

OACO: 2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



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June 14, 2023

OACO

Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office



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Executive Summary

The Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO) is a non-partisan state agency that provides legislative expertise and advisory support to Oregon's four state advocacy commissions: OCBA, OCHA, OCAPIA, and OCFW. Alongside with these four commissions, the OACO strives to further social equality for under-represented groups across the state by enhancing civic engagement, legislative advocacy, policy research, and citizen trust in government. In an effort to refocus their organizational priorities, the OACO partnered with the University of Oregon's Planning, Public Policy, and Management Department to create a student-produced strategic plan that identifies the agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T.s) and outlines a three-fold action plan to support their future success.

During a ten-week academic term, the UO planning team – comprised of three graduate students – gathered information through an initial meeting with OACO staff and a thorough review of supplemental materials such as website information, annual reports, and budget workbooks. The team then conducted 21 S.W.O.T. interviews with staff, commissioners, and other relevant stakeholders. Based on this S.W.O.T. analysis, the team identified three strategic priority areas that require the agency's attention. The team also produced research on the OACO's market sector, per the agency's request, to assess their relative financial position and staff capacity. In sum, this report develops and justifies three strategic recommendations:

- **Clarify Workplace Roles & Expectations**
- **Strengthen Commissioner Engagement**
- **Increase Legislative Support**

This strategic plan will allow the OACO to better articulate their goals by identifying key developmental priorities for FY2023-2025. This document also serves as a record of the agency's status at the close of the FY2021-2023 cycle, contributing to their institutional memory. The information contained herein demonstrates the agency's need for further resources to build capacity and improve internal efficacy. The UO planning team hopes that this report will initiate a new wave of administrative change and growth for the agency.

Introduction

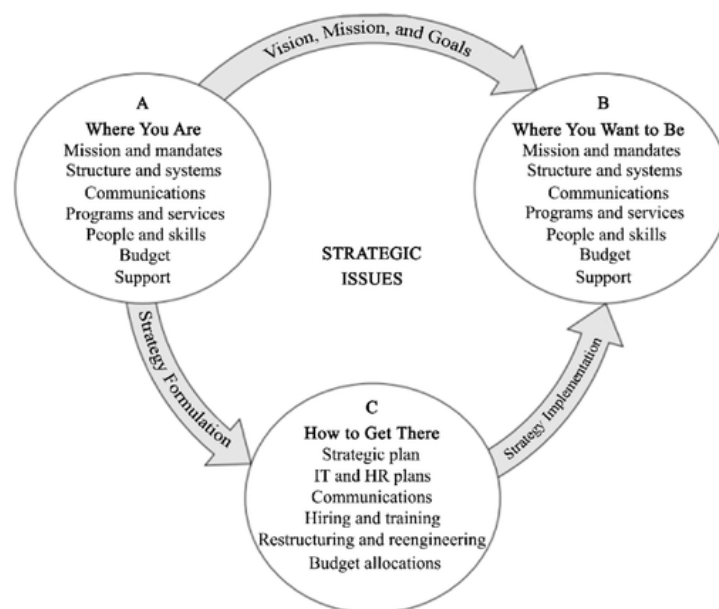
Purpose of Report

This report exists to provide a strategic framework that will guide the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO) through the FY2023-2025 biennium, allowing them to enhance their efficiency, improve internal communications, and clarify their organizational identity. Since their inception in 2005, the OACO has been chronically overlooked and undervalued by the state legislature. Despite requests for additional funding, the agency faces an 18% budget cut for the upcoming biennium, which will greatly limit their performance capabilities. The agency has thus far performed planning on a purely ad hoc basis – more intentional, strategic, and well-documented planning efforts are therefore required to ensure that they realize desired goals and maximize their potential. This document represents the first of many stages in that planning process: using a S.W.O.T. analysis, it offers an overview of the agency’s current strengths and weaknesses and outlines their short-term strategic goals and priorities. The agency hopes that future planning efforts will include robust participation and feedback from members of the four Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs) to develop parallel, unified missions and goals that can be carried out in tandem.

The OACO has survived considerable turbulence in both external sociopolitical contexts and internal shifts in staffing and leadership – they now look towards an ambitious future of increased organizational stability, public prominence, and social change. After hiring a new Executive Director in 2021, the agency has worked hard to realign their mission and statutory directives. A lack of detailed historical records from past administrators, combined with staff turnover, has created a considerable loss of institutional memory [i]. Managing recruitment, onboarding, and collaborative work on a remote basis during the COVID-19 pandemic was a tremendous undertaking for staff. Throughout FY2021-2023, the OACO sought to provide ongoing administrative support to roughly forty commissioners while simultaneously stabilizing a team of eight new staff members. Having recently achieved such stability, the agency is now positioned to tackle broader strategic goals and objectives that will expand their operational capacity in the future. This report provides a framework of recommendations and priority areas that the agency can further adapt to suit their needs and capabilities.

What is a Strategic Plan?

Strategic planning is a powerful management tool that enables organizations to align their vision, priorities, and capabilities, empowering them to effectively fulfill their mission. Taking a systematic approach, strategic planning guides decision-making processes and ensures that resources are optimally utilized to achieve organizational goals. It serves as a compass, guiding leaders and stakeholders in setting clear objectives, identifying key strategies, and allocating resources strategically. Through the integration of data analysis, stakeholder input, and forward thinking, strategic planning cultivates a proactive mindset, enabling organizations to adapt to changing environments, seize opportunities, and navigate challenges with resilience. Ultimately, strategic planning equips organizations with a roadmap for success, empowering them to make informed decisions, drive innovation, and achieve sustainable growth.



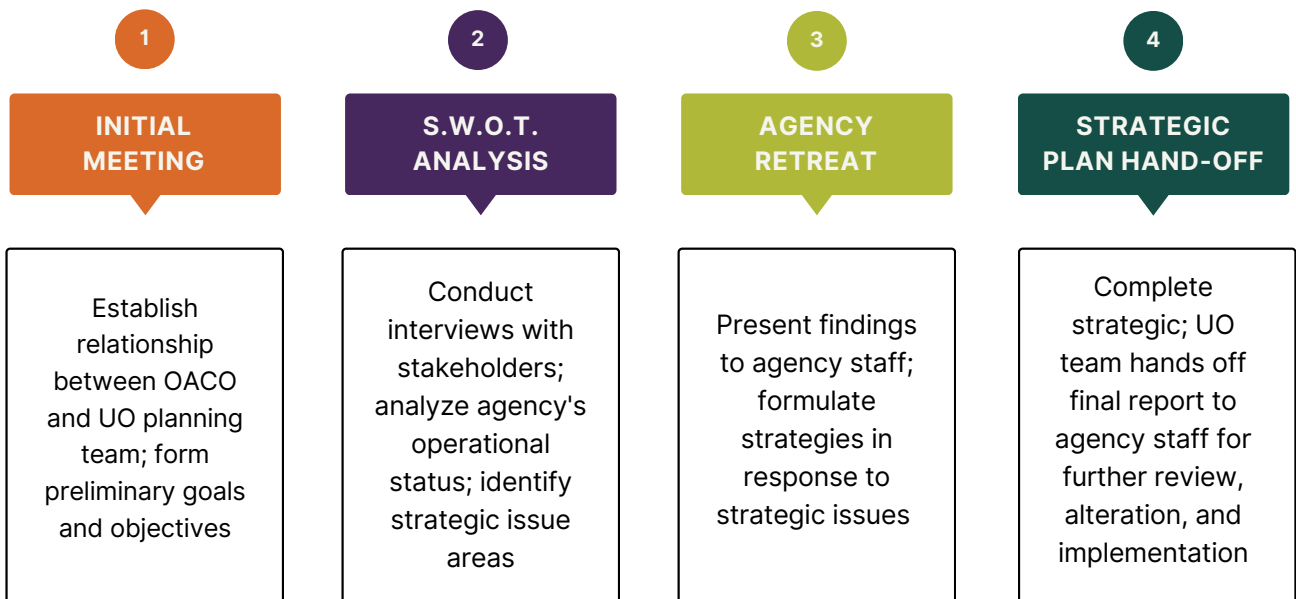
This strategic plan aims to provide a blueprint for the OACO's actions. It cannot predict the future, nor does it seek to establish rigid statutes that cannot evolve over time. Executing this strategic plan will likely not be a smooth, predictable process; instead, it will require flexibility and sound judgement on behalf of administrative leadership. This document reviews the OACO's current operations and drafts broad milestones that will guide their operations for the upcoming biennium. As such, it is a collaborative document that represents hours of strategizing, deliberation, and teamwork on behalf of both the UO planning team and agency staff. While administrative goals may change, the UO team hopes that this report will guide the OACO as they transition into the 2023-2025 biennium

Methodology

Summary of Methods

The creation of this plan involved four main components, as depicted in the flowchart below. Collaboration between the UO planning team and the OACO began on April 19, 2023, and concluded on June 13, 2023. First, the UO team held an initial meeting with Director Lee to discuss the agency's preliminary goals and motivations for pursuing a strategic plan. The team then began a series of S.W.O.T. interviews with relevant stakeholders to assess the agency's organizational status. After aggregating feedback from these stakeholders, the team recommended several strategic priorities that warrant the agency's attention. Together with the entire agency's staff, the UO team formulated a series of strategies in response to these issue areas. The S.W.O.T. analysis and subsequent strategic recommendations make up the crux of this report and can be found on page 38.

Four-Step Methods Process



Bryson's 10-Step Strategic Planning Model

While there are many ways to create a strategic plan, the UO planning team relied on Bryson's 10-Step Model to guide their process [ii]. Bryson's "strategic change cycle" applies private sector strategic planning concepts to the public sector. While the ten steps are outlined sequentially below, in practice, they may not occur in perfect sequence. The bulk of the UO planning team's work involved **Steps 4-6**. The OACO will continue to act on **Steps 7-10**.

Step 1: Initiate and Agree on the Strategic Planning Process

The OACO's Executive Director, Albert Lee, formally commits to participating in the University of Oregon's planning process. In the classroom, UO planning team members are assigned to the agency based on their stated preferences.

Step 2: Identify Organizational Mandates

The UO planning team learn about the OACO's goals, processes, and statutory mandates. Understanding current operations, as well as administrative expectations, is a crucial step in determining what activities might be eliminated from, restructured, or added to the agency's roster.

Step 3: Clarify Organization's Mission and Values

The agency's mission statement is an integral part of its identity, both guiding internal functions and informing the public. In the team's initial client meeting with Director Lee, they learn about the OACO's values, goals, and any relevant stakeholders that influence the agency's success.

Step 4: Assess the Agency's External and Internal Environments

The UO planning team conducts a series of S.W.O.T. interviews to identify the OACO's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. They also read supplemental documents, such as website materials, legislative bills, and budget information, to better understand the agency's position. More detail on the S.W.O.T. analysis can be found on page 38.

Step 5: Identify Strategic Issues

Based on the S.W.O.T. analysis, the UO team pinpoints major organizational problems and their contributing factors, homing in on strategic issues that should be prioritized.

Step 6: Formulate Strategies and a Plan to Manage Issues

The UO team and OACO staff hold a collaborative “retreat” to discuss the results of the S.W.O.T. interviews. Afterward, the team identifies strategic patterns that emerge across rhetoric, choices, actions, and consequences. This strategic plan reflects the results of that process.

Step 7: Review and Adopt the Strategies and the Plan

Here, the strategic plan is handed off to the OACO for review and implementation, marking the end of the UO team’s involvement. The OACO modifies the plan to suit their needs and capabilities and begins adopting its recommendations.

Step 8: Establish an Effective Organizational Vision

This step encourages the OACO to craft a “vision” of their future successes. Staff members should feel empowered and mobilized to pursue the agency’s mission; the strategic plan should reflect this vision for growth and improvement.

Step 9: Develop an Effective Implementation Process

The OACO builds capacity for the sustained implementation of this and future strategic plans to ensure that their organizational “regime” is stable, long-lasting, and flexible to evolving needs.

Step 10: Reassess Strategies and the Strategic Planning Process

After some time has passed, the OACO reflects on their plan's effectiveness and assess the need for adaptation and change. The administration should be willing to modify this plan, or craft a new plan, as the agency’s environmental and sociopolitical contexts evolve.



Chapter 1

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

About the OACO

Mission Statement

The Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs), leaders of underrepresented communities in Oregon, share their expertise and knowledge to inform equity in state policy. The OACs research issues, educate the public, and provide advice to state policy and decision makers, including the Governor, legislators, and state agency leadership. The OACs are continually looking for ways to improve the lives and livelihoods of all Oregonians and encourage diverse leadership in state government. The Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO) was established to support the statutory work of the four OACs [iii]:

- Oregon Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA)
- Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA)
- Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA)
- Oregon Commission for Women (OCFW)

History & Operations

Between the 1960s and 1990s, the State of Oregon established four state advocacy commissions (OACs) within the Department of Administrative Services, each with a dedicated agency and a mission to support equity, leadership, and public policy initiatives for their communities: Black, Hispanic, Asian & Pacific Islander, and female Oregonians, respectively. However, the OACs were defunded in 2003, leaving commissioners to continue their advocacy work on a strictly volunteer basis. The Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO) was established by statute in 2005 to support and advise the volunteer efforts of the four commissions. The OACO assists commissioners in their statutory duties, which include: serving as a liaison with the legislature and the Governor's Office; recommending and developing equitable policies to address social issues; building bridges between marginalized groups and government services; supporting coalition-building and resource leverage; testifying before the legislature; and generating policy research [iv]. Each commission adheres to the same mission of enhancing economic, social, legal, and political equality within their communities. The OACs represent approximately 97,000 Black Oregonians; 233,000 Asian & Pacific Islander Oregonians; 593,000 Hispanic Oregonians; and 2.2 million women [v].

In 2008, the OACO became fully operational after hiring their first Executive Director and Executive Assistant. Since then, the organization has expanded their permanent positions to support four full-time staff members (4.0 FTE): an Executive Director, an Executive Support Specialist, a Public Affairs Specialist, and an Operations & Policy Analyst. These staff operate as a politically neutral body under the authority of the Governor's Office, in support of the statutory charges of the four OACs. Each commission is comprised of eleven volunteer members: nine members of the public, appointed by the Governor, and two Legislators, appointed by the Senate President and Speaker of the House [vi].

Programs

The OACO provides many services to the OACs, such as helping commissioners cultivate relationships with government entities and community partners, encouraging citizens to participate in civic activities, and increasing minority representation within government leadership positions. Under the OACO's guidance, the commissions follow a community-centric framework by allowing community members to attend commission meetings and providing scholarships to encourage citizens to pursue culturally focused leadership and development opportunities. The OACO also seeks to develop relationships with research partners that will assist the commissioners in developing literature reviews related to the OACO's seven strategic priority areas: Jobs & the Economy; Justice, Safety, & Policing; Housing & Stable Families; Health & Healthcare; Civic Engagement; and Environmental Justice. This research educates the public and informs the state legislature about relevant policy issues that impact marginalized communities. Overall, the OACO looks to ensure that commissioners are equipped with the necessary resources to make lasting change within their communities.

The OACO's sole statutory mandate is deceptively simple:

"The Administrator of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office shall provide each commission served by the office with the administrative support needed by the commission to carry out the statutory duties of the commission. Subject to any applicable provisions of the State Personnel Relations Law, the administrator shall employ all persons necessary for the operation of the office, prescribe the duties of those employees and establish the compensation payable to those employees." [vii]

However, the statutory mandates of the OACs are wide-ranging and difficult to fulfill. Until 2021, the agency functioned with 2.0-2.5 FTE staff positions that served 44 commission members. Despite its recent expansion, the agency faces ongoing limitations in capacity, requiring adaptability among its personnel. In its collaborations with four functionally-independent commissions, the agency has found it helpful to divide tasks into four focus areas: advocacy, public policy research, leadership development, and partnerships [i].

Ultimately, the OACO seeks to build public trust in government and encourage civic engagement by pursuing the following objectives [viii]:

- Provide government leaders with insights from underrepresented communities
 - Advise the Governor
 - Advise the legislature
- Build trust and communication
 - Ensure that the advocacy commissions are an avenue of communication between government and community
 - Establish trust in state government with populations historically excluded from participation
- Strengthen civic engagement for a stronger democracy
 - Provide education on government processes and functions
 - Increase engagement within underrepresented communities
 - Encourage diverse community voices in government
 - Develop and train civic leaders
- Research disparate impacts
 - Research issues that impact the constituent communities represented by the advocacy commissions
 - Share findings with community and government leaders

Health Equity Project

During the 2022 Legislative Short Session, Oregon passed HB 4052, a two-pronged measure to tackle health inequities across the state. In conjunction with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), which has begun a pilot program to administer grants in support of racial equity, HB 4052 allocated \$404,927 to the OACO for the creation of an affinity group task force. Composed of leaders of communities of color, this task force conducts health policy research and provides the OHA with recommendations for grant resource allocations [ix]. To this end, the agency onboarded three additional, limited-duration positions in 2022.

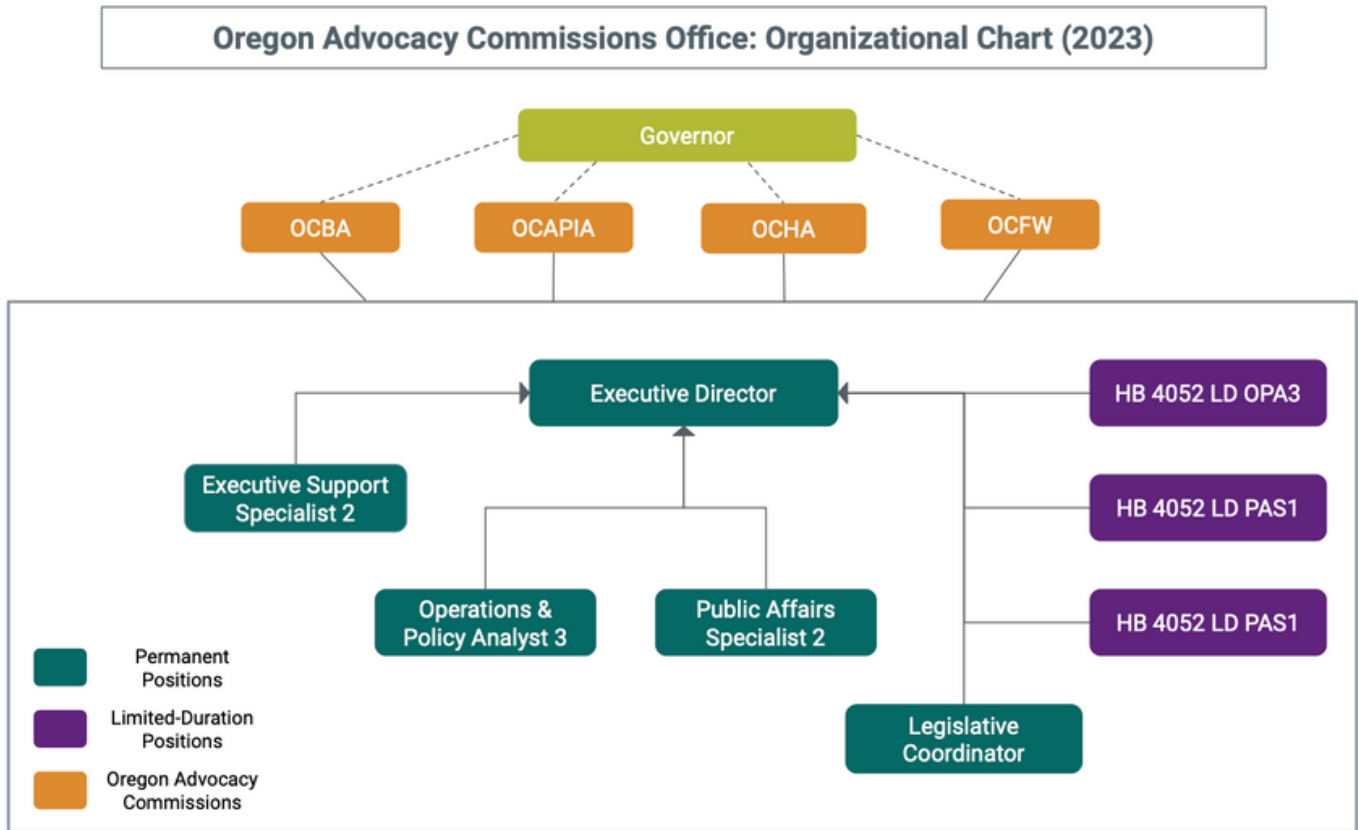
The agency awaits the results of HB 2925, which would extend the deadline of this project into the next biennium, thereby allowing the agency to maintain these temporary positions. However, there is no guarantee that this bill will be passed; failure to renew these positions will result in their dissolution.

Organizational Structure

Executive Director Lee joined the agency in July 2021, prompting a complete turnover in staff [i]. Under his leadership, the OACO has expanded from 2.0 FTE positions to 5.89 FTE positions. Since July 2021, the agency has cycled rapidly through staff; six positions were filled a total of thirteen times by nine different people. The agency saw an overall increase of 280% in temporary and permanent positions in quite a short period. Despite these challenges, the agency continued to provide administrative support to the OACs while gradually reaching a point of relative stability in staffing. The agency hopes to maintain this stability by ensuring that funds are allocated to support all current positions. It awaits the results of HB 2925, which would renew the Health Equity Task Force for at least another year. Additional funds would also secure permanent placement for the Legislative Coordinator, a position added in February 2023. The Legislative Coordinator has been an invaluable asset for the agency, initiating orientation procedures with new commissioners and offering legislative expertise. Unfortunately, none of these temporary positions are guaranteed to continue into the upcoming cycle. Their dissolution, if it occurs, will be a tremendous loss of manpower for the agency.

The organizational chart below depicts the agency's staffing structure as of June 2023. While this chart denotes specific titles for permanent staff members, the roles and tasks of individual staff often overlap and merge due to the agency's size constraints and the expansive scope of their statutory duties [viii]. To reiterate, the limited-duration positions have not yet been granted the funds to continue into the new biennium. On the contrary, renewal of the three health equity positions and of the Legislative Coordinator has *not* been secured for the upcoming biennium, and it is very likely that these positions will expire on June 30. These losses in staffing will pose a considerable challenge for an agency already struggling with capacity limits. This strategic plan acknowledges the severity of these losses, but hopes that the agency will nonetheless proceed with their strategic planning efforts. An internal redistribution of tasks and a reassessment of goals will like follow the departure of these positions. The UO team hopes that the agency can use this opportunity to capitalize on the execution of this plan. Indeed, such downsizing underscores the need for a strategic, deliberate evaluation of the agency's existing resources, goals, and priorities.

Figure 1.1: Organizational Chart for the OACO (as of June 2023)



This chart reflects the agency's organizational position at the close of FY2021-2023. However, maintaining the three HB 4052 positions and the Legislative Coordinator require additional legislative funds; renewal of these funds is currently pending and not guaranteed.

Budget & Expenses

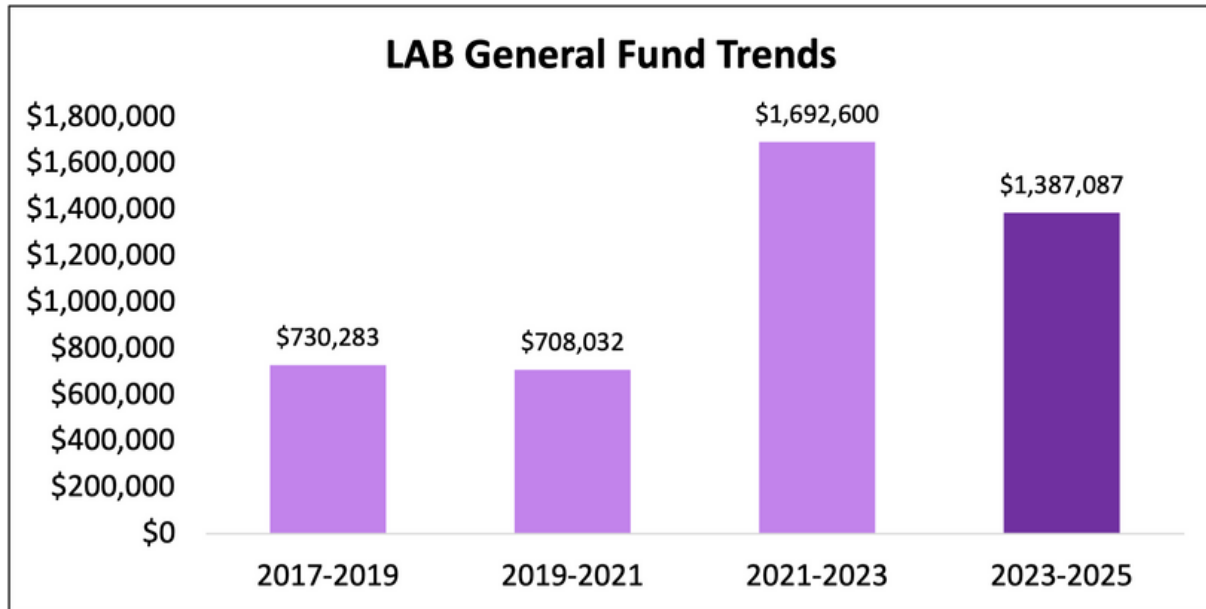
The OACO was granted \$1.39 million in General Fund appropriations for the 2023-2025 biennium. While commissioners are permitted to solicit donations, the General Fund represents 99% of the OACO's total budget. In addition, each commission is allotted \$6,515 in General Funds for the biennium. Commissioners that earn less than \$50,000 per annum may elect to receive compensation for commission-related activities at an amount equal to the legislature's daily per diem rate in Salem, OR. At the time of this report's publication, that rate is \$155.00/day. The legislature has yet to pass HB 2925, which would extend the limited-duration health equity affinity group task force, or HB 3313, which would allow the OACO and the four commissions to employ paid interns and intern supervisors [x, xi]. While the agency's budget has seen substantial increases in recent years, the 2023-2025 Legislatively Adopted Budget marks a decrease of 18% from the previous budget cycle, underscoring their chronic lack of funding. Budget trends are depicted in Graph 1.2 on page 16.

The OACO receives nearly all of their financial support from the Oregon State Treasury's General Fund. Each budget cycle covers a biennium that begins on July 1 of an odd-numbered year and concludes on June 30 of the next odd-numbered year. The agency's budget cycle follows Oregon's three-phase state budgeting process. First, the agency submits their Agency Request Budget for the upcoming biennium to the CFO by September 1 of the year prior. Then, the Governor and CFO review the requested budget, making any necessary changes based on current government priorities, budget policies, and the Tax Expenditure Report; they present their modified version of the agency's budget requests – the Governor's Recommended Budget – to the state legislature in January. Finally, legislative committees review the recommended budget, holding public hearings to solicit feedback from agency personnel and members of the public. After some deliberation, the legislature votes to confirm each budget bill into a series of laws that make up the Legislatively Adopted Budget, which is enacted as the official Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB) for the biennium [xii].

From FY2019-2021 to FY2021-2023, the OACO saw a 139% increase in General Fund appropriations. This increase allowed the agency to add a full-time Public Affairs Specialist position (1.0 FTE); increase the Operations and Policy Analyst to a 1.0 FTE role; increase the rate of pay for the newly onboarded Executive Director; and add three part-time, limited-duration positions to support HB 4052's health equity project [xiii]. These three positions share a combined 1.89 FTE.

As depicted below, the agency faces a considerable loss in resources for the next budget cycle and will require increased, sustained, and stable funding from the government to expand their capabilities.

Graph 1.2: LAB General Fund Appropriations for the OACO



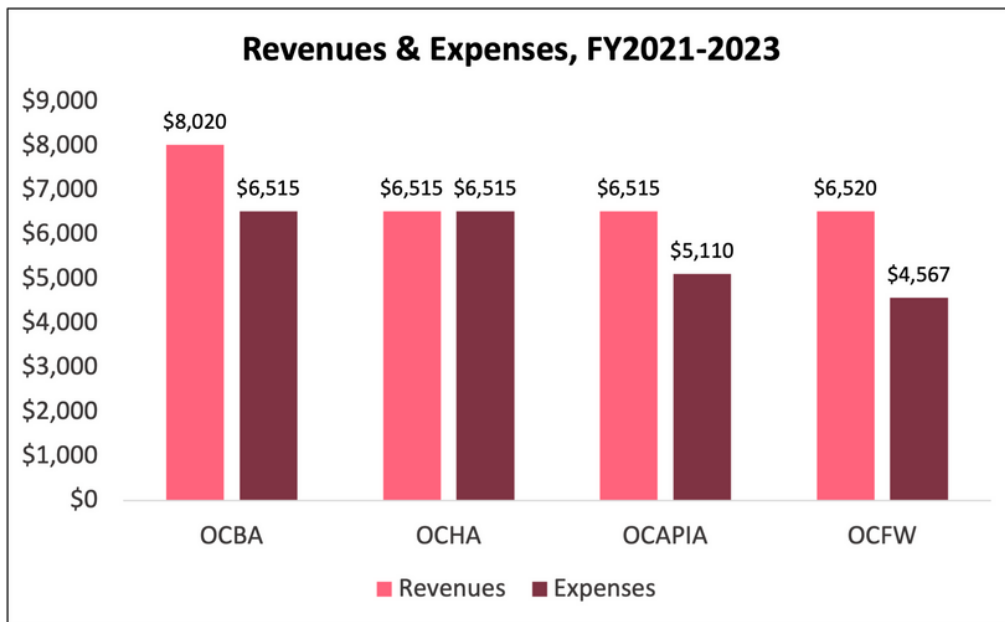
This graph depicts trends in LAB General Funds across multiple budget cycles. FY2021-2023 marked a significant increase in General Funds, but these increases are not stable; the upcoming biennium faces an 18% decrease in General Funds. While General Fund allocations are not equivalent to total revenues, the difference is so slight that studying General Fund trends provides an accurate snapshot of the agency's budget changes over time.

While the amount specified in the Legislatively Approved Budget [xiv], once passed, is final, there are additional means to increase commission funds. The legislature can introduce and pass bills throughout the legislative session – HB 4052, passed in 2022, is one such example of a mid-cycle expansion in staffing, programming, and funding. However, passing bills requires robust support and initiative from members of the legislature. The OACs and the OACO are also authorized to solicit donations or receive grant funding; however, current staff levels restrict their capacity to engage in fundraising or grant writing efforts. Graph 1.3 depicts all donations received during FY2021-2023 for each commission and for the OACO, respectively – these amounts were negligible. Donation amounts are unlikely to change unless the commissions increase their fundraising activities.

Chart 1.3: Donations Solicited during FY2021-2023



Graph 1.4: Revenues and Expenses for All Commissions, FY2021-2023



None of the commissions exceeded total revenues for FY2021-2023. Values for FY2023-2025 will likely resemble those of the previous cycle, barring substantial changes in activities.

Table 1.5: Total Revenue Appropriations for FY2021-2023

Total Revenues for FY2021-2023						
	OACO Admin	HB 4052	OCBA	OCAPIA	OCHA	OCFW
General Funds	\$1,692,600	\$404,927	\$6,515	\$6,515	\$6,515	\$6,515
Donations	\$1,500	\$0	\$1,505	\$0	\$0	\$5
Total Revenue	\$1,694,100	\$404,927	\$8,020	\$6,515	\$6,515	\$6,520

Table 1.6: Total Expenditures for FY 2021-2023

Expenditures	OACO	Combined Totals
Personal Services	\$33,316	\$93,722
Services & Supplies	\$(53,260)	\$(25,139)
Total Expenditures	\$(19,944)	\$68,633
Remaining Cash Balance	\$(19,944)	\$68,633

Preliminary Goals & Concerns

Prior to the development of this report, the OACO sought to address several ongoing strategic issues. These issues were discussed in the initial meeting between Executive Director Lee, Legislative Coordinator Guerrero, and the UO planning team. During this meeting, the Director and Legislative Coordinator expressed their frustration with current working dynamics between commissioners and the agency, citing a lack of staff capacity as a major hindrance to operations. Each advocacy commission has broad, expansive duties, with limited capacity (and no dedicated staff members) to fulfill them. Commission members serve on a strictly voluntary basis and rely on the OACO for administrative support; the OACO, meanwhile, relies entirely on funding allocations from the legislature to maintain their administrative services. The agency finds their current size inadequate to sufficiently address the needs of every commissioner. Due to chronic underfunding and resource scarcity, none of the OACs have ever successfully satisfied all of their statutory mandates – as such, the feasible scope of their work is quite limited. The OACO believes strongly in their mission and in their ability to create social change, but remain stymied by budget and staffing constraints.

In addition, there appears to be a lack of engagement from commissioners and a general misalignment in duties, roles, and workplace expectations. Commission members often look to the OACO to initiate legislative advocacy work, rather than leading these efforts themselves. Moving forward, the OACO hopes to empower the commissions to lead advocacy and coalition-building within their respective communities, while the agency staff take on their intended role as advisors and administrators. Director Lee also feels that the agency lacks a strong outward-facing presence in Oregon. Branding and mission clarity are often inconsistent across the commissions, and the public has a poor understanding of the agency's relationship with the OACs. The initial meeting with the UO team made evident the need for both internal and external restructuring and for clarification of the agency's identity and their intersection with the four commissions.

Market Sector Context: Equity and Advocacy in Oregon

Here, the UO planning team provides a brief overview of the OACO’s market sector. When thinking about the organization’s long-term goals, priorities, and capabilities, it is useful to situate the agency within their regional context. There are numerous entities performing political and social advocacy across the state; listed here are the OACO’s most prominent peers in Oregon.

Racial Justice Council

The Racial Justice Council (RJC) was established by HB 2167 in June 2021 [xv]. The Council’s mission aims to target structural racial inequities relating to mass incarceration & criminal justice, housing access, health, economic opportunities and wealth creation, and educational attainment. By statutory mandate, the Council supports and directs policy research and data collection; provides principles to inform the Governor’s FY2023-2025 Recommended Budget and Tax Expenditures Report; and makes policy recommendations to the Governor and State legislature. Its main task is to create a “Racial Justice Action Plan” with six areas of focus:

- Criminal Justice Reform & Police Accountability
- Housing & Homelessness
- Economic Opportunity
- Health Inequity
- Environmental Equity
- Education Recovery

Each focus area has a corresponding committee comprised of RJC sitting members. The RJC is made up of 34 council members, all appointed by Governor Kotek, the Council Chair. Each member makes a one-year term commitment at minimum, with no upper term limits. Council members are high-profile leaders in Oregon’s BIPOC and Tribal communities. The council meets once monthly for two-hour sessions; individual committees meet virtually two to four times a month to address specific initiatives. The Council is staffed by the Governor’s Equity and Racial Justice Director, a Racial Justice Advisor, and a Policy Coordinator. The RJC received \$598,516 in General Fund allocations during FY2021–2023 LAB. These funds supported two permanent positions (2.00 FTE) – a Principal Executive Manager and an Executive Support Specialist [xiii, xvi].

The mission, values, and objectives of the RJC overlap considerably with those of the OACO. While the RJC has a smaller budget and staff than the OACO, they also operate under the authority of the Governor and carry out her agenda. Such similarities in mission and governmental position have, at times, created a sense of redundancy across the two entities. The RJC undeniably plays an essential role in Oregon's efforts to promote racial justice, but their presence may, at times, divert attention and resources away from the OACO. Thus, a strong understanding of the OACO's distinctive capabilities and statutory duties is needed to ensure that the agency maintains a clear sense of identity moving forward.

Unite Oregon

Unite Oregon is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization led by BIPOC, immigrant, rural, and low-income community members striving to “build a unified, intercultural movement for justice” across the state [xvii]. They encourage legislative advocacy, community organizing, and participation in citizen advisory committees. Their work centers on six “pillars” of community impact: Climate Justice, Housing Justice, Community Safety, Education Equity, Economic Justice, and Health Equity. The organization was founded in 2002 as the Center for Intercultural Organizing, and later merged with Oregon Action in 2016 to become Unite Oregon. With chapters in Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington counties and the Rogue Valley region, Unite Oregon has a wide-reaching community presence. Their current membership exceeds 22,000. Unite Oregon has 10 current Board Members and employs 54 staff across their headquarters and various chapters. They earned \$2,018,893 in total revenue during FY2019 [xviii].

Other Advocacy Organizations

Many non-profit organizations work to address issues of social injustice across the state of Oregon, including [xix]:

- Oregon Justice Resource Center
- Oregon NAACP Oregon
- Rural Organizing Project
- The Portland African American Leadership Forum
- Urban League
- Center for Dialogue and Resolution
- Centro Latino Americano
- Community Alliance of Lane County
- The Next Door
- Rogue Action Center
- Restorative Justice Equity Group
- Oregon National Organization for Women (NOW) chapter

The OACO would do well to collaborate with many of these organizations to broaden their community outreach efforts. However, the OACO's distinctive advantage within their market sector lies in their unique relationship with the Governor's Office. As a government agency, the OACO receives a level of legitimacy, support, and public status that is less easily conferred to nonprofits. The agency can communicate commissioners' perspectives and policy goals directly to the Governor, and vice-versa. Granted, this relationship means that the OACO cannot extend any political opinions of their own; they exist to represent the Governor's agenda and are thus afforded less agency than many of the groups listed above. With adequate resources, the OACO hopes to better leverage their legislative connections and maximize their reach within Oregon communities.



Chapter 2

CLIENT RESEARCH

Client Research: Advocacy across the U.S.

The OACO has often felt overlooked and underrepresented in the legislature, which established expansive statutory duties for the OACs and yet routinely denies their requests for substantial funding increases. The agency found it useful to compare themselves with similar advocacy groups across the U.S. to better understand whether their financial limitations are typical or unusual within their nationwide market sector. The UO planning team gathered data on various state advocacy commissions, with an eye towards legislative budgets, commission sizes, and staff-commissioner ratios. While the limited scope of this strategic plan prevented the team from conducting an exhaustive survey, the following information should provide valuable insights into the OACO's relative position and demonstrate its need for further resources. Such research might be continued by a future staff member or intern to generate a comprehensive assessment. All data listed below was freely accessible to the public.

Washington State Advocacy Commissions

Washington, like Oregon, has four state advocacy commissions: the Washington State Women's Commission [xx], the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs [xxi], the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs [xxii], and the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs [xxiii]. Unlike Oregon, Washington does not have a centralized advisory office resembling the OACO. The four commissions appear to operate independently of one another.

At the structural level, the four Washington commissions function similarly to the Oregon commissions:

- Each commission is composed of nine Governor-appointed members.
- The members serve three-year terms and can be re-appointed.
- Two to four state Legislators can serve as additional members for two-year terms in a non-voting, advisory capacity.
- Each commission has two to three full-time, dedicated staff positions.

Washington Commission on African American Affairs (WCAAAA)

- Established in 1992
- 9 commission members
- 3 full-time staff (3.0 FTE)
 - Executive Director
 - Project Manager
 - Executive Assistant
- FY2021-2023 LAB: **\$861,000**

Washington's Black population: 350,100

Per capita budget: $\$861,000 / 350,100 = \2.46

Washington Commission on Hispanic Affairs (WCHA)

- 13 commission members
- 3 dedicated staff members (3.0 FTE)
 - Executive Director (appointed by the Governor)
 - Operations and Special Project Manager
 - Communications and External Relations Manager & Small Business Liaison
- FY2021-2023 Budget: **\$1.03 million**

Washington's Hispanic population: 1,065,860

Per capita budget: $\$1,030,000 / 1,065,860 = \0.96

Washington Commission for Asian Pacific American Affairs (WCAPAA)

- 11 Commissioners
- 3 dedicated staff (FTE 3.0)
 - Executive Director
 - Project Manager
 - Project Coordinator
- FY2021-2023 Budget: **\$910,000**

Washington's Asian American & Pacific Islander population: 840,240

Per capita budget: $(\$910,000) / (840,240) = \1.08

Washington State Women's Commission

- Established in 2018
- 13 Commission members
- 9 appointed by Governor
- 4 are current Legislators serving as non-voting advisory members for two-year terms
- Four subcommittees: Economic Opportunity, Economic Security, Safety, and Health
- 2 full-time staff members (2.0 FTE)
- FY2021-2023 Budget: **\$561,056**

Total female population in Washington: 3,861,750

Per capita budget: $\$561,056 / 3,861,750 = \0.15

San Francisco Human Rights Commission: Office of Racial Equity

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission's Office of Racial Equity is a dedicated commission that addresses racial disparities and promotes equity throughout the city. As part of the larger Human Rights Commission, the Office of Racial Equity plays a vital role in developing policies, initiatives, and programs that aim to dismantle systemic racism and ensure equal opportunities for all residents. The office works closely with community organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders to identify and address racial inequities, provide resources and support to affected communities, and promote racial solidarity and healing [xxiv].

Justice and Equity for Transformation Council

- Advisory council (voluntary basis)

Two dedicated staff (as shown on website)

- Community Engagement and Partnerships Director
- Policy Director

Internship programs: BA student intern; MPP student working as a Graduate Student

Researcher for Office of Racial Equity; another graduate student intern.

According to legislative ordinance, the Office should be staffed by an executive director and “no fewer than” four full-time employees (5.0 FTE).

Population served: all San Francisco racial minority groups.

Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs (ICHA)

As a non-partisan state agency, ICHA advocates for Idaho's Hispanic population, communicating between Latinx communities and the state government. ICHA was created to demonstrate the state's commitment to achieving social, political, economic, and educational equality for Hispanic residents through policy research and legislative advocacy [xxv].

- FY2022 budget: **\$418,400** (Governor's Recommended Budget)
 - \$250,300 General Fund
 - \$148,100 Dedicated
 - \$20,000 Federal Funds
- 9 volunteer commission board members
 - 2 appointed by the President Pro Tempore
 - 2 appointed by the Speaker of the House
 - 5 appointed by the Governor
- 3 dedicated staff positions (3.0 FTE)
- ICHA represents 257,892 Hispanic Residents (13.3% of state population)

Idaho's Hispanic population: 13.3% or 257,892

Total Idaho population: 1,939,033

Per capita budget: $(\$418,400) / (257,852) = \1.62

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW)

The MCSW is a state-established entity that reviews the social and political status of women and offers policy recommendations that would enhance equality and opportunity. It seeks to advance progress for women and girls in all aspects of society, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, language, ability, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation [xxvi].

- FY2022 Budget: **\$486,700**
 - Budget source: “Budgetary Retained Revenues” (direct appropriations from General Appropriation Act)
- 19 volunteer commissioners
 - 5 appointed by Governor
 - 4 by Senate President
 - 4 by Speaker of the House
 - 6 by Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators
 - Serve up to 3-year terms, eligible for renewal
- 6 dedicated staff members
 - Executive Director
 - Administration & Finance Director
 - Regional commissions Director
 - Communications & Marketing Director
 - Program & Research Director
 - Administrative Assistant
 - Finance & Administrative Assistant
 - Clerk & Executive Assistant
- Seasonal internships – up to four positions available to graduate and undergraduate students on rolling, seasonal basis
 - Program & Planning
 - Marketing & Communications
 - Regional commissions
 - Admin & Finance

Massachusetts’ total population: 6,981,974

Percent female: 51.5%

Total female population: 3,567,789

Per capita budget for MCSW: $(\$486,700) / (3,567,789) = \0.14

Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission (MAAPIC)

The MAAPIC was created to recognize and highlight the social value that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have brought to the state of Massachusetts. The commission addresses the sociopolitical needs specific to these demographic groups and promotes their wellbeing through policy research and advocacy [xxvii].

- Permanent commission, established 2006
- 21 volunteer commissioners serving 3-year terms
 - 3 appointed by Governor
 - 3 by President of the Senate
 - 3 by Speaker of the House
 - 3 by State Treasurer
 - 3 by State Secretary
 - 3 by Attorney General
 - 3 by state Auditor
- 7 staff members (FTE unclear)
 - Executive Director
 - Program & Research Director
 - Communications & Outreach Manager
 - Development & Communications Coordinator
 - Youth Coordinator
 - Policy Coordinator
 - Health & Pacific Islanders Coordinator
- FY2022 budget: \$250,400
- **FY2023 budget: \$456,053**
 - Supports \$150,531 worth of employee salaries
 - Additional \$38,803 in intern stipends
 - Paid internships for students are offered throughout the year at \$15/hour, 12 hours per month

Massachusetts' Asian and Pacific Islander population: $0.076 * 6,981,974 = 530,630$
Per capita budget for MAAPIC: $\$456,053 / 530,630 = \0.86

California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has been a leading force in promoting gender equity and addressing disparities in state laws, practices, and conditions that impact women and girls for over 50 years. Since its establishment as a state agency in 1965, the commission has played a crucial role in identifying and eliminating inequities in various aspects of life, including health, safety, employment, education, and representation in the military and media [xxviii].

- The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is supported by a dedicated team of 7 full-time staff members.
- The commission consists of 17 distinguished members.
- The members include 9 Public Members, 6 Legislative Members, and 2 Statutory Members.
- The appointment of commissioners is conducted by the appropriate authorities, such as the Gubernatorial, Senate, Assembly, or Statutory bodies.
- It is important to note that the commission's role does not involve direct responsibility for the appointment of commissioners.

Below is relevant information from the FY 21-22 Annual Report:

FY 21-22 Budget Summary

- Total Budget Authority for all funds: \$15,858,000
- Total Budget Authority – General Funds: \$3,869,000
- Total Budget Authority – General Funds for Local Assistance: \$5,000,000
- Total Budget Authority – College Student Center Sexual & Reproductive Health Prep Fund: \$6,989,000

Budget Breakdown:

- 87% - Grants and Local Assistance
- 7% Programs and Policy
- 6% Operations and Personnel
- Per Capita Budget:
- 15,858,000/19.78M = **\$0.80**

South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs

Over the past 30 years the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs (SCCMA) has been serving minority communities. Since its inception in 1993 where the CMA was first focused on understanding the socio-economic inequalities within the communities of African Americas. In 2003 the agency broadened their impact and began serving the Native American, Hispanic/Latino American, and Asian American communities within the state of South Carolina. With this expansion, the Commission for Minority Affairs developed the Minority Population Divisions, these divisions are managed by the Commission's advisory committees, each committee is focused on investigating the issues that directly impact their minority committee and is comprised of 17-23 committee members [xxix].

The South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs is supported by a dedicated team of nineteen staff members and one intern. Roles for the organization include:

- Executive Director (1)
- Chief of Staff (1)
- Director (4)
- Administration (2)
- Coordinator (5)
- Program Manager (3)
- Analyst (2)
- Statistician
- Visual Media Designer

Legislative Appropriations:

- FY2022 Total Appropriations Funds: \$2,027,435
- **FY2023 Total Appropriations Funds \$2,611,536**
- FY2023 Budget Request \$505,000
 - \$100,000 Office Expenses (Increased funding for relocated office suites and attendant expenses)
 - \$150,000 Reentry Database (Increased funding for reentry database management)
 - \$100,000 Publications (Increased funding for agency publications)
 - \$55,000 Non-recurring Costs (Funding for security system at new office)
 - \$100,000 Capital Request (Funding for multimedia production space)

South Carolina Minority Population: $0.357 * 5,282,634 = 1,885,900$

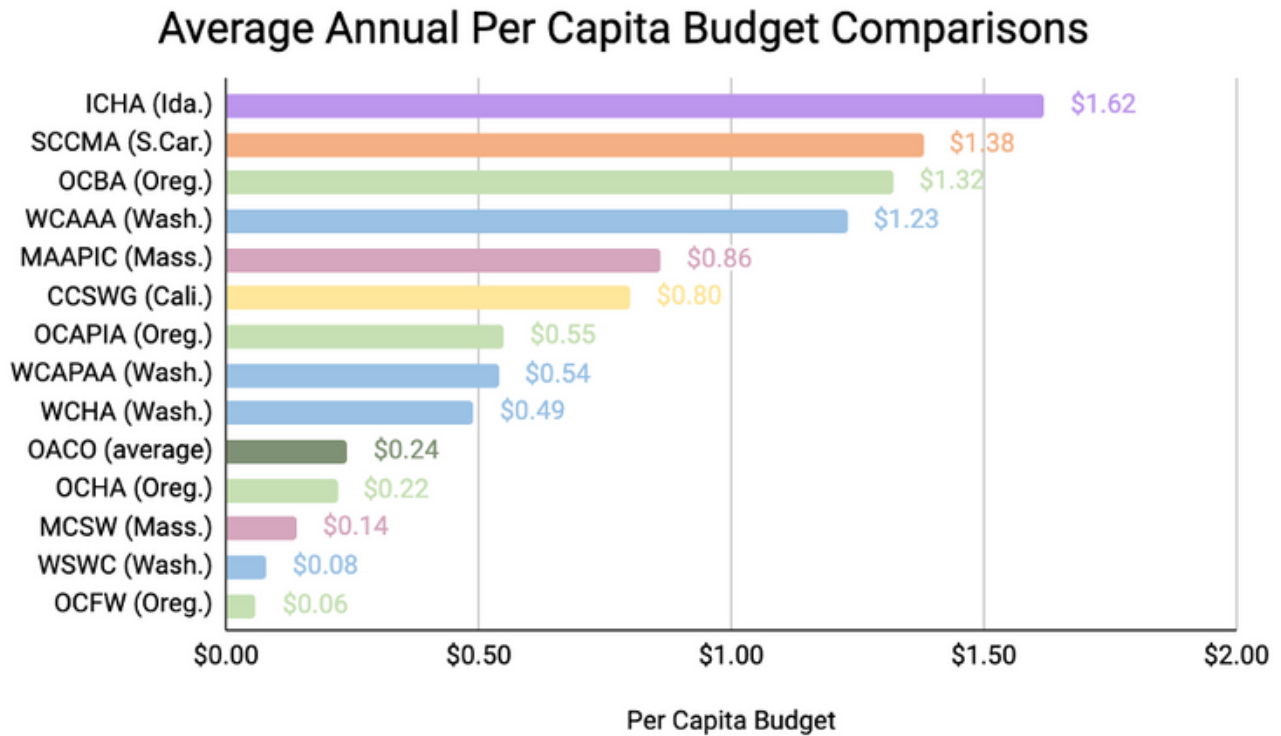
Per capita budget for SCCMA: $\$2,611,538 / 1,885,900 = \1.38

Market Comparisons

The UO planning team consolidated the above data into several graphs and charts that depict side-by-side comparisons, which shed light on critical factors such as budget allocations, staffing capacities, and the number of commissioners each entity accommodates. This detailed examination of comparable organizations aims to provide valuable insights that will inform strategic decision-making within the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO). By delving into these crucial metrics, the OACO can gain a deeper understanding of their nationwide market sector and explore avenues to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency in supporting underrepresented communities.

Below is a graph that provides comparisons and insights into the average annual budget per capita for the commissions that have been researched in this section. The average annual budget per capita is an important metric, as it indicates the financial resources allocated to commissions within their respective jurisdictions while accounting for variations in population size. By examining this data, the OACO can gain a better understanding of the financial support available to other state agencies. As is demonstrated by the graph, the OACO scores well below average in terms of legislative appropriations. Per capita allocations for each OAC are provided to indicate that per capita financial support for each constituency are not even; however, it is important to note that these per capita calculations were performed using 25% of the OACO's LAB, with the idea that the OACO can divide its resources and attentions equally among the four OACs. Actual legislative appropriations for the OACs average \$6,515 per biennium, as indicated in Table 1.5.

Graph 2.1: Average Annual Legislative Appropriations per Capita



**OACO's average annual per capita budget was calculated by halving the 2023-2025 LAB This figure was divided by the OACO's constituency, which represents all Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and female Oregonians. Per capita estimates for each commission are also presented here, based on dividing one-fourth of the OACO's budget by each representative constituency's total population in Oregon.*

In addition to examining financial resources, the UO team also compared staff capacities among these agencies. Sufficient personnel is a major asset to any organization and often the primary determinant of its ability to succeed. Table 2.2 on the following page displays the various agencies discussed in this section based on staff count, commission seats, and staff-commissioner ratios. These ratios were calculated by dividing staff counts by commission seats. Though such a metric oversimplifies an agency's total resources, it serves as a meaningful snapshot of their relative capacity to support the work of their commission members with dedicated, full-time staff.

Table 2.2: Staff-Commissioner Ratios

Agency	Staff	Commission Seats	Staff-Commissioner Ratios
South Carolina Commission on Minority Affairs	19	7	2.71
California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls	7	17	0.41
Washington State Commission on African American Affairs	3	9	0.33
Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs	3	9	0.33
Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission	7	21	0.33
Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women	6	19	0.32
Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs	3	11	0.27
Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs	3	11	0.27
Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office	8*	44	0.18
Washington State Women's Commission	2	13	0.15
Average values for dataset	6.1	16.1	0.53

**The OACO's ratio does not take into account that three staff positions are limited-duration and dedicated to HB 4052 health equity project, and therefore not heavily involved with the OACs. The agency's true ratio is likely even lower than projected – especially given the impending loss in staffing as they enter FY2023.*

The South Carolina Commission on Minority Affairs has the highest staff count (19) and a ratio of 2.71, making it an outlier in the dataset. The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has the next-highest ratio, 0.41. Several commissions have a ratio of 0.33, including the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs, Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission. The Washington State Women's Commission has the lowest ratio of 0.15 with 2 staff members and 13 commission seats. These figures highlight the variations in staffing and representation among the agencies and commissions. Note that the OACO falls well below the average staff-commissioner ratio, with merely eight staff responsible for advising forty-four commissioners (assuming that all commission seats are filled).

While this data has a small sample size, it is evident that the OACO remains significantly disadvantaged in both budget and staff allowances relative to their peers in the state advocacy market sector. Again, while further research is recommended to bolster these findings, the OACO's resource allocations appear to be atypical and below average, validating their requests for additional funding.



Chapter 3

S.W.O.T.
ANALYSIS

S.W.O.T. Analysis

The UO planning team performed a S.W.O.T. analysis to evaluate the OACO's operational status through a comprehensive analysis of four dimensions: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Conducting a S.W.O.T. analysis not only offers an overview of an organization's current performance, but also provides valuable insights into its potential future trajectory. By gathering input from a diverse panel of stakeholders, a S.W.O.T. analysis can reveal patterns of behavior that may not emerge by merely consulting administrative staff individually. This document represents the OACO's first series of S.W.O.T. interviews; the collected data provided the UO team with a basis for the strategic priorities that follow (see page 47). The agency would likely benefit by incorporating this process during any future renewal or redevelopment of this strategic plan. Such an approach allows for an ongoing evaluation of internal progress and a reassessment of strategic priorities, ensuring continued growth and improvement over time.



S.W.O.T. Methodology

The UO planning team conducted 21 S.W.O.T. interviews with key agency stakeholders, including staff members and current commission members, to gather information about the OACO. These interviews were performed one-on-one via Zoom or phone call and lasted approximately thirty minutes each. Stakeholders were asked to share their unique perspectives on the OACO's performance as an agency. In one instance, to accommodate an individual's scheduling needs, the team used an online survey in lieu of an interview.

Each interviewee was asked the same five general questions, as outlined below:

Describe the nature of your relationship with the OACO.

What are the OACO's strengths? In other words, what do they do well, from your perspective?

What are the agency's weaknesses or areas of improvement?

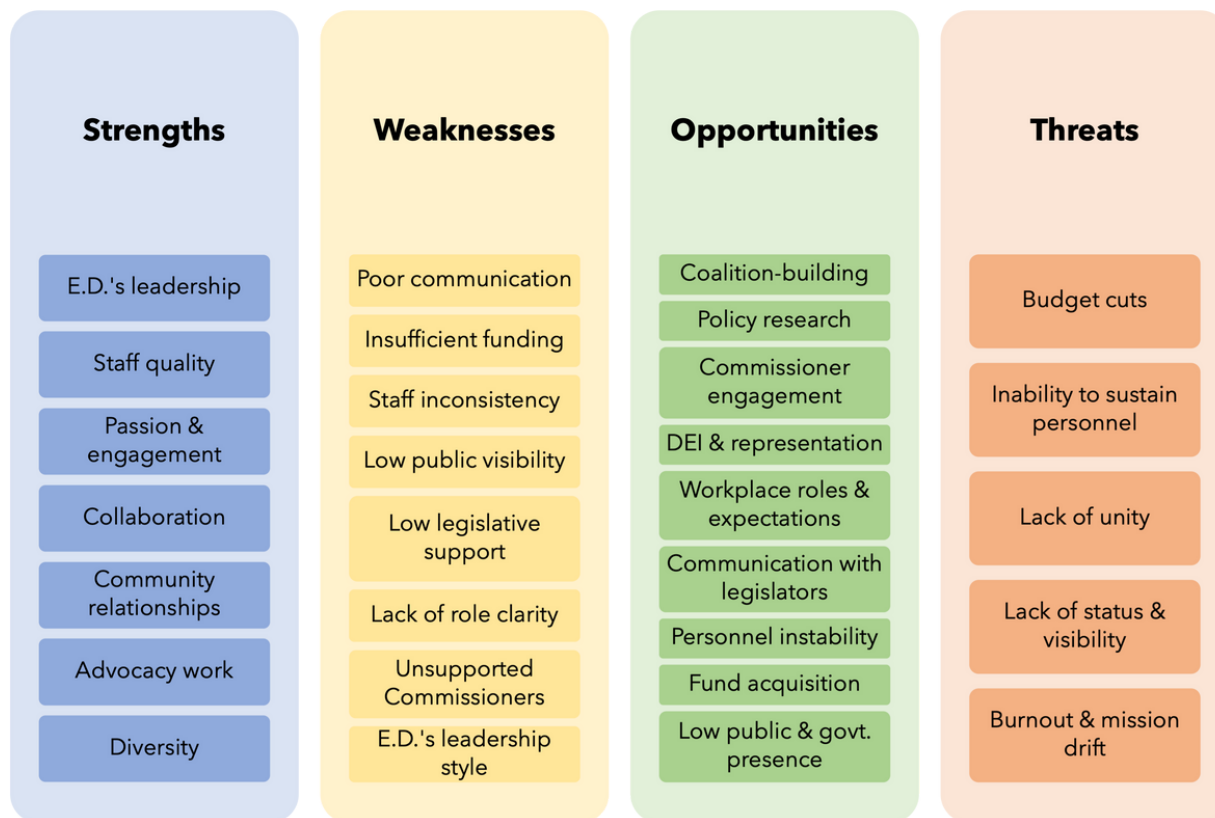
Can you identify any opportunities on the horizon that the agency could capitalize on?

Do you foresee any future threats that the agency should prepare for?

After all interviews were conducted, the UO team coded responses based on recurring themes that emerged across multiple respondents. The coded data can be found in Appendix B on page 70. Responses were coded anonymously to preserve the stakeholders' privacy. The UO team presented their findings to the entire OACO staff on May 17, 2023. There, the staff and planning team discussed the implications of the S.W.O.T. results, using this data to formulate the agency's strategic priorities for the 2023-2025 biennium.

S.W.O.T. Results Summary

Figure 3.1: Summary of S.W.O.T. Results



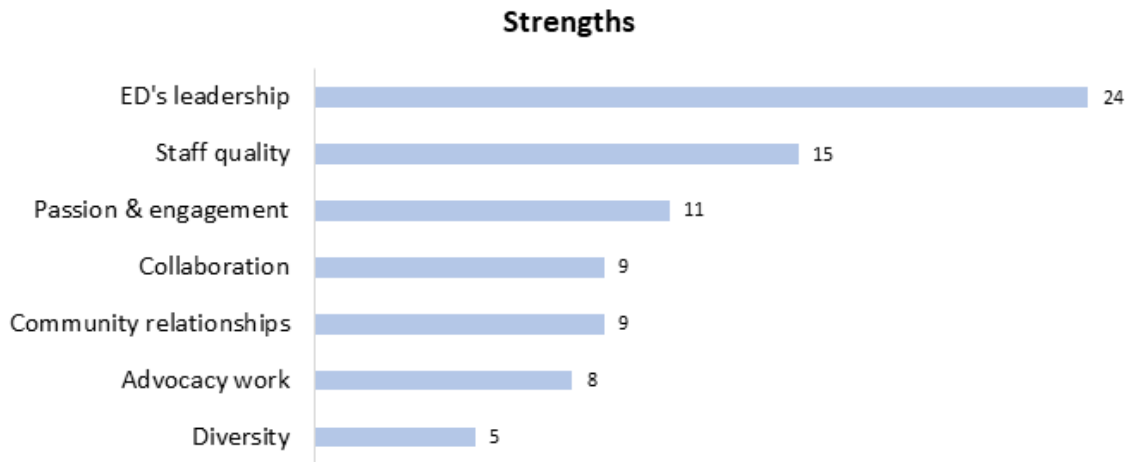
Strengths

Stakeholders were eager to praise the OACO when asked about their organizational strengths. When thinking about future expansions and internal improvements, the OACO should never lose sight of these strengths; they serve as proof of the agency’s hard work and constitute a valuable foundation from which to expand their capabilities. Listed below in descending order are the most common strengths cited by respondents, with frequency included in parentheses:

- Executive Director Lee’s management and leadership (24)
- Hardworking, passionate staff (15)
- Passion & engagement among staff and stakeholders (11)
- Meaningful and powerful relationships with public organizations and community members (9)

- Collaboration efforts among staff and with commissioners (9)
- Meaningful, important advocacy work that benefits Oregonians (8)
- Diversity of perspectives, experiences, and identities among staff and commissioners (5)

Figure 3.2

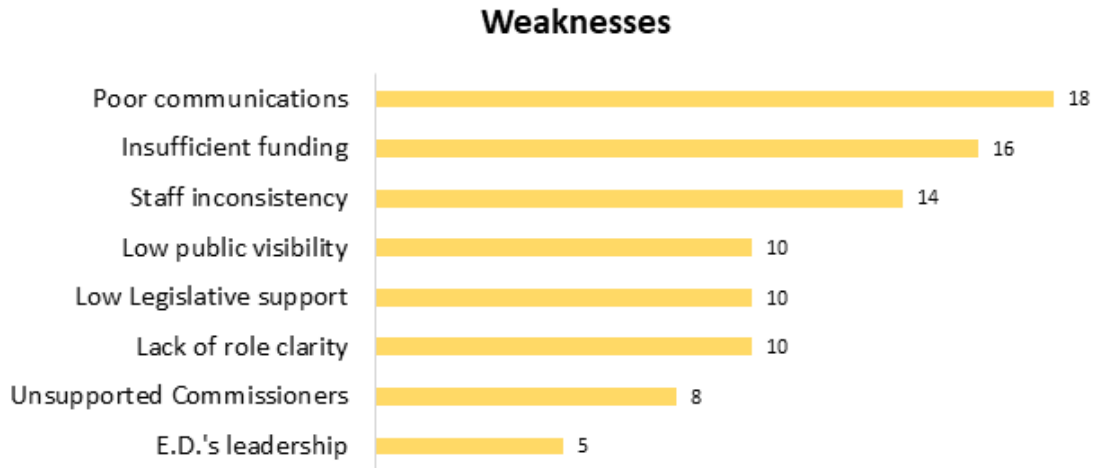


Weaknesses

Listed below are the most common sources of constructive feedback provided by stakeholders. These themes represent areas of improvement or sources of conflict for the agency. In some instances, these weaknesses may be driven by factors outside of the agency's control, but are nonetheless crucial to consider when setting goals for the future.

- Poor interpersonal and virtual communication with commissioners (18)
- Insufficient funding and resources to achieve goals (16)
- Performance inconsistency, inexperience, and high turnover among staff (14)
- Low public awareness and visibility (10)
- The agency faces a lack of legislative support, both in terms of financial resources and vocal endorsement (10)
- Lack of role clarity and expectations in the workplace, both for staff and commissioners (10)
- Commissioners feel unsupported in their positions by OACO staff & management (8)
- The Executive Director's leadership sometimes lacks consistency, training, and guidance, both internally and with the OACs (5)

Figure 3.3



Opportunities

Stakeholders identified potential opportunity areas that the OACO might capitalize on for future improvements. The agency would do well to identify items that can be feasibly achieved with their current budget projections. Less-feasible ideas should serve as aspirational goals for future expansion, funds permitting.

- The OACs can use their connections and positions to build community coalitions (24)
- Increase volume of policy and academic research produced by the OACs (24)
- Increase commissioner engagement for public events, participation in meetings, and advocacy work (12)
- Expand diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by selecting commissioners that represent the entire state, not just the Willamette Valley (11)
- Expand OACO personnel and improve stability by preventing high staff turnover (9)
- Improve communications with the Governor’s Office and the legislature (9)
- Set clear goals, expectations, and roles in the workplace (9)
- Acquire more funding by expanding the Legislatively Approved Budget, or via fundraising and grant writing efforts (7)
- Elevate the agency’s presence and status in both public-facing and government contexts (7)

Figure 3.4

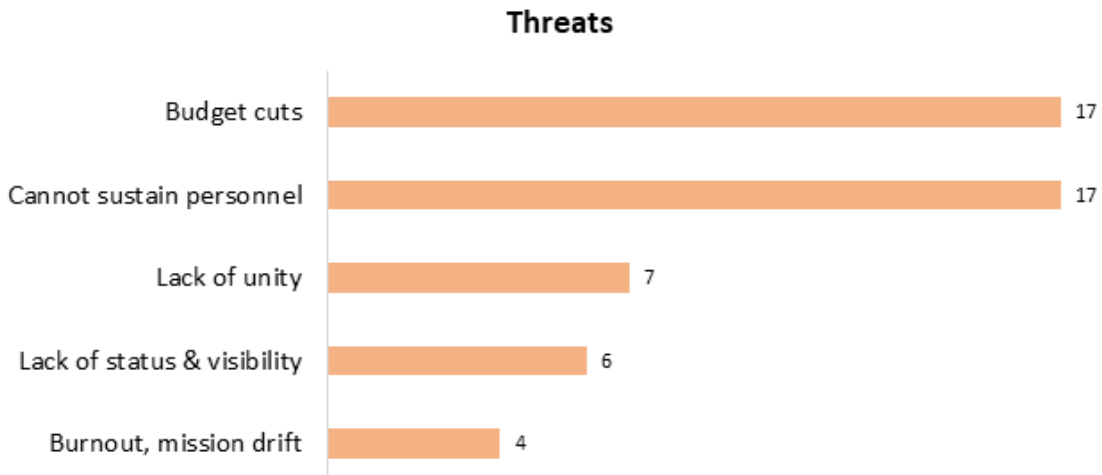


Threats

The final component of the S.W.O.T. interview process proved the most challenging for many respondents, who often struggled to pinpoint specific obstacles to the agency's future successes. In many regards, the threats listed below represent potential outcomes if current weaknesses are not adequately addressed and instead permitted to fester. While these threats are long-term, forecasted, and therefore hypothetical, they should not be overlooked in planning efforts.

- Continued budget cuts will prevent growth and stability (17)
- The OACO and the OACs may struggle to maintain staff and membership in the long-term (17)
- Lack of unity in mission and efforts among the OACs (7)
- Continued lack of public status and outward-facing visibility (6)
- Burnout among personnel and mission drift (4)

Figure 3.5



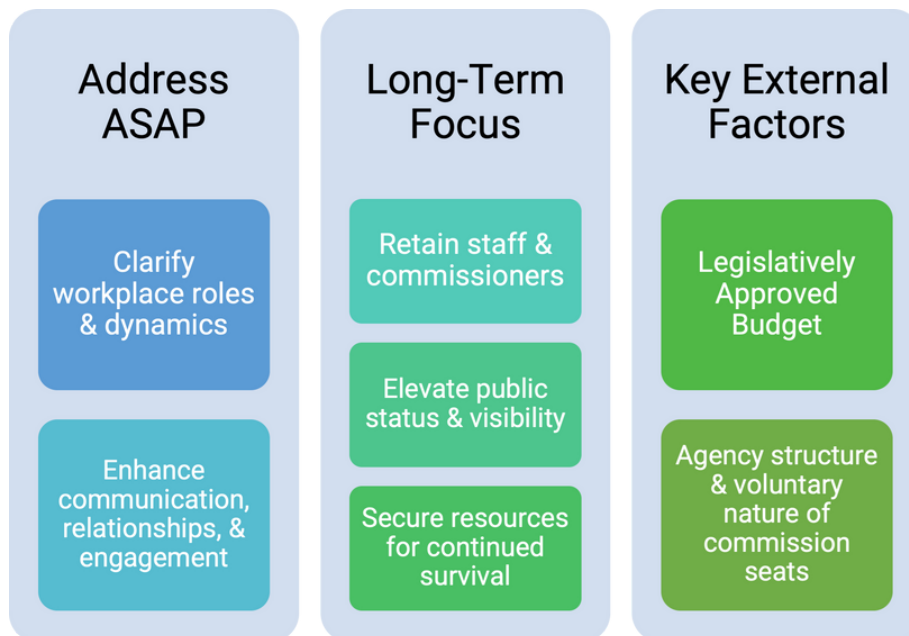
Conclusion of S.W.O.T. Analysis

When reviewing the above data, it's important to differentiate between weaknesses, threats, and strategic issues. The UO planning team found it helpful to sort strategic issues into three categories:

- Type A: No action required, but must be monitored
- Type B: Coming up on horizon, likely to cause problems; can be handled through regular planning cycle
- Type C: Requires an immediate response; cannot be handled in a routine way

Based on the initial meeting with Director Lee and the subsequent S.W.O.T. analysis, the UO planning team identified several initial strategic focus areas. They also highlighted two external factors that, while largely beyond the agency's control, greatly influence their operations. These external factors might be categorized as Type A issues – while the agency cannot change the LAB or their staff capacity, they should be aware of how these elements impact the formation of other strategic issues and potentially impede strategic goals. Long-term focus areas constitute Type B issues and should be incorporated into the agency's regular planning cycle. Type C issues must be tackled as soon as possible, as they pose considerable barriers to the agency's day-to-day operations. Until the agency clarifies the roles and expectations of staff and commissioners and improves commissioner engagement, they will struggle to address longer-term, Type B challenges.

Figure 3.6: Initial Strategic Focus Areas for 2023-2025



The planning team presented these results to the OACO during the planning retreat. The subsequent discussion and brainstorming among staff members was mapped onto a vision board and used to inform the strategic priorities and action plans that follow. A digital recreation of this vision board can be found in Appendix D.

Once strategic issues have been prioritized, the agency can develop strategies to tackle the issues head-on. Strategies are patterns of decisions, policies, and purposes that define what an organization is, what it does, and what it seeks to do. Recommended strategies for the 2023-2025 cycle are discussed at length in the following chapter.



Chapter 4

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic Priorities

All strategic priorities, and the steps needed to achieve these goals, were created by UO students in collaboration with the OACO staff. This section looks to amplify the plan of the OACO staff with tangible action steps.

Strategic Priority #1: Clarify Workplace Roles & Expectations

This strategic priority is intended to improve the understanding of what is expected of OACO staff and commissioners. In light of the recent budget cuts, commissioners are required to provide significant support to OACO's remaining staff. OACO will be able to create a stronger and more efficient team through the strategic priorities of commissioner chair-led orientations, reorientation of veteran commissioners, professional development opportunities, and a redistribution of staff duties.

Steps to achieve this strategic priority:

1. Orientations that are led by commission chairs

Research has shown that a comprehensive orientation is essential when working with volunteers. According to Unkefer (2017), the extent to which detailed information is provided within an orientation directly correlates with employee retention and turnover. As found within the steps provided below, we suggest that the orientation curriculum is consistent and offers a thorough overview of the roles and expectations of commissioner's duties. In order for this information to have a significant impact, commission chairs will be required to assist with commissioner orientation. This opportunity not only takes a load off OACO staff, but it also gives new commissioners the chance to engage with their chair and gain a better understanding of what is expected of them. Knowing who you are working with is always important when dealing with any organization. We recommend that the orientation process incorporate commission leads as much as possible; however, we also believe that it is very beneficial to incorporate OACO staff into these orientations led by commissions. Finding a balance between these two parties will be crucial to the success of this organization.

2. Reorientations for existing commissioners

Studies show that current volunteers should be required to attend refresher classes/orientations annually. These courses ensure that all volunteers are up to date on all aspects of the organization as well as notified of any changes. For the OACO, staff can focus on including the following pieces of information: overview of duties and responsibility of commissions, updates within the OACO, upcoming bills, yearly update on the impact that each of the commissioners have made, and skill development opportunities that will allow commissioners to fulfill their role. Lastly, these reorientations should be conducted with each OAC separately. This can ensure that relevant information for that commission is being shared and discussed.

3. Conduct strengths assessments with Commissioners

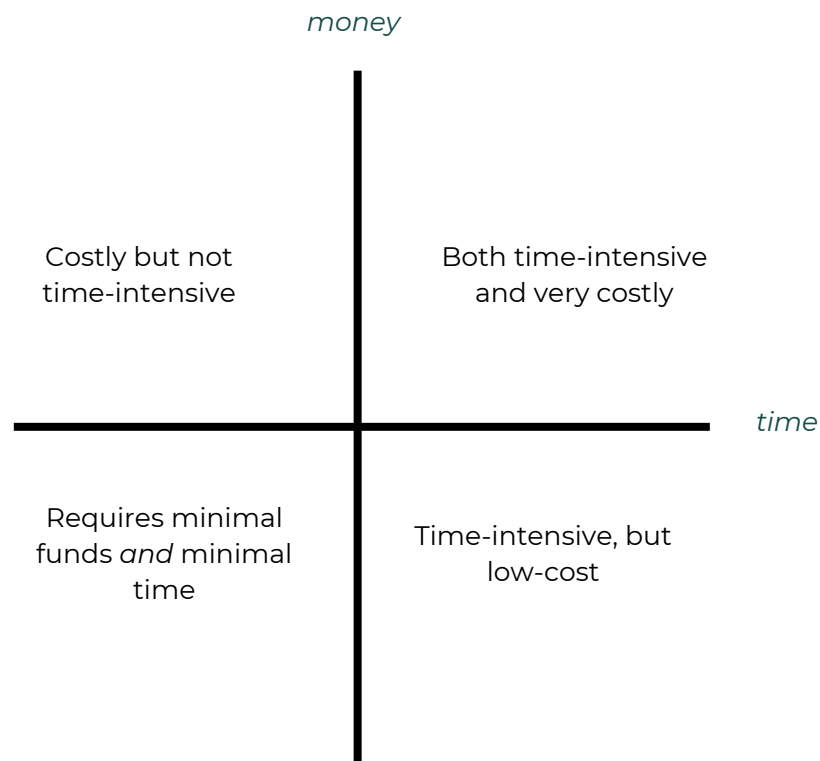
Since OACO has recently faced budget cuts, it is imperative that the commissioner and staff work together to ensure a successful OACO in these circumstances. The success of such an initiative depends heavily on conducting a strength assessment. The strengths assessment should be used to identify potential areas of interest that commissioners may have. It should also be used to determine whether or not their expertise can be used to assume ownership of previous staff duties. Further, this strengths assessment can also help identify which commissioners will best help remaining OACO staff complete and achieve each of the strategic priorities outlined in this strategic plan.

4. Reassess internal operations

Given that the agency faces imminent budget and staffing cuts, permanent staff should collectively reassess the agency's internal structure and operations moving forward. This includes reviewing all current job descriptions and making any necessary updates to them, as well as determining whether the current distribution of tasks is aligned with job descriptions. As the agency begins to implement this strategic plan, they should think seriously about which tasks to prioritize in the immediate future. *[continued on the next page]*

Per the suggestion of one staff member, the agency might create a time-money matrix, with *time* on the x-axis and *money* on the y-axis, and plot all potential goals and tasks within this matrix to better determine their feasibility. A visual depiction of this matrix is provided below. Goals that are extremely costly or extremely time-consuming — especially those that fall within the top right quadrant — will need to be closely evaluated or eliminated from the action plan.

Ensuring that all existing staff members agree with the agency's goals, priorities, and short-term strategic planning steps will be integral to ensuring good teamwork going forward. A loss of resource only emphasizes the need for strategizing and efficiency. Taking the time to reassess tasks and expectations will help the agency transition into the 2023-2025 biennium.



Action Plan

Action Step # 1: Orientations that are Led by Commission Chairs

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
Develop clear and concise one-pagers that outline roles and duties for commissioners and staff	Current by-laws are dense and inaccessible. One-pagers would communicate tasks & expectations for commissioners.			
Establish consistent orientation protocols	Ensuring that all orientation processes are standardized will ensure consistency in the onboarding process			
Document orientation protocols for uniformity and re-use	Thorough documentation will bolster consistency and add to the agency's institutional memory. It will also ensure that protocols are maintained amidst staff turnover			

Action Step # 2: Reorientations for Existing Commissioners

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
Establish consistent orientation protocols	Compare current orientation curriculum for new commissioners to curriculum of refresher orientation to ensure that foundational information is consistent amongst both			
Conduct pre-orientation survey before reorientation date	This will allow OACO staff to identify the potential areas/topics that the reorientation will need to focus on.	OACO Staff		
Ensure information from reorientation is easily accessible for commissioners to review.				

Action Step # 3: Conduct Strengths Assessments with Commissioners

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
<p>Create self-assessment survey for remaining staff and commissioners to compete</p>				
<p>Review and analyze data</p>	<p>Before all commission analyze data and pre-assign areas of support that commissioners may be interested in based on results.</p>	<p>OACO Staff</p>		
<p>Host all commission meeting that will identify areas of support that OACO staff needs help with</p>	<p>This meeting will identify staff duties and strategic priorities of this plan that are needing to be filled and working with commissioners to identify who will claim ownership.</p>	<p>OACO Staff</p>		

Strategic Priority #2 : Strengthen Relationships with Commissioners

As important as it is to provide your commissioners with the necessary resources, it is equally important to facilitate strong relationships – both within and across the commissions. As part of this section, we will highlight key principles that OACO will need to adopt in order to develop and maintain their relationships with the OACs.

Steps to achieve this strategic priority:

1. Improve internal communications

As stated in Strategic Priority #1, with the recent budget cuts it is imperative that the remaining OACO staff and current commissioners are able to effectively work together. The success of this partnership relies greatly on the internal communication system within the organization. To date, commissioners and current staff have identified that communications between both parties are weak. With many of the commissioners operating in different parts of the state, it is essential that communications are cohesive and clear. This strategy will look to provide steps to establish a work culture rooted in clear and open communications.

2. Support with creating relationship with Legislators

In accordance with the steps needed to achieve this strategic priority, it is important to communicate openly between commissioners and staff to ensure OACO's success. Additionally, commissioners will have a greater impact on legislation if they establish open communication with legislators. For many commissioners, this will be their first experience operating in a political environment. Within this step we intend to demonstrate how current OACO staff can serve as the liaison between these two parties by setting up low-pressure opportunities for legislators and commissioners to meet.

3. Plan unstructured social time with OACs and OACO staff.

Legislative advocacy and coalition-building can be exhausting, demoralizing work, and social change often comes in small increments over long periods. In light of this, it is important to recognize the commissions' (and the agency's) dedication. It is also essential to provide opportunities for members to gather informally to mingle, grow their networks, and celebrate their hard work.

4. Provide access to professional development opportunities

With the continued growth of OACs, professional development workshops provide commissioners with the opportunity to enhance both their leadership and management skills to ensure that they are fully prepared to take on their role as a commissioner. Professional development opportunities can focus on public speaking, fundraising, mobilization, etc. These development opportunities look to not only provide commissioners with the skills they need to effectively perform their civic duty, but it also looks to provide your commissioners with the necessary tools that they need to run for office. Lastly, access to these professional development programs can also look to create team building opportunities amongst other commissions. These quarterly opportunities can be used to help facilitate discussion amongst commissions, allow commissioners to practice their new skills with their counterparts, and allow commissioners the opportunity to reflect to OACO the types of skills they are needing support based on some areas of struggle threat they have experienced while serving as a commission. With the continued growth of OACs, professional development workshops provide commissioners with the opportunity to enhance both their leadership and management skills to ensure that they are fully prepared to take on their role as a commissioner.

Action Plan

Action Step # 1: Improve Internal Communications

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
Require monthly progress reports of commissioners	Have commissioners to submit a one page summary detailing their impact to commission chairs and chairs will then provide an overall report to the OACO			
Set aside time to learn more about commissioners				
Publish monthly internal newsletters	Monthly newsletters can serve as an announcement board of upcoming events, updates from each of the commissions and a commissioner spotlight.			

Action Step #2: Support with Creating Relationship with Legislators

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
Provide training on how to communicate and engage with Legislators	Can be a potential professional development seminar the OACO provides as stated in the prior strategy			
Host in-person coffee hour for Legislators and Commissioners to mingle.				
Legislator + Commissioner Speed Dating	Fun opportunity to get commissioners and legislators together to learn more about each other in a fun environment)			

Action Step #3: Plan Unstructured Social Time with OACs and OACO staff

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
Monthly zoom coffee hours	Can serve as a drop in time for commissioners and OACO staff to catch up			
Plan events within commissioner communities				
Selfie Challenge	Encourage commissioners to take part in monthly challenges ie: post a selfie at an event for a different OAC or while your engaging with communities.			

Action Step #4: Provide Access to Professional Development Opportunities

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
<p>Identify commissioners that may be interested in leading a professional development seminar in their area of expertise.</p>				
<p>Cover topics that are reflective of the skills needed to be successful in this role</p>				
<p>Share survey with commissioners to identify topics they would be interested in</p>				

Strategic Priority #3: Increase Legislative Support

OACO was established with the aim of providing a forum for community members to express and advocate for the issues affecting their communities. As part of this, the legislature is responsible for creating laws and policies that protect against the issues that commissioners advocate for. OACO's role as a liaison between government and communities is to ensure that legislators are given the opportunity to hear about these experiences. By increasing the support of the legislature, OACO seeks to achieve two major objectives: (1) Increase awareness of the organization's purpose among legislators and (2) Increase the number of laws and policies reflecting the wishes of minorities so that they are able to flourish in their local communities. In order to ensure the success of this partnership, the following section will provide formative steps for increasing legislative support within the OACO.

Steps to achieve this strategic priority:

1. Conduct annual impact report

For the OACO, it is crucial that the organization showcases the impact staff and commissioners are making in Oregon. In this regard, an annual impact report will offer the organization the opportunity to present their year's achievements. A major issue discussed in our first initial meeting is that the legislature does not know what the OACO does. An annual impact report will provide OACO with the opportunity to showcase all that the organization has accomplished and give staff and commissioners the opportunity to tell the story of their year. As part of the impact report, the chairs should be able to assess the progress made against the commission's strategic priorities by reviewing the commission's initiatives and accomplishments. As a result, each commission will be able to determine how effective the strategies are in meeting their objectives and will set a benchmark for future progress.

2. Involve legislature in the process of redefining statutory duties

In this section, we will focus on ways to foster a strong relationship between the legislatures and the OACO. In order for the OACO to achieve success and grow its budget and capacity size, they must establish a strong relationship with the legislators. During our first meeting with Gustavo and Director Lee, we were informed that the legislative branch is concerned that they lack an understanding of what the OACO does. Because of this lack of understanding, OACO has been subject to continuous budget cuts. In order to change this, this strategic priority aims to establish more meaningful connections with the legislature. Involving the legislature in the organization's administration and programming will facilitate legislators becoming more familiar with the OACO and gaining a greater understanding of its purpose. The action steps provided for achieving this strategic goal will focus on meaningful methods of integrating the legislature and increasing the level of involvement and partnerships between the legislature and current commissioners.

3. Facilitate orientations for legislative commissioners

To ensure that legislative commissioners are able to effectively advocate for the issues that are impacting local minority communities it is essential for legislative commissioners to be oriented in a way where they can effectively understand what is their purpose on the OACO and how they can use their platform to help transform minority communities across the state of Oregon-orientation should follow much of the similar protocols that have been stated within Strategic Priority #1.

Action Plan

Action Step # 1: Conduct Annual Impact Report

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
Consider how your target audience would like to receive this report	Annual reports can be delivered in the following ways: booklet, video, infographic, etc.			
Require OAC Commissions to write their sections of the report.	With commissioners required to submit a monthly update to commission chairs. This running log of impact will allow commissions to easily synthesize their impact/			
Identify the topics that your annual report will focus on	Topics can include: financials, projects, community partnerships, research and much more!			

Action Step #2 : Involve Legislature in the Process of Redefining Statutory Duties

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
Host quarterly hybrid meetings	Will allow legislators to easily attend meetings. In addition be sure to record and share one page summary of meeting.			
Involve in the creation of KPI for the upcoming year				
Communicate vision of OACO and ask for support on how to best accomplish this				

Action Step #3 : Facilitate Orientations for Legislative Commissioners

Tasks	Suggestions/ Justifications	Responsible Party	Resources Required	Time/Money Matrix
Ensure orientation curriculum is consistent with new commissioner curriculum		OACO Staff		
Commision chairs to lead oreintation	A great opportunity for Legislative Commissioners to build relationship with commision leader.	Commision Chair		
Provide one pager on areas of interest that their OACs are working on	Legislative Commissioners are busy, make sure they understand the goals that their OAC commision is working towards	Created by OAC Commissions		

Conclusion and Next Steps

The above recommendations are based on the research and observations of three graduate students in the University of Oregon's PPPM Department. The depth of their research was constrained by their ten-week academic term, which limited the scope of this project. Nonetheless, this report clearly demonstrates the importance of focusing on key strategic issues that have impacted the agency and will continue to impede operations unless addressed. The UO team hopes that the OACO will further adapt this action plan to suit their needs. Step #4 of Priority #1 – reassessing internal operations – will help the agency to determine which components of this action plan should be taken on immediately and which might be deferred until further resources are secured.

Many of these suggestions are ambitious in scope and may not be feasible based on current budget and staffing constraints. However, the UO team hopes that the OACO can be creative in their implementation of these action items. The main takeaway from this report should be its emphasis on the three major priority areas: Clarifying Workplace Roles & Expectations, Strengthening Commissioner Engagement, and Increasing Legislative Support. These issues emerged from both the S.W.O.T. analysis and the agency retreat and should therefore be addressed with vigor as the agency enters the new biennium. Implementing these strategic recommendations with support the OACO as they continue to benefit the lives of countless Oregonians through their passion, dedication, and legislative expertise.

Acknowledgements

The UO planning team would like to thank Bob Choquette for his guidance, planning expertise, and for cheerleading their work throughout the academic term. This report would not exist without him.

The team is also grateful to all S.W.O.T. interview participants for their valuable insights; their responses were foundational to the development of this plan.

A hearty thanks to the entirety of the OACO for their support and collaboration; this was a fantastic learning experience for the UO students, and they wish your agency great success going forward!

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Appendices

Appendix A: About the Authors

Appendix B: S.W.O.T. Coded Data

Appendix C: Organizational Chart for 2023

Appendix D: Retreat Vision Board

Appendix A: About the Authors

The UO Planning Team

The development of this plan was led by three graduate students within the University of Oregon's Planning, Public Policy, and Management (PPPM) Department. This report was created for PPPM 526 Strategic Planning in Management, a graduate-level course taught by Bob Choquette. Over the ten-week Spring 2023 term, these students conducted research, performed S.W.O.T. interviews, and held meetings with OACO personnel to gather the information needed to create this document.

Jenna Bryant is a first-year Master of Public Administration student at the University of Oregon. An East-Coast transplant, she loves the natural splendor of the Pacific Northwest. She cares deeply about issues of social, environmental, and health equity and hopes to use her public policy background to improve the lives of Oregonians.

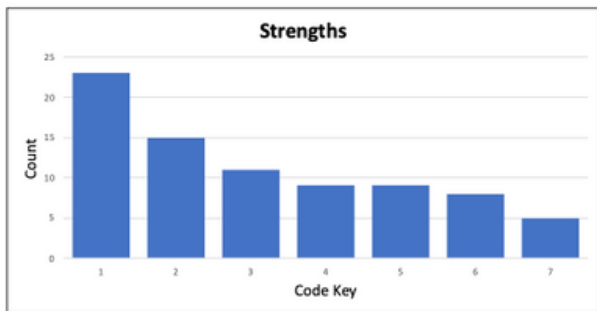
Naomi Evans is a Master of Nonprofit Management student at the University of Oregon. As a native of Detroit, MI, Naomi learned at a very early age the importance of serving and supporting your communities. In response, she has dedicated her life to ensuring that nonprofits serving marginalized and historically silenced groups are equipped with the essential resources needed to help these groups grow and thrive.

Hiba Shocair is a Master of Nonprofit Management student at the University of Oregon, who embarked on a transformative journey when she moved to the U.S. at the age of 17 from her hometown, Jordan, to pursue her education. She is passionate about fostering equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplaces, and hopes that her degree will pave the way for becoming a social change agent.

Appendix B: S.W.O.T. Coded Data

SWOT DATA SUMMARY

STRENGTHS	
COUNT	CODE KEY
23	1. E.D.'s leadership
15	2. Staff quality
11	3. Passion & engagement
9	4. Collaboration
9	5. Community relationships
8	6. Advocacy work
5	7. Diversity



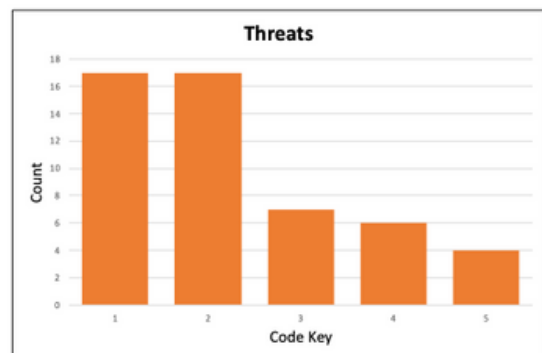
WEAKNESSES	
COUNT	CODE KEY
18	1. Poor communication
16	2. Insufficient funding
14	3. Staff inconsistency
10	4. Low public visibility
10	5. Low legislative support
10	6. Poor role clarity
8	7. Commissioners not supported
5	8. E.D.'s leadership



OPPORTUNITIES	
COUNT	CODE KEY
24	1. Coalition-building
24	2. Policy & academic research
12	3. Commissioner engagement
11	4. DEI & representation
9	5. Workplace roles & expectations
9	6. Communication with legislators
9	7. Stabilize personnel
7	8. Fund acquisition
7	9. Elevate public & govt. presence



THREATS	
COUNT	CODE KEY
17	1. Budget cuts
17	2. Sustain personnel
7	3. Lack of unity
6	4. Lack of status & visibility
4	5. Burnout, mission drift



STRENGTHS	
CODE	COMMENT
1	Not a political agency, they align their position with what the governors position is. The commissioners are
1	Diversity of staff and of the commissioners brings sense of camaraderie
1	Communication is strong – prevents burnout; grateful for their support
2	Daily 15-min encouraged but not required, but those check-ins are healthy
2	Open to receiving feedback on structure of the OACO, people’s voices are heard if something is not working
2	Every time E.D. wants to do anything for the team, he takes their input and does not make any major decisions or planning without consulting with the staff
2	E.D. manages the communication in a way that sets boundaries for everyone, was very honest about where they stand, not many surprises
2	E.D. has created a wonderful team, and it's the OACO’s biggest strength
2	slow but definite improvements in OACO's involvement and outreach – feels like there is clear movement in the right direction
2	E.D. has elevated all of the commissions from “status quo” position to more aggressive (i.e. more engaged/involved) relationship with legislature
2	New leadership has created clearer standards of performance, “professionalizing” status – leads to better triaging and selection of best commissioners
2	E.D.’s guidance, ability to communicate, to focus, to make tough decisions, to cut commissioners if they’re not doing their job
2	Weekly tasks "Laundry list" meetings turned into daily check-ins, much lighter and enhances connections
3	Do a lot with limited resources/staff
3	Stability among staff better than it has been previously
3	Staff ensemble is successful in navigating state legislation & connecting commissioners with bills
3	Nice people to work with
3	Leadership genuinely cares about the work it does and people it fights for
4	Great example of what advocacy looks like
4	Recruitment of new Commissioners has been successful, lots of new people who are excited to make change.
5	Recruited commissioners from various expertise and connections (legislative, etc)
5	Access to other leaders in the community – OACO is an established organization, so has lots of contacts, which allows commissioners to connect with relevant stakeholders/community members
5	OACO funded by the state, which elevates priority areas when they're identified
5	Great public relations
6	Commissions have no shortage of important work and feel passionately about it
7	Diverse and broad group
1,2	OACO staff have expanded under ED Lee – feels more supported with additional staff
1,2,3	Provides expertise leadership, accountability, institutional history and support to the Commissions.
1,2,3,4,5	OACO provides a space for people to talk about issues and provides commissioners with the tools to get things passed in the legislature.
1,5	New legislator commissioners are in positions of power, and are very influential, for the first time in years for those positions to be filled w legislator commissioners. Key in support of future funding and presence in the community.
1,5	Collaborative relationships/partnerships – feels stronger, less “performatory” now – providing opportunities to be engaged
1,6	OACO doing a great job to motivate commissioners and providing them opportunities for community engagement

2	The ED is a great manager, able to empower the people who are working at the agency, which creates a stronger team regardless of the size.
2	Wonderful leadership
2,3	Nimble, able to adapt and make something happen. Good to be incredibly reactive, but not sustainable
2,3,4	Lots of leadership development opportunities within Commissions
2,3,6	Relatively new ED and new team, lots of new energy and new visions for the agency
2,4	OACO has goals, vision
2,6	More time and effort and work required under Lee's directorship; therefore, able to take on more direct role as commissioner
2,7	His knowledge, ability to mobilize, diverse and culturally competent perspectives and ways of recruiting people – he is the face of the agency
2,7	E.D. does a great job of uplifting voices within the commissions and nominating diverse members
3, 6	Everyone is very invested personally in what the agency stands for and the work they are trying to do.
3,6	The team, although it's a small team, they have genuine good people who care about the equity work that they do, which makes it easier to do the work, despite different personalities
3,6	Staff is very excited and motivated, having a bigger team allows for less burnout
3,6,7	Staff are bright, passionate, dedicated, diverse, and loyal
3,7	Diverse group of individuals on the team, provides more perspectives
4,5	Commissioners have the ability to talk with governors about issues that are impacting our communities of color.
4,5	4 commissions with people focused on improving the lives of marginalized Oregonians.
4,6	The commissions and the OACO do genuinely make a difference
6	New commissioners, new excited people with new ideas - No dead weight because people are only there for 3 or 4 years, can serve up to two terms

WEAKNESSES	
CODE	COMMENT
5, 7	Efficiency and clarity in roles vs role of commissions
1	Commissions have been around for a long time, but not a great reputation in the community - New staff having to deal with the old reputation/past presence
1	Precense lacking in the community
1	Wishes they had a stronger presence/foundation externally
1	lack of public awareness about the commissions' work
1	As the Governor's Policy Advisor, I really don't know their staff other than E.D.
2	Lack of capacity/resources/ staff Lots to do as an agency but don't have the manpower to do it
2	Lack of sources and funding
2	Budget
2	Lack of funding
2	Would like to work hybrid rather than fully remote
2	No funding
2	Low funding
2	Commissions not sufficiently integrated in state govt and lack research funding
2	Lack of financial resources (budget)
2	Not properly funded.
3	About to go back to 4 permanent full-time staff after June
3	Struggling to recruit commissioner openings; need full commissions
3	Fewer staff than are needed; commissions not always filled
3	High OACO staff turnover makes for lack of consistency on projects
3	Inexperience and lack of direction on the part of OACO staff
3	Not enough staff to meet goals
3	Lack of manpower (staff capacity, resources)
3	Lack of staff
4	Guidelines needed for commissioners to ensure accountability and clarity
4	Lack of clear agreement about collaboration process; Commissions should be in charge of their direction/agenda
5	Internal communication –they have a lot of communication issues
5	Feedback is not equal, some people are giving harsher feedbacks than others, women of color receive more negative feedback than the rest of the staff
5	Growing pains associated with high turnover in staff and commissioners. Bonds could be stronger
5	Virtual/hybrid meetings lack engagement and meaningful face-to-face relationship dynamics (partly Covid's fault)
5	Lack of opportunity to meet staff outside of email and Zoom platforms to foster basic relationships – to avoid misunderstandings
5	General inexperience of OACO staff sometimes cause miscommunications and "personality clashes"
5	Not a lot of joint work or interactions between commissions
5	Communication is really challenging – floods of emails, inconsistency, confusion
5	Commissioners need to actively participate and voice info about bills, policy concerns
5	Lack of awarness of what other comissions are doing. Would like more oppotunites to either attend other comissions events or collaborate with other comissions.
5	Got appointed during the pandemic, missed out on a lot of opprtunities to connect
6	Culture in the legislature and Oregon politics not welcoming to POC
6	Attempts to expand budget/staff continually shot down by Legislature
6	Lack of support from government

7	People in other roles asked to do what they are not responsible for
7	Lack of clarity in roles and too many gaps in dealing with bureaucracy
7	Small staff vs the commissions they serve
7	Not enough guidance and structure which adds a lot of stress and is time consuming
7	For newer onboarded members of the commissions, must clearly communicate roles, responsibilities, and expectations early on to ensure that they're prepared for the work
8	Did not get the appropriate training due to the person before them leaving abruptly
8	Not enough institutional knowledge, E.D. did not have experience with the state before working for the agency
8	ED is often unsupportive in meetings & should be a more active listener
1, 6	OACO not a top priority for executive branch; competing with other valuable hot-button issues (e.g. homelessness)
1, 7	Not sure if legislators fully understand the purpose of the commissions outside of a "ceremonial" role/function
1, 7	Not a clear story of OACO, confusing on what their purpose is
1,6	OACO falls under BOLI: Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries, which makes them a lower priority in the hierarchy system of the government.
2, 6	Lack of steady, concrete <u>budget</u> sends the message that these agencies aren't critical functions and don't take real priority/legitimacy from executive branch
2, 6	Constrained by the Legislature (budget)
2,3	Can see that the current workload could burnt out the staff
2,3	Lack of in-house staff designated to each commission.
2,5	No office, communication takes longer because its through phone calls, emails, texts
2,6	While on the commission I felt that OACO and commissioners had to change the opinion of how legislatures saw them- felt like we were stepchild and were forced to constantly showcase why we deserved to be here.
2,6	Never able to have both- want staff they must give up space and vice versa.
2,7	44 to 1 ratio workload through commissions
3, 4	Hard to for commissioners to accomplish work, attend committee events, etc. without staff to support
3, 4	Commissioners lack capacity to do all outreach work themselves
3,4	Volunteer advisory groups are expected to do the same level of work as staff.
3,4	Lack of staff/interns. Having more staff would help relieve issues within the differenet comissions and allow the comissions to have a team that focus on the challenges that are unique to their comission.
4, 5	Some commissioners say they lack support and direction – maybe need to communicate more directly with the OACO
4,8	ED does not do the best with Advising.
5, 1	External communication could be more professional and more polished
5, 7	Establishing concreteness of "dos" and "don'ts" for roles, abilities, etc. of operational constrictions, boundaries for everyone, including the commissioners
5, 8	E.D. is the point person for HR problems (although they have an HR person, they are reluctant to go to them for these issues). E.D. tends to tell you what you want to hear
5,6	Currently experiencing growing pains and not really working well together
	Some commissioners are either burnt out from their jobs or simply disengaged from the work; not doing enough
	Commissioners were not very engaged when I served.

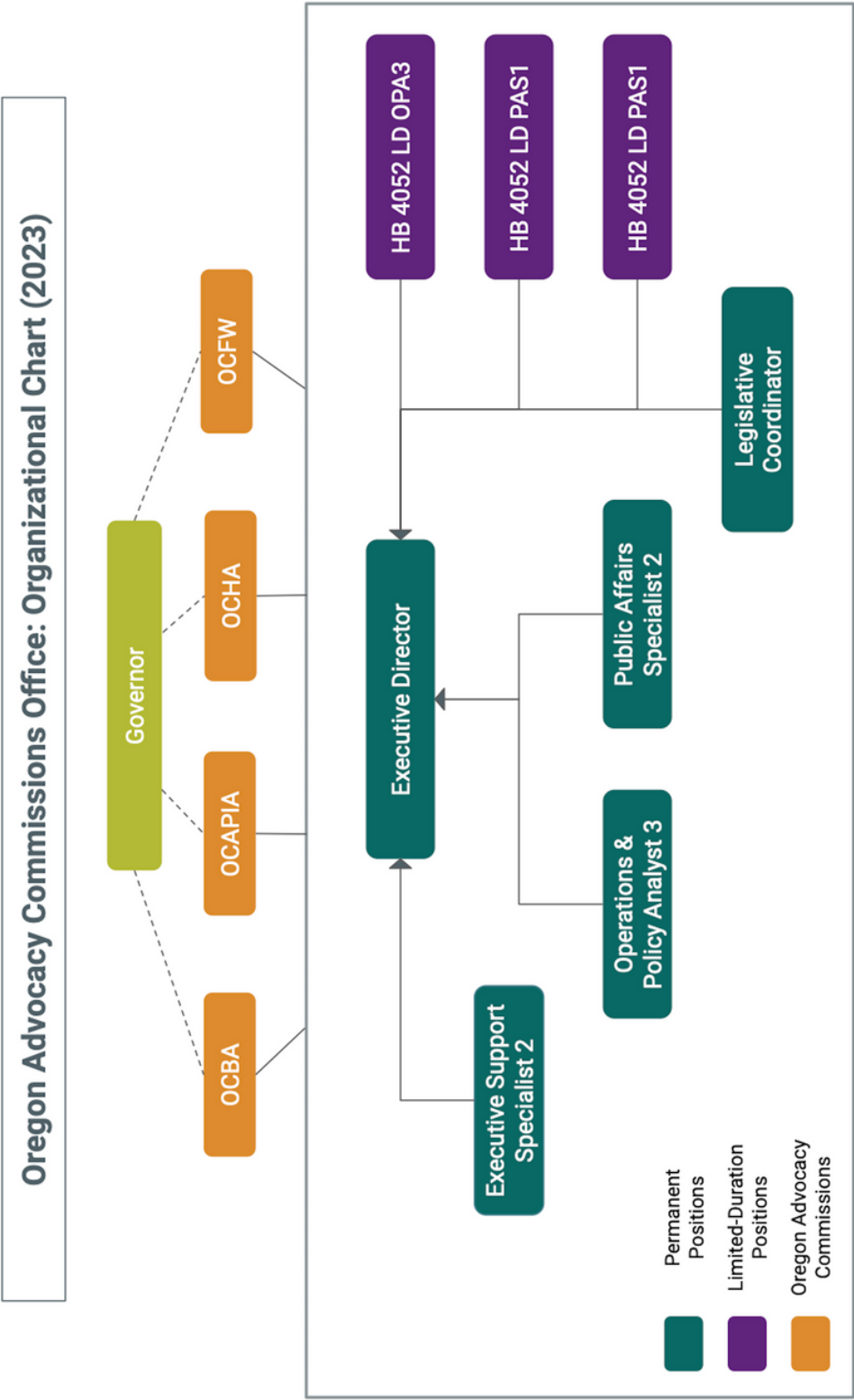
OPPORTUNITIES

CODE	COMMENT
1	Hosting more events to have more things to show for (evidence)
1	Externs/interns → a missed opportunity to engage youth and academic communities
1	More community event involvement
1	More outreach and community engagement
1	More programs to help constituents to see why it's important to advocate.
1	civic engagement amongst community members to help pass bills.
1	There was more participation across the state via zoom, hybrid model has higher attendance
2	Agency and commissions can solicit private and public contributions
2	Fundraising (where capacity exists)
2	Break through to the Legislature and acquire more funds and resources -- would drastically increase their success
3	Until June – they have a very dynamic team want to try to knock out some of the basic outline stuff such as presentation materials, collateral
3	Duty is defined in Oregon State law, to really go through the statutes (what they are mandated to do) go through them with a fine-tooth comb to ensure that they are hitting most of what is defined in there, will help organize their goals better and could be used to support budget needs
3	Lots of things up in the air due to the new administration and lots of new positions - Can define those roles in a way that works best for the organization
3	Aligning collective goals more cohesively
4	E.D. should be advocating & develop stronger connection with governor's office; two-way communication between Commissioners and Governor
4	Communication between Racial Justice Commission and OACO; both agencies are valuable, but RJC overshadows OACO
4	Cultivating relationship between appointed legislature and commissioners.
4	With Governor passionate about organizations like OACO this is the best time to ask for everything under the moon.
4	Ensuring that appointed legislature is engaged.
5	With some longevity and retaining staff with skill set that helps them properly advocate for increased funding
5	Maintaining staff loads to support operations
5	Gradually phase in additional staff to expand capacity
5	Having staff dedicated to commission that can make up for commissioners who are busy
6	Engage more with policy.
8	Make it a requirement for commissioners to attend at least one other OACO commission meeting or event a month.
9	OACO to create programs that educate community members on homeownership and economic mobility.
9	OACO should make it a priority to showcase how to take a holistic approach towards increasing access to equity in minority communities
1, 6, 8	Community-level involvement for the commissioners (e.g. City Council) - educate community about policy research (need budget to support these activities)
1,5,9	Connect more with rural communities, but needs more staff to support this
1,6	Create a permanent internship position to work with the OACO to earn credit and experience (e.g. through UO/PPPM)
1,7	Lots of different agencies and departments doing social justice work and all competing for the same funds, not connected so none of them know what the others are doing
1,7	Nobody understands how they operate, the services they provide, although they have been around for decades. Shows the lack of presence in the community

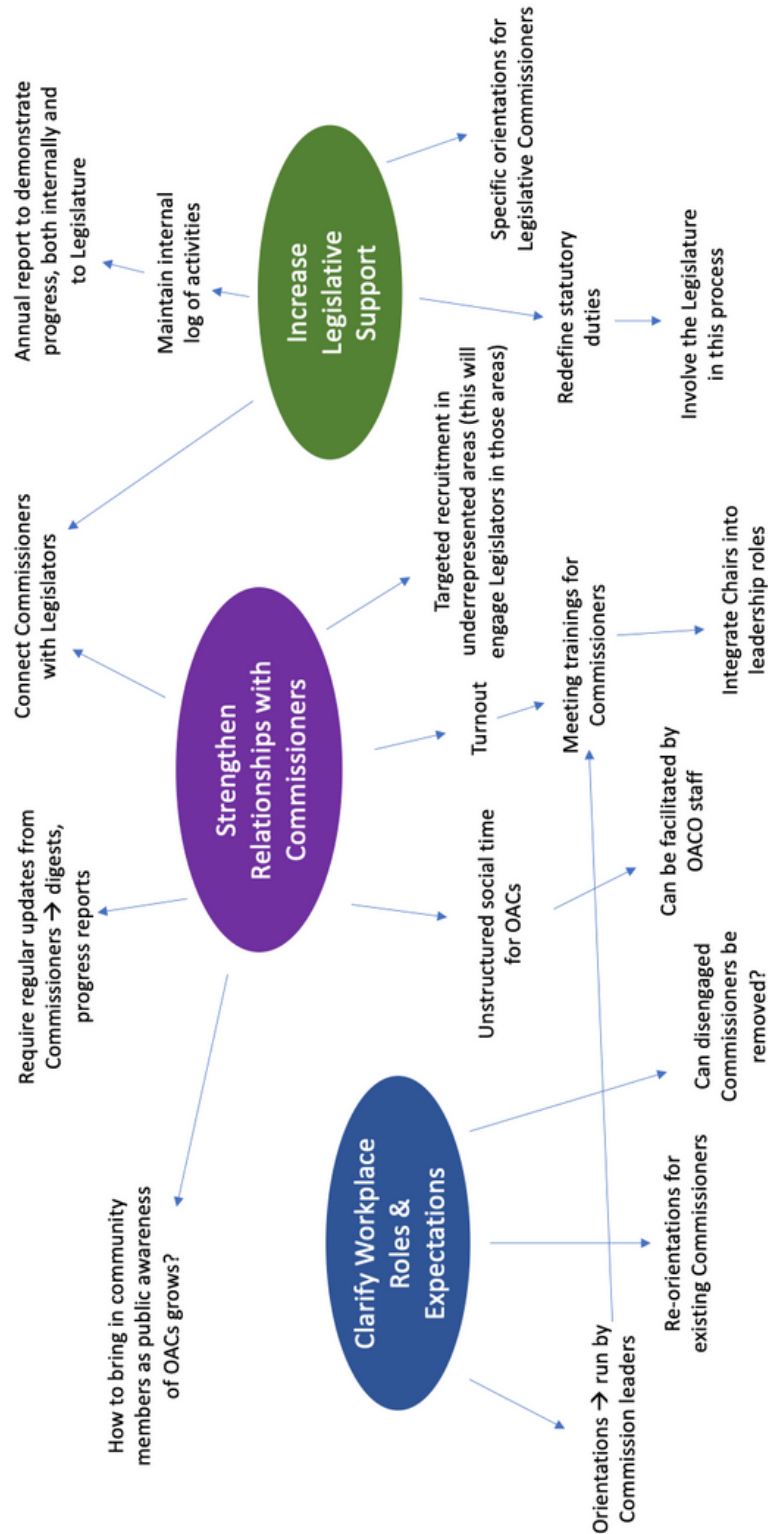
1,7,9	Aggressive social media platforming to spread message, connect state-wide organizations – ensuring that the entire state gets coverage and attention
1,8	Commissioners can utilize their networks and community presence – biggest tool for OACO in near future
1,8	More room for the commissioners to collaborate with community-based organizations
1,8	Collaboration across commissions.
1,8	More opportunities to engage community members in advocacy and civic engagement opportunities.
1,8	Building relationship between college and commissions as a way to engage young people in commissions.
1,8,9	Thinking of new ways to diversify the people who are on the commissions
1,9	Networking and prioritizing reaching more people in the community, increasing presence in the community. Through having the website more accessible, hosting and attending mult-cultural events
1,9	OACO should be a mouthpiece to highlight that advocacy issues in the state
1,9	When recruiting, making sure that commissioners represent all demographics (ie: low income, immigrant, widow, etc) of a community.
1,9	Give people opportunities to work by broadening the door and remove the barrier towards employment.
1,9	OACs to shift focus towards economic freedom and how to build and uplift communities.
2, 5	Obtaining more funding to support staffing
2, 5	Commissioners should solicit donations - separately (ideally with a dedicated OACO coordinator)
2,5	Investing in leadership development.
2,8	Very passionate and dedicated/active new commissioners, Ability to advocate for legislators, be a vehicle of support for their communities with the legislator
3,5	Organize efforts more to capitalize on the skills of the staff, can be capitalized on better if they had more organization
3,6	Set up training for commissioners, very limited civic knowledge
3,8	Aligning priorities that intersect across commissions – strengthening message through support and collaboration – reducing “silos”
4, 7	Rebuilding status and role of the commissions (E.D.’s role) in the eyes of the legislature – commissions have fluctuated in terms of importance over time - potential to elevate status, but takes time
4,7	Identify what gaps can OACO fill that the Racial Justice Council does not already fill.
4,8	Having an office space to meet everyone and better connect with the new Commissioners
4,9	Address equity issues in each of state executive branch agencies (over 80 state budgets/agencies)
6,8	(Bi-)annual studies conducted on emerging issues for commissions – produce reports that inform policymakers and relevant stakeholders about advocacy issues
7,3	Working on standards between the commissions
7,3	Updating board by-laws

THREATS	
CODE	COMMENT
1,6	Fear of being defunded/closed
1	Need to update bylaws for each commission; barrier is DOJ sticking with a large bill and unfeasible timeline
1	Lack of funding
1	Republicans just walked out of legislation; their budget is in danger – almost every agency is
1	Constant state of unpredictability due to what the state decides they can receive in terms of budgeting, makes it hard to plan
1	Senate walk-out
1	Lack of funding
1	18% cut when asked for extra funding
1	Funding being cut
1	Budget cuts a constant, looming threat
1	Limited by General Fund funds
1	Further budget cuts
2	Lack of public visibility for agency and Commissions
2	Due to lack of awareness within communities, people may want to serve on a commission like OACO but may not know that they exist.
2	Difficulty to increase public visibility and engage with community members due to the lack of office space.
3	Constantly creating commissions with no funding available to support them
3	Staff needed in order to support the agency and Commissioners
3	Creating a plan for possibly losing staff/ temp staff, what it looks like for 4 members to operate for the next two years
3	Lack of staff
3	Staff turnover (potential and ongoing)
3	Lack of engaged work from commissioners; ongoing unwillingness of commissioners to do work
3	Inability to fill Commission seats
3	Commissioners are not paid for their service so it may be hard to keep individuals on the Commission that do not have the privilege to provide 20 hours of work for free.
4	Lots of different agencies and department doing social justice work and all competing for the same funds, not connected so none of them know what the others are doing
4	Lack of internal OACO leadership to engage Commissions long-term
4	No unity in state government; “silos” create isolation among state agencies; lack of cohesion
5	Fear of burnout as Staff spread is thin
1, 3	Risk of dilution
1,2,6	Due to the lack of understanding on what the purpose of OACO is, there is a threat of not being funded by the Legislature any more.
1,3	Loss of staff due to lack of funding will prevent agency from reaching its potential
1,3	Lack of resources
1,6	The possibility of being fully defunded. Lots of agencies being cut
2,3,4	Lack of engagement/collaboration amongst commissions will make it harder for OACO to sustain itself.
3,4	New commissioners entered in a time where they have much more staff, but if they don’t receive additional funding to keep the temporary staff, they will be seeing all the commissions being staffed down to 4 people
3,5	Genuine staff coming on are more likely to burn out or want to leave due to lack of organization and resources
3,5	Older commissioners are more burnt out, less engaged/passionate; will harm operations in the long-term
3,5	Without the governor’s buy-in, and with continued administrative hurdles and staff turnover, being a commissioner can be a demoralizing job
4, 3	Fears that if Commissions are not prominent enough, and Commissioners not engaged in their work, they will leave their positions
4,2	Losing focus on the advocacy and engagement piece within community.
	COVID caused recurring issues of DEI – not able to sustain DEI efforts on large scale

Appendix C: Organizational Chart



Appendix D: Retreat Vision Board





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University of Oregon
Eugene, OR