



Ohio Board of Psychology

Testimony on the FY24-25 Biennial Operating Budget
Senate Health Committee
Senator Stephen Huffman, Chair

Ronald R. Ross, Ph.D., CPM
Executive Director
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Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Committee:

I am Dr. Ron Ross, Executive Director of the State Board of Psychology. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Sub HB33. Thanks also to OMB Budget Analyst Nick Strahan and LSC Analyst Ryan Sherrock for their work on this request and the Redbook. The executive recommendation totals operating funds of \$747,000 for FY24 and \$757,000 for FY25, the projected minimal funding to allow the Psychology Board to meet its basic obligations to enforce ORC 4732 (psychologists and school psychologists) and ORC 4783 (Certified Ohio Behavior Analysts).

The State Board of Psychology's Role in Ohio

Since 1972, the Psychology Board has provided protections to the public through examinations, licensing, monitoring of continuing education, monitoring of unlicensed practice (both supervised practice of extenders and illegal practice), and conducting investigations and issuing disciplinary actions to maintain accountability among Board license holders. In addition, in 2014 the Psychology Board became responsible for regulating the practice of applied behavior analysis with the enactment of ORC 4783 and the promulgation of rules in OAC 4783. Therefore, the Psychology Board enforces two chapters of law and rules, and we absorbed the regulation of ORC 4783 without an increase in staffing or funding.

The Psychology Board's 4,600 licensees are at the forefront of the healthcare system in Ohio, being found in private practices, hospitals, medical schools, autism treatment centers, mental health clinics, Veteran's Affairs medical centers, college counseling centers, schools, industries, courts, and prisons. Each licensee must restrict one's practice to those areas in which he or she is competent, and must strive to do no harm. The deeply human interactions that take place in a psychologist's practice typically reflect a complicated combination of hope and despair. The Psychology Board has the responsibility for regulating behavior that typically occurs when patients are highly vulnerable in

terms of their emotional condition, self-concept, and relationships. Ohio's consumers of psychological services expect from their psychologists and behavior analysts competence, compassion, trust, confidentiality, and a clearly defined role. The Psychology Board exists to ensure that Ohioans get these things.

Operational Overview

- Like most occupational regulatory boards, the Psychology Board does not receive General Revenue Funds and we remain self-supporting through fees.
- Along with approximately 35 other boards and commissions, the Psychology Board receives consolidated administrative, fiscal, and HR support from the Central Services Agency, a division of OMB. We receive shared IT services from the Office of Information Technology.
- We do business from a customer service model. Those emailing or calling the Board almost always need something that we have, so we answer our phones in person and we are immediately responsive to licensees and the public. When you call the Psychology Board office, you get a personable staff member who knows the laws and rules and will take the time to address your concerns or find somebody in the office who can.

Challenges for the 2024-25 Fiscal Biennium

- Increases in Payroll and Benefits. This budget request is submitted in the context of payroll projections being 7% higher for FY24 over FY22 Actual and 7.5% higher for FY25 over FY22 Actual. This is the primary challenge when considering the steady operational costs to run the Board and meet standard obligations.
- Funding to Pay for Credit Card Processing Fees (especially FY25 license renewal). Projected fees related to eLicense credit card transactions are predictable and steady, estimated at \$1,500 for FY24 and \$20,000 for FY25. This is a basic cost of doing business and providing for credit card payments for all Board services through eLicense Ohio.
- Funding to Pay for Biennial Audit. This submission also includes a request to cover funding to ensure that the Board is sufficiently funded to pay invoices from the Auditor of State, for our audit in FY24 and FY25. The audit costs around \$12,000.
- Unmet Funding. Following submission of this request to OBM last year, a regulatory reform bill was enacted that will require additional funding for the Psychology Board. HB509 transfers the responsibility for the regulation of the 3,000 school-employed school psychologists and all future applicants and licensing from the Department of Education (ODE) to the Psychology Board, effective January 1, 2025. A dialogue with ODE has been established to begin the

process of complying with this mandate. Preliminary study indicates that we will incur significant unanticipated IT costs to add the school psychologist license type to eLicense Ohio. It is not clear whether we will need additional staffing to handle applications, but we will do everything we can to onboard this new license without an increase of payroll. We are moving forward with the transition, most of which will happen during FY24, and get specific costs before going to the Controlling Board.

Unanticipated costs notwithstanding, the Board believes this biennial funding recommendation will allow the Board to meet our responsibilities to the public, maintain our staffing level, and meet costs of conducting business amid some increases in projected spending on DAS charges and employee payroll and benefits.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions.