



SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

FY 2018-19 Budget Hearing



Created by State Law on May 6, 1966

Mission Statement

The mission of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind is to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services and prevention of blindness services to blind and visually impaired individuals leading to competitive employment and social and economic independence.

South Carolina Commission for the Blind Agency Highlights

- **STEM Exploration Week utilizing the 3-D Career Exploration Lab and assisted by instructors from NASA. This program will return in 2018 and several other states are now using our model to implement the program in their agency.**
- **SCCB was honored to accept an award from Verizon in Charleston as the Diversity Partner of the year.**
- **The Business Enterprise Program continues to grow and currently has almost 90 Blind Licensed Vendors operating vending routes, cafeterias, and snack bars at over 100 state and federal locations across the state.**

Prioritized Budget Requests

Children's Services Program Increase \$ 25,000.00 (recurring)

- Children's Services hosted a Summer Reading Challenge and the annual Braille Challenge. They also worked closely with SCCB Vocational Rehabilitation Program and successfully helped 12 consumers move from Children's to Transition Services as they reached age 14.
- Along with an increase in referrals for this program we have seen increasing costs in providing services, especially technology. Children can remain on caseloads for up to 10 years depending on when their case was first opened and with program growth has come increased case service costs. These include CCTV's up to \$2,200, iPads at \$900 each, and Brailers that can cost as much as \$900. Providing the necessary services for children with Blindness is imperative to their future success as they move into adulthood where we encourage them to become self-sufficient and independent as well as gainfully employed. Technology is necessary for this population to obtain degrees and credentials for a successful career.

Prioritized Budget Requests

Prevention of Blindness Program Increase \$ 100,000.00 (recurring)

- Prevention of Blindness continues to grow and served over 30 consumers last year with sight restoring procedures. With the help of this program South Carolinians who lack insurance coverage for sight restoring procedures such as cataract removal and retina detachment surgery are able to regain their sight and maintain or obtain gainful employment and remain independent. The program also assists those who cannot afford eye exams and glasses so they also may remain employed and independent. This program provides education on eye safety to employers and citizens throughout the state to increase awareness about preventing Blindness.
- Referrals to this program have continued to grow as the public becomes aware of the services. In 2016 our agency underwent a Legislative Oversight Study and the committee unanimously recommended that the Prevention Program be funded at the pre-recession levels. This recommendation is in the Legislative Oversight Committee final report.

Prioritized Budget Requests

MOBILE UNIT \$ 195,000.00 (non-recurring)

- The most common barrier to receiving services for a person with Blindness or severe visual impairments is the inability to find transportation to our agency locations and in rural areas, to medical care. These funds would be used to purchase a customized mobile unit to travel the state of South Carolina to provide assessments, vision screenings, testing and a team to bring services to rural area consumers of the great state of South Carolina. Based on Cornell University 2015 Disability Data Reports there are approximately 77,000 South Carolina residents between the ages of 16 and 64 with visual impairments. Approximately 33% of this population lives in poverty, most in rural areas of the state. A mobile unit could assist our agency in helping many of them gain greater independence and employment.
- Goals in our agency Strategic Plan and Statewide Strategic Plan include increasing and improving our services to rural areas of the state. Not funding this request will hinder our efforts in reaching the many South Carolina residents with visual impairments who live in the rural areas of our state.

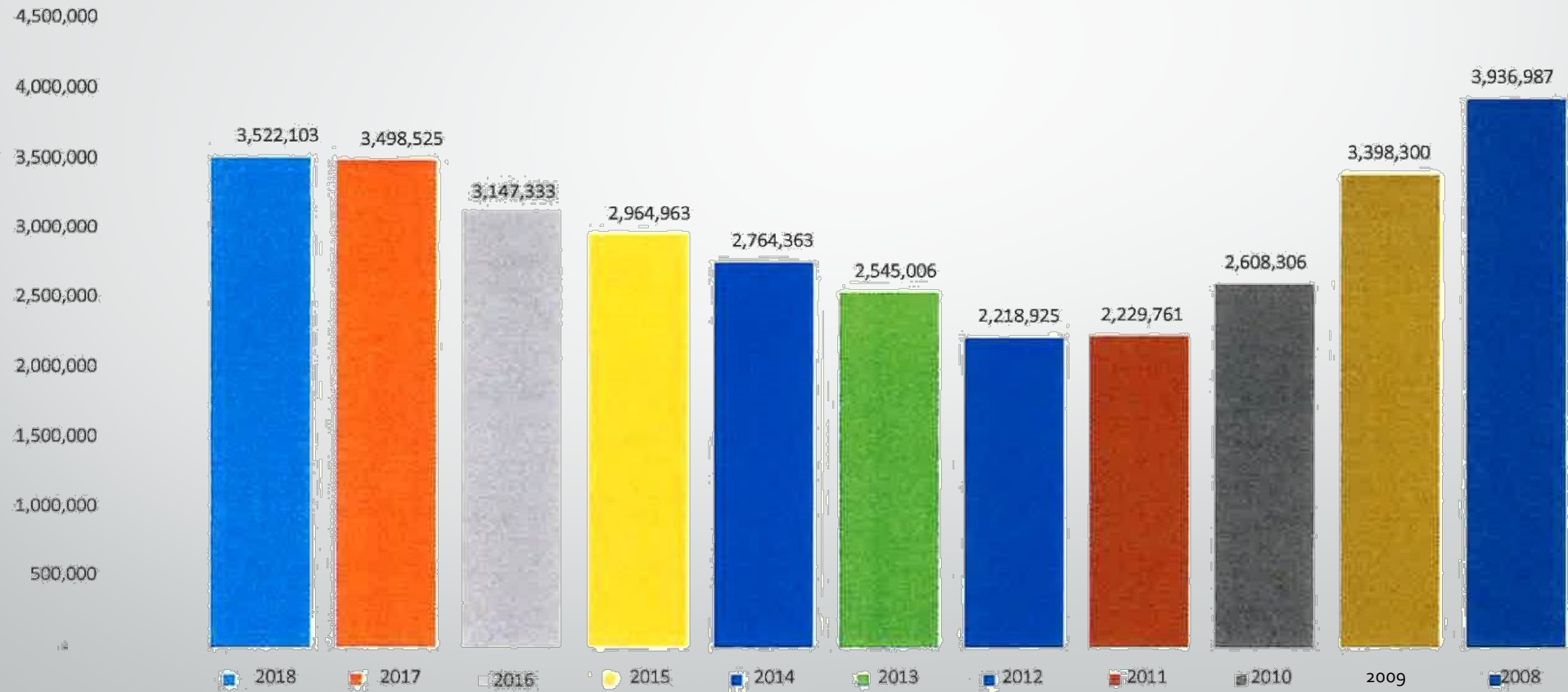
3 Year Authorization and Expenditure History

	FY17		FY18		FY19	
	Authorization	Expenditure	Authorization	Expenditure	Authorization	Expenditure
General Fund	3,769,846	3,730,608	3,409,108	3,137,787	3,239,369	2,977,594
Federal Fund	8,433,255	8,433,247	8,433,255	7,529,829	8,433,255	7,328,733
Other Fund	403,000	25,073	403,000	53,560	293,000	156,681


Agency Cost Saving for General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan

- **\$ 105,633.00 = 3% Reduction**
- **A 3% reduction to the case services budget would greatly impact the service delivery to our consumers. SCCB's consumers in our Vocational Rehabilitation Program need training, medical services and assistive technology.**

11 Years of Recurring State Appropriations



FY18 has one-time state funds of \$100,000 for the creation of a SCEIS and AWARE interface.



***Thank you for your time and
consideration of our requests.***