



**Ohio Vendors Representative Committee (OVRC)**

**Sunset Review Committee Testimony**

**July 30, 2024**

Chairman Wilkin, Vice-Chair Hillyer, and Members of the Sunset Review Committee, my name is Christine Hauck, and I am the Business Enterprise Program Manager at Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). I am here to testify on the Ohio Vendors Representative Committee (OVRC).

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), through our Business Enterprise Program (BEP), is the state licensing agency for the Randolph-Sheppard Act in Ohio. The BEP provides entrepreneurship opportunities for Ohioans who are legally blind. Under the Randolph-Sheppard Act, federal regulations require a State Committee of Blind Vendors to provide feedback and input regarding the system.

In Ohio, this committee operates under the name of The Ohio Vendors Representative Committee (OVRC). OVRC committee members are elected by fellow BEP Operators and represent all BEP Operators in their geographically assigned areas of the state. The OVRC is comprised of seven area representatives and seven area alternative representatives. Each member is a licensee who volunteers to serve as a representative and is not compensated anything other than allowable travel expenses.

**There are no state General Revenue Funds** used in the day-to-day operations of the OVRC. This committee is 100% federally funded and mandated. Per Section 395.14 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, OVRC shall:

- (1) Actively participate with the State licensing agency in major administrative decisions and policy and program development decisions affecting the overall administration of the State's vending facility program;
- (2) Receive and transmit to the State licensing agency grievances at the request of blind vendors and serve as advocates for such vendors in connection with such grievances;
- (3) Actively participate with the State licensing agency in the development and administration of a State system for the transfer and promotion of blind vendors;
- (4) Actively participate with the State licensing agency in the development of training and retraining programs for blind vendors; and
- (5) Sponsor, with the assistance of the State licensing agency, meetings and instructional conferences for blind vendors within the State.

The BEP currently has 103 businesses statewide with 73 licensed Operators managing the various locations. Gross sales generated in FFY 2023 totaled \$15,009,030, with the licensed Operators reporting an average income of \$49,049.



OOD staff spend a minimal amount of time assisting the OVRC in administrative tasks such as scheduling meetings, posting meeting minutes, and assisting the committee with their nominations. By Federal law, OOD's staff's role is to actively participate with OVRC which is accomplished through attending their monthly meetings. This support equals roughly 16 total hours of OOD staff time each month.

The BEP provides an annual budget of \$10,000 for reimbursement of allowable travel expenses for attendance at OVRC meetings. The committee is self-funded by fees collected from the BEP Operators matched with Federal Vocational Rehabilitation 110 Funds. For every one BEP dollar collected from licensed operators, the federal government adds \$3.69.

Chairman Wilkin, Vice-Chair Hillyer, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide a brief overview of the Ohio Vendors Representative Committee. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.