



Executive Budget Recommendations SFY2024-2025
Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
February 14, 2023

Chairman Carruthers, Ranking Member Liston, members of the Subcommittee, I am Jill Smock, Executive Director of the Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals (CDP) Board. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to provide testimony and answer any questions you many have regarding the Board's proposed budget for fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

The CDP Board's mission is to cultivate, certify and license quality prevention and substance use disorder treatment professionals. Our vision is a network of competent, ethical professionals practicing evidence -informed services that promote health lifestyles and communities.

This is accomplished by the following regulatory roles:

- establishing and maintaining educational and experience standards for those who seek a license or certification.
- protecting consumers through investigation of ethic complaints and guiding professional practice through the enforcement of ethical standards.
- providing oversight and monitoring of continuing education activities.
- overseeing the administration of professional examinations.

The Chemical Dependency Professionals Board licenses the professionals with the specialized knowledge and skills to treat those with substance use disorders, supports those in recovery to obtain employment in the field through license and/or certification opportunities, and allows communities and schools to provide behavioral health prevention services through certified prevention professionals thus supporting the infrastructure of many current initiatives of our state. The public is served further by the Board's ongoing efforts to develop a workforce of appropriate size and skill to serve the needs of Ohio's citizens.

Organizationally, the Board has positions for thirteen Board members including 2 public members, 6 full time staff members and the Executive Director. Currently the CDP Board provides licensing and certification to over to 13,500 active substance use disorder treatment and prevention professionals and assists many more Ohioans and those coming into Ohio seeking to obtain licensure with this Board.

The Board has continued to have a steady increase in new applications received on an annual basis, especially within our entry-level (CDCA) certification many of them from the recovery community. With the ongoing efforts of this administration, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and other State departments to increase career pathways to meet the behavioral health workforce needs, this Board anticipates a continual increase in demand to obtain credentialing with this Board.

The Board seeks to facilitate professional development opportunities for these professionals as well. It reviews and endorses substance use disorder treatment and behavioral health prevention continuing education trainings, courses, conferences, and workshops to ensure CEU Sponsors and Providers are meeting education requirements. The board is receiving an increase in the entry level CDCA educational coursework to review. It anticipates with additional funding in the State to prepare the substance use disorder treatment and prevention workforce that we will continue to see an increase in reviewed and approved training courses by our staff.

The CDP Board is also responsible for investigating violations of the laws and rules governing our licenses and certificates. If a licensee or certificate holder is found to have violated the laws and rules, appropriate action is taken by the Board to impose discipline and ensure the public is protected. With an average new case load of 185 cases per year, and only one Investigator, this Board has asked for increased funding to hire an Investigative Supervisor who can focus on the most egregious cases as well as oversee all the board investigations, hearing preparation, application review for those with conviction history, and provide administrative oversight of ethic cases. The Board anticipates the investigations to protect the public and the profession to continue to remain a large percentage of the workload for our board.

The staff provides technical expertise and knowledge to the professionals in the field, allowing them to move efficiently through the licensing process. With application reviews and ethical grievance investigations being the main responsibilities of our staff, the board also receives close to 1000 emails and calls each month from the field that are answered by one administrative staff member who also reviews CDCA applications. This does not include the number of calls and emails that are directed to individual staff members to respond with general and specific licensing information. While thoroughness of application review and timeliness of staff responses are all a part of the quality customer service the Board values and expects, we are a small staff compared to the workforce needs. Over the last fiscal year, the board has cross-trained administrative staff to expand its capacity to review applications in a timely manner. Still with keeping as close to our goal of 30 business days from application submission to its review, it can be six weeks or more until an applicant moves to the top of the review queue, all requirements are verified, and they can start to provide services under a board approved certificate or license. The Board also requested in our budget for an additional Certified License Examiner position in order to get people to work faster while still verifying all the requirements of substance use disorder or prevention specific education and experience to meet the qualifications in our statutes. The need for this reviewer is also anticipated as the Board has worked to remove unnecessary barriers to allow for more master's degree or higher educated individuals to meet the highly desired independent license requirements. Funding in Ohio to increase the number of licensed professionals who can provide gambling disorder treatment services and to increase mental health prevention services should also increase the number of applications the board must review and process.

Budget

The Board is a fee-based entity and does not receive any general revenue funding. Revenue is generated by licensing fees, renewal fees, and fees for approval of continuing education

providers. OCDPB is part of the 4k90 Fund group. The Board expects increases in our revenue in future years as the demand for our licensed and certified workforce continues.

The Executive budget request will align with the Board's priorities for the upcoming biennium and its overall strategic plan and will:

- Support the operations of the board and staff.
- Ensure the Board can provide consumer protection through the enforcement of ethical standards.
- Support continuous efforts to improve services and communication for the Board's credentialed professionals, increase efficiencies in the processing of applications and remove unnecessary barriers to licensure.
- Enable the Board to continue its work with colleges, universities, and educational providers to expand professional development and career pathway opportunities.

The Board will continue to use DAS' Central Service Agency (CSA) to help contain costs and as a vehicle to expand its participation in the sharing of services whenever and wherever possible. The Board continues to be good stewards of our resources. No fee changes are included in this budget request.

As mentioned, the expansion of the behavioral workforce and serving the needs of Ohioans in prevention, treatment, and recovery is one of the goals of this administration. CDP understands its role in the availability of services Ohio can provide is dependent on the expansion of our workforce. We must be up to the task with reducing license processing time, improving communication, ensuring evidence-based education and training for our license and certificate holders all while regulating the profession through accurate and timely ethic investigations. While technology and on-line systems help improve efficiencies and timeliness, it is personnel investments that will allow this board to meet the growing needs of the professions we serve and the needs of this state.

The Board respectfully requests its appropriation authority to be increased from the proposed Budget recommendation amount by \$112,000 for FY24 and \$97,400 for FY25 and allow an additional staff position to be secured beyond what is proposed in the FY2425 biennium budget. This reflects an extended budget to include sufficient funds to cover all operational expenses, hearings, anticipated increases in payroll and health care costs, and staffing to include two vital additional staff members, a Certified License Examiner, and an Investigative Supervisor. Without this increase to the proposed recommended budget, the Board will have to decide between getting people working to provide services in Ohio faster or protecting the public. These appropriation levels are necessary to allow this Board to maintain a service level that corresponds with the resources and funding being invested in Ohio's priorities for mental health prevention and substance use disorder treatment services that are delivered by the same workforce that we certify, license, and the population we protect.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be glad to respond to any questions you may have at this time.