


Government of the District of Columbia
Office of the Chief Financial Officer



Jeffrey S. DeWitt
Chief Financial Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

FROM: Jeffrey S. DeWitt
Chief Financial Officer 

DATE: July 14, 2020

SUBJECT: Fiscal Impact Statement – Office for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Establishment Amendment Act of 2020

REFERENCE: Bill 23-147, Committee Print as provided to the Office of Revenue Analysis on June 26, 2020

Conclusion

Funds are not sufficient in the fiscal year 2020 budget and proposed fiscal year 2021 through 2024 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. The bill will cost \$836,000 in fiscal year 2021 and \$3.26 million over the financial plan.

Background

The bill establishes an Office for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing (ODDHH) to oversee the District's compliance with laws affecting the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing Community (Community). ODDHH will be headed by a Director appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the Council.¹ The Director is responsible for organizing personnel, re-delegating authority, developing programs, and taking other actions consistent with appropriations and other applicable law. The ODDHH will be responsible for the following duties:

- Advance the adoption of laws, policies, and programs that benefit the Community;
- Increase public awareness of the needs and issues affecting the Community;
- Provide outreach, training, and education on issues affecting the Community;
- Provide information about existing programs and services for the Community;
- Refer members of the Community with problems or concerns to the appropriate District agency or private organization;
- Assist employers, educational institutions, employment agencies, social service agencies, and businesses to comply with state and federal laws pertaining to the Community;

¹ In accordance with section 2(a) of the Confirmation Act of 1978, effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Law 2-142; D.C. Official Code § 1-523.01(a)).

The Honorable Phil Mendelson

FIS: Bill 23-147, "Office for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Establishment Amendment Act," Draft Committee Print provided to the Office of Revenue Analysis on July 10, 2020

- Connect members of the Community with specialized services, including case management, interpreter services, and technology services, including assistive listening devices, independent living services, information services, and other services as needed;
- Maintain a registry of available and qualified interpreters in the District and increase the number of qualified interpreters in the District;
- Create and distribute visor communication cards to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) containing instructions for how to effectively communicate with a motorist from the Community;
- Assist District agencies to develop policies that consider the needs of the Community;
- Ensure District-wide compliance with laws and policies that protect the civil rights of the Community;
- Assist agencies and the Council with referrals to certified interpreters;
- Coordinate with appropriate District agencies to connect Community members who are children to services necessary to ensure language access and developmental support;
- Support Community members' access to workforce development opportunities;
- Provide training to District agencies and the Council on the needs of the Community, as it relates to the agency's or the Council's mission;
- Offer cultural awareness and basic sign language communication training to all agencies and the Council;
- Complete an analysis of whether District programs are accessible to the Community; and,
- Provide an annual summary of whether District agencies and the Council provide American Sign Language interpretation, real-time captioning, access to Assistive Listening Systems, and other needed measures.

The bill also requires² all agencies to submit to ODDHH an annual self-evaluation and implementation plan describing how the agency shall ensure that all programs are accessible to the particular needs of the Community, including coordination with the ODDHH and providing American Sign Language interpretation, real-time captioning, and other technologies to ensure that the Community has access to information in public settings.

Financial Plan Impact

Funds are not sufficient in the fiscal year 2020 budget and proposed fiscal year 2021 through 2024 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. The bill will cost \$836,000 in fiscal year 2021 and \$3.26 million over the financial plan.

The new ODDHH will require resources to pay staff salaries, to purchase computers, phones, office supplies, and MPD visor signs, and to rent office space. The ODDHH will also need funding to develop, publish, and maintain a registry of all available and qualified interpreters in the District. District agencies already report to the Office of Disability Rights (ODR) information pertaining to accessibility for the Community. This information will now be filed with ODDHH on an annual basis instead of ODR at no additional cost.

² By amending The Disability Rights Protection Act of 2006, effective March 8, 2007 (D.C. Law 16-239; D.C. Official Code § 2-1431.01 et seq.).

The Honorable Phil Mendelson

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Office for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, Establishment Amendment Act of 2020					
Total Cost					
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Total
Salary ^(a)	\$606,202	\$606,202	\$606,202	\$606,202	\$2,424,808
Fringe ^(b)	\$112,754	\$114,445	\$116,162	\$117,904	\$461,264
Computer and Phone ^(c)	\$10,500	\$1,750	\$1,750	\$1,750	\$15,750
Registry Cost and Maintenance	\$10,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$13,000
Office Space ^(d)	\$66,600	\$67,599	\$68,613	\$69,642	\$272,454
Office Supplies	\$10,000	\$10,150	\$10,302	\$10,457	\$40,909
Visor Card Design and Printing ^(e)	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$35,000
Total	\$836,056	\$806,146	\$809,029	\$811,955	\$3,263,185

Table Notes:

- (a) Assumes one ES-3 Director, one MS-14 Deputy Director, one Grade-12 Public Affairs Specialist, one Grade-13 Program Specialist, one Grade-11 American Sign Language Interpreter, and one Grade-9 Staff Assistant.
- (b) Assumes a fringe rate of rate of 18.6%. Fringe costs grow by 1.5 percent each fiscal year.
- (c) Assumes \$1,750 per employee for computer and phone purchase.
- (d) Assumes 200 square feet of office space per employee at a cost of \$55.50 per square foot.
- (e) Assumes \$15,000 in year one for pamphlet design and \$5,000 to print visors for approximately 1,700 MPD patrol vehicles.