



**Ohio House of Representatives Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education  
Ohio Vision Professionals Board  
Budget Recommendations for SFY 2024/2025 Testimony  
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Good afternoon, Chair Manning, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education. I truly appreciate the opportunity to provide an overview of the Ohio Vision Professionals Board (VPB) and our budget recommendations.

For a bit of history, the 132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly consolidated the State Board of Optometry and the Optical Dispensers Board into the Ohio Vision Professionals Board in January of 2018. It achieved administrative efficiencies and regulatory functions. The VPB is the regulatory body for the licensing and registering of nearly 6,600 optometrists, opticians, ocularists and apprentices. VPB monitors compliance with continuing education requirements, approves provider program relevance to practice in Ohio and educates the licensees on the laws and rules which govern licensees and consumers on services provided by the licensees. The governing board is comprised of seven members appointed by the governor which include licensees and a public member.

The mission of the Ohio VPB is to provide statewide leadership in protecting and serving Ohioans by effectively and efficiently regulating the practices of optometrists, opticians, ocularists and apprentices. In 2022-2023, the VPB updated the Board's website to the new Innovate Ohio Platform (IOP) statewide model. Reduced the number of Board rules by 30-40%. Is in the process of implementing a Safe Haven Program to offer support for practitioners working through mental health and substance use disorders. The VPB has standards of conduct for our licensees / registrants and internally handles all the investigations of all complaints against our licensed professionals for compliance with the applicable laws, rules, and regulations. We strive to be a national leader for the establishment of professional practice standards and licensure of those professions. The VPB employs an executive director, an investigator and two administrative personnel.

The budget funding for fiscal year 2024 is \$608, 684. Funding for fiscal year 2025 is \$619, 864 for a total biennium budget of \$1.2 million. The proposed budget illustrates a 9.2% decrease from the SFY 2023 and a 1.8% increase over SFY 2024. As required, by the Ohio Revised Code ORC 4734.54, all receipts of the VPB are deposited into the Occupational and Professional Licensing Fund, also known as the 4K90 fund.

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity to present the Ohio Vision Professionals Board's executive budget proposal to you today. The VPB has an enormous responsibility to act in the best interest in protecting and serving Ohioans with educated and ethical eye care professionals with the highest levels of accountability. The VPB respectfully requests your support with an open and collaborative process with budget deliberations. I thank the committee for their time and attention and welcome your questions and comments.