

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2014-15 Performance Report

WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT OF EXISTING CLAIMS

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

Here a simple statement of the adopted mission of the agency should be provided, along with the entity or person(s) who adopted the mission statement and when it was adopted.

Mission Statement: To ensure fair and timely procedures for the informal and formal resolution of disputes within the jurisdiction of the Court of Existing Claims and identification of issues involving work related injuries. This has been the mission statement since 2001 by the former Workers' Compensation Court.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Here is the name, title and contact information for the lead administrative person should be listed.

Court Administrator Michael J Harkey; 1915 N. Stiles Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73105; 405-522-8600; mharkey@cec.ok.gov

GOVERNANCE:

Here a brief description of the agency's governance structure should be provided. Is the agency headed by a Governor appointee? An appointee of an independent board? Who selects the board, and who are the current members of the board.

L. Brad Taylor	Presiding Judge, appointed by Governor Mary Fallin on January 1, 2015.
David Reid	Judge
Owen T. Evans	Judge
Margaret A Bomhoff	Judge,
Carla Snipes	Judge,
Michael W. McGivern	Judge,

Does the Board have any committees or subgroups? If so, please provide a detailed listing of the subgroups and their areas of focus.

Not applicable.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

Please provide copies of the minutes for any Commission/Board meetings the agency has had since July 1, 2010 in electronic format (Only in PDF format) Is there an attendance policy for board members/commissioners? If so, is it being followed?

Not applicable.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

Please provide a listing of all government modernization efforts undertaken by the agency since July 1, 2010. Additionally, please provide any authorizing statutory changes that prompted the modernization efforts and whether those efforts have led to cost savings or additional cost burden.

SB 1062 created the Workers' Compensation Court of Existing Claims and The Workers' Compensation Commission. By signed agreement in FY15, the Commission promised to provide all expenses and payroll for the Court as was evident by the Court's limited appropriation in FY15 of only \$2.75M. As a result of the Supreme Court decision in the case of Carlock v. Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission, 2014 OK 29 these two bodies are now operating separately. The Court of Existing Claims has, since July 1, 2014, been operating with less than one/half its previous staff and has consolidated its former 10 departments into 4. We have taken on ½ of the IT expenses amounting to \$249,144.15. We are now required to pay rent annually in Tulsa of \$124,833.60 per year. We continue to have an ongoing large case load inherited from the former Workers' Compensation Court. The work of the Court of Existing Claims has not yet slowed as can be seen by the numbers of Orders being written and cases being Set. This work is being done efficiently despite the loss of 4 Judges who would have shared this task. The Court of Existing Claims requests a budget of approximately \$4M but continues to produce work commensurate with the former Workers' Compensation Court which required a budget of \$6.65M prior to the legislative changes referenced above.

What steps has the agency taken to cut costs and/or eliminate waste? Are there efforts that have been successful which you believe could serve as a model for other state agencies seeking to keep costs minimal?

Since July 1, 2014 the Court of Existing Claims has, been required to cut its staff from 66 to 31 for a reduction of approximately \$1.5M including a reduction of 4 Judges, and 6 Court reporters. We have consolidated the former 10 departments into 4 to avoid wasted time and efforts. The Court has moved and consolidated its payroll, purchasing, data processing and budgetary oversight to the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for a savings of \$228,863.00. We have required our talented but limited staff to heavily multi-task, eliminating the need for additional employees. We have consolidated our IT departments and transferred them to the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for a savings of \$289,480. (Note that the former Workers' Compensation Court's IT expense averaged \$700,000.00 per year.) We have reduced exorbitant mailing costs in our docket department by utilizing the electronic emailing of notices. We have consolidated the processing of certain Orders to reduce time, expense, and paperwork. All of the above has not only resulted in a reduction of costs but a streamlining of efficiency. The Court of Existing Claims requests a budget of approximately \$4M but continues to produce work commensurate with the former Workers' Compensation Court which required a budget of \$6.65M for a total savings of approximately \$2.65M overall.

CORE

What services are you required to provide which are outside of your core mission? Are any services you provide duplicated or replicated by another agency? Are there services which are core to your mission which you are unable to perform because of requirements to perform non-core services elsewhere?

None. No. No.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

Are any of the services which are performed by the agency also performed in the private sector in Oklahoma? In other states? Has the agency been approached by any foundation, for-profit or not-for-profit corporation with efforts to privatize some of the functions of the agency?

No. No. No.