

2009 Non-Mandated Expenditures Department Response

DEPARTMENT: Commissioners and County Administration

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Todd Portune, President, Board of County Commissioners

OCA TITLE: County Commissioners

Hamilton County departments and agencies have the opportunity to respond and provide insight to the Office of Budget and Strategic Initiatives (BSI) initial assessment as to non-mandated services. This response form should be used for each specific BSI assessment; not a general response for entire department. Take as much space as necessary for each question.

1. Are there elements of the BSI non-mandated services that you believe are mandated? If so, provide the specific Ohio Revised Code (ORC) citation, Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) and/or relevant case law information. Please be especially diligent if there is a specific service or staffing level prescribed by law.

Chapter 305 (Attached) of the Ohio Revised Code outlines the mandates of the Board of County Commissioners regarding the governance of the county. While the ORC does not mandate Commissioner Aides or Clerk to the Commission, the size and complexity of Hamilton County as the central urban county in the tri-state region clearly dictates that additional staff support beyond the three Commissioners is necessary.

Additionally, the Commissioners are considered as part-time, but the demands of the 842,000 county residents require additional staff to execute the mandated duties of the Commission.

The Budget Office mandate assessment identified the six Commissioner Aides (two per Commissioner), Clerk of the Commission and Deputy Clerk of Commission as non-mandated. These positions are absolutely necessary to address constituent concerns and keep the business of county government going.

2. Who are the recipients of the service or activity for the non-mandated service? How many recipients? Please note any internal customers, other county departments, jurisdictions, businesses, etc. If the service is geographic specific (i.e., a satellite probation office), please identify the neighborhood, township or municipality.

All county residents, businesses and visitors are recipients of the efforts of the Commissioner Aides and the clerk function of the Commission. Additionally, since the Commission has board authority and responsibility for budget appropriation, land and equipment ownership and other matters related to inter and intra-government activities, the recipients include all elected officials within Hamilton County including townships, municipalities, and villages. Recipients would also include state agencies and federal agencies.

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3. Are there county revenues associated with the non-mandated services? If so, please provide the methodology for any lost revenues. Please consider state or federal reimbursements, grants, fees, etc. Please note if the service or activity is included in the county's indirect cost plan.

No.

4. If the county did not provide the non-mandated service, is there the potential for increased expenditures in another jurisdiction within Hamilton County? If so, please list the specific municipality and/or township.

The elimination of Commissioner Aides and the clerk function would cost time and money to all entities doing business with the county. More directly, if there is no clerk function the ORC provides for the County Auditor to serve as the Clerk. As such, there is no savings of eliminating the function as the County Auditor would have to perform the same duties currently performed by Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

5. Does the non-mandated service include Board of County Commissioner policy via resolution or motion?

Current Board of County Commissioners policy includes the appointment of Clerk to the Commission as called for in ORC 305.13 (Attached). Current Board policy provides for two Commissioner Aides per Commissioner.

6. Are there contracts or agreements that preclude the elimination of a non-mandated service? If so, please provide the specific language as to termination and/or amendment terms.

No contractual arrangements preclude the elimination of the Commissioner Aides or clerk function.

7. What are the equipment/non-personnel expenditure considerations with discontinuing a non-mandated service? (i.e., surplus equipment).

Office equipment is integrated with that of other county administrative functions. Office furniture and PCs would become available for surplus auction; however, shared equipment (copiers, printers, etc.) would be dependent upon the extent to which other administrative functions are eliminated.

8. Do any of the non-mandated services include employees represented by a bargaining unit? If so, please note the union and provide information as to reduction-in-force and job abolishment considerations.

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No.

9. For positions within non-mandated services, are there are special circumstances that preclude a traditional job abolishment process? Separation costs will be addressed centrally including leave balance payouts, unemployment compensation and severance (based on current Commission policy).

To the extent that the administrative functions of the Commission (i.e., County Administrator, Budget, Personnel, Purchasing, etc.) are eliminated or dramatically reduced, the Commission may have to take these functions on. This would require additional workload on the Commissioner Aides and clerk function.

10. In addition to positions associated with non-mandated services, the Budget Office included a review of management layers, support staff, and currently vacant positions. Please comment on the impact of eliminating these positions.

N/A

11. What is the performance impact of not providing the non-mandated service? For example, wait times, waiting lists, case loads, operating hours and other consequences of not providing the service.

The ability of the Commissioners to be responsive to the recipients identified in item number 2 would be greater curtailed. Lack of responsiveness results in distrust in government. Concerning the clerk function, the county would be unable to be responsive to public records requests.

12. Are there any alternatives that result in savings to the general fund?

None at this time. May depend on the final configuration of other administrative functions within county government.

13. Are there more efficient ways to deliver a mandated service that may allow for the savings to offset the cost of a non-mandated service?

None. Contingent response is a labor intensive process that does not lend itself to automation or outsourcing.

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14. Is there an opportunity to transfer any non-mandated expenditures to another funding source (i.e., restricted fund or grant)?

There are not restricted funds that can legally support the Commissioner Aides or clerk function.

15. Does your department have any fees that could be raised to offset the cost of a mandated service?

No.

Other Considerations and Comments:

The current configuration of Commissioner Aides and clerk function is equal to or less than the Commissioner offices and clerk function in the top five urban counties in Ohio. Additionally, the Commission's support function is considerably less than the City of Cincinnati councilmember support function.