directed more consumers to contact OHA to pursue appeal assistance. OHA's case volume has increased more than 20% from 2022 to 2023 and more than 10% per year in 2024 and 2025. OHA staff are working beyond historical capacity. OHA anticipates further increases in case volume over the next several years due to increased awareness of its services, coupled with the increased challenges that members of the public will face as a result of recent major changes to Medicaid, Medicare and other sectors of the healthcare and health insurance landscape.

OHA has not yet determined the appropriate job classes for these additional positions.

- b. If there is a reduction, please explain what is driving the reduction
    - i. Are the positions being transferred to another area?
3. Does this budget ask include the open/vacant positions above? **Yes**
- a. If yes, how are they budgeted into your plan? (Please explain for all opens – if you have ten opens then explain for all ten)
    - i. Are these full time or part positions? **All OHA positions are full time positions.**
    - ii. What is the anticipated start date of your vacancies? **OHA anticipates that the open Paralegal Specialist position will be filled on February 6, 2026. With the return of the OHS position to OHA, the agency expects to have one vacancy at the start of FY26-27. However, OHA is currently making efforts to fill the vacancy prior to FY26-27 if possible.**

\*Please detail by number, for example: There are 10 open positions – 8 are full-time and 2 are part-time. We have built them into the budget as follows. 8 full-time positions are expected to be filled on 07/01 and 2 part-time positions are expected to be filled on 01/01

4. How many opens/vacancies did you have at the prior year end on 06/30/2025? **As of June 30, 2025, OHA had 1 vacant position for a Staff Attorney 2.**
- a. How many vacancies did you start the prior year with (07/01/2024)? **As of July 1, 2024, OHA had 2 vacant positions, including a Paralegal Specialist and the Healthcare Advocate.**
  - b. How many people left throughout the year either via leaving, retiring, or transferring? **From July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, 1 staff member left OHA, creating a Staff Attorney 2 vacancy.**
  - c. How many new hires did you have in the same time period (07/01/24-06/30/25)? **From July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, 2 staff members were hired, including a Paralegal Specialist and a Healthcare Advocate.**

\*For example-- all of these numbers should tie. Started 2023 with 20 vacancies, 2 left for retirement, hired 12. This should tie to your opens above – 20+2-12=10

5. What is the average salary of your open positions? **The annual salary range for the vacant Paralegal Specialist position is from \$74,750 to \$96,734.**

**Lapse Questions: \*(please provide the numbers and not a link to the comptroller's report)**

1. Were there any lapsing accounts on 06/30? **Yes.**
  - a. If yes, what were the accounts? **Please note the lapsing accounts in the chart below.**
  - b. If yes, what was the lapse balance? **Please note the lapsing balances in the chart below.**
  - c. If yes, what drove the lapse? What spending didn't occur that was planned to occur? **OE funding lapses due to lag times related to the payment to DOI for reimbursement of OHA's premises expenses. Timing of DAS billing to DOI/OHA results in payments for months of May and June being completed after the end of the fiscal year.**

<b>Budget Summary Account</b>	<b>Total FY25 Budget</b>	<b>FY24 Actual Expenses</b>	<b>Unspent Funds</b>	<b>% Expended</b>
Personal Services	\$1,929,194.00	\$1,821,520.29	\$107,673.71	94.42%
Other Expenses	\$292,991.00	\$290,710.57	\$2,280.43	99.22%
Equipment	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	100.00%
Fringe Benefits	\$1,831,655.00	\$1,380,489.26	\$451,165.74	75.37%
Indirect Overhead	\$76,735.00	\$76,735.00	\$0.00	100.00%
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>\$4,135,575.00</b>	<b>\$3,574,455.12</b>	<b>\$561,119.88</b>	<b>86.43%</b>

2. Please provide the starting Personnel Services budget number and the ending Personnel Services number. Please do not include any dollars that may have been moved via the FAC process. Just total non adjusted budgeted PS line item and total ending PS line item. **See above chart.**
3. Where there any dollars for new programs that did not kick off? **No**
  - a. If so what were the programs?
  - b. What prevented implementation of the program?
4. If there is a lapsing balance, do you anticipate it carrying forward? **OHA anticipates that it may need to request a carry forward of lapsed funds from FY25-26.**
  - a. If yes, how do you propose to use that lapse? **OHA anticipates that it will be required to vacate its current leased office space and relocate to a new leased space sometime during FY25-26 or FY26-27. As a result, OHA will incur certain one-time expenses associated with the relocation of its offices. OHA is currently working with DAS to identify a new location for its offices and to estimate the associated costs of moving, including the purchase (as needed) of new furniture, equipment, etc. In addition, OHA was appropriated \$100,000 in FY25-26 to support the creation and deployment of a hospital financial assistance portal to be hosted on its website. OHA has been actively designing and developing this tool with the assistance of DAS/BITS**

**and the support of a team of Governor's Fellows. OHA anticipates that it will begin soliciting vendors to complete development and deployment during FY25-26, but may not be ready to expend all of the appropriated funds until FY26-27.**

- b. Will it be for one-time expenses? **Yes**
  - i. If so, what are those one-time expenses? **See above response to question 4a describing the one-time expenses.**
- c. If ongoing expense is that expense built into this budget in FY 25?

#### **ARPA Questions:**

1. Are there still ARPA funds included in this budget? **No ARPA funds were received or used by OHA for FY24-25 or FY25-26.**
  - i. If yes, when will the funding be fully utilized

#### **Audit Questions:**

1. Have you reviewed your agencies latest audit finding? **Yes. The last audit was completed in November 2024, covering FY21-22 and FY22-23.**
2. Have you implemented the recommendations with no fiscal impact?
  - a. If so, please provide explanation of what you have changed to meet audit expectations. **Yes. Steps intended to address the no fiscal impact recommendations had been taken and communicated to staff prior to the auditors issuing their findings.**
3. If your agency has a recommendation with a fiscal impact, do you know what that annualized impact is? **N/A**

#### **General Questions:**

1. Is there anything you would change about this budget? **In addition to the changes identified above, OHA has identified certain bills pending before other committees that contemplate increasing OHA's appropriation for specific projects. For example, SB 1192 envisions the possibility of an additional appropriation for OHA to engage a vendor for the purpose of making certain enhancements to its website to address medical debt and access to hospital financial assistance programs. OHA also anticipates greatly increased consumer inquiries related to medical debt and financial assistance programs if OHA is to assume this financial assistance application coordinating role, requiring an additional staff member or two.**
2. Is there anything you would add to this budget? **See above.**
3. Is there anything you would remove from this budget? **No.**
4. Is there any legislation that was passed you feel you are not adequately prepared to implement? **No.**
  - a. If so, what would we need to change to make it implementable?