

## Part I – Agency Profile

### Agency Overview

The Office of Performance Evaluations (OPE), created in 1994, is a nonpartisan, independent office that serves the Legislature's information needs by conducting performance evaluations of state agencies and programs. The mission of OPE is to promote confidence and accountability in state government through these evaluations. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations from OPE evaluations are used by the Legislature to make policy and budget decisions and by agencies to improve performance.

Performance evaluations include assessing whether

- agencies or programs are complying with applicable laws and legislative intent;
- services are provided efficiently and cost-effectively; and
- programs and services are achieving intended results.

OPE works under the direction of the bipartisan Joint Legislative Oversight Committee (JLOC). The office has eight full-time authorized positions.

### Core Functions/Idaho Code

Authorizing statutes: Idaho Code §§ 67-457 through 67-464

1. Conduct performance evaluations and report each evaluation to JLOC
2. Identify cost savings and opportunities to avoid unnecessary future costs
3. Provide useful recommendations to assist the Legislature in making policy and budget decisions
4. Be responsive to the Legislature's information needs

### Revenue and Expenditures

Revenue	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
General Fund	\$756,600	\$743,300	\$697,450	\$764,070
Dedicated	\$14,200	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$770,800</b>	<b>\$743,300</b>	<b>\$697,450</b>	<b>\$764,070</b>
Expenditure	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Personnel Costs	\$609,900	\$624,036	\$615,284	\$600,095
Operating Expenditures	\$100,800	\$99,803	\$37,071	\$77,188
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,600
Trustee/Benefit Payments	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$710,700</b>	<b>\$723,840</b>	<b>\$652,355</b>	<b>\$685,883</b>

### Profile of Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Number of performance evaluation projects completed	2	4	5	5
Number of follow-up reviews for previous evaluations completed	1	3	6	7

The OPE workload depends on the number and nature of projects assigned each year by JLOC. Completed reports may be accessed at [www.legislature.idaho.gov/ope/publications/reports/index.htm](http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/ope/publications/reports/index.htm).

## Performance Highlights

1. The office received the 2013 Impact Award from the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society, a staff section of the National Conference of State Legislatures, for the report *Coordination and Delivery of Senior Service in Idaho*.
2. The office received the 2013 Notable Document Award from the Legislative Research Librarians, a staff section of the National Conference of State Legislatures, for the report *State Employee Compensation and Turnover*.
3. The office's report *Guide to Comparing Business Tax Policies* (June 2013) helps policymakers to navigate through complex tax policy issues by asking the right kinds of questions early in the legislative process and to more thoroughly understand how nontax factors play a part in forging appropriate tax policy alternatives. Also introduced at the report's release was OPE's first interactive web-based tool that helps policymakers evaluate the link between tax policy proposals and tax policy goals. The tax tool was praised by the chairman of the Idaho State Tax Commission and the director of the Department of Commerce.
4. In the report *State Employee Compensation and Turnover* (January 2013), the office presented results of a survey of more than 17,000 classified and nonclassified state employees. The survey showed that about one-fourth of the respondents were likely to leave their current employment within the next two years. OPE found that 90 percent of classified employees were paid below the state's established benchmark rates for their position.
5. The report *Workforce Issues Affecting Public School Teachers* (January 2013) was a first-of-its-kind effort in recent years to gather and report the perspectives of all Idaho's K–12 educators and administrators. OPE received input on teacher workforce needs and conditions from 2,486 teachers, 256 principals, and 84 superintendents.
6. In the report *Strengthening Contract Management in Idaho* (January 2013), the office found that although Idaho's framework for developing and awarding large contracts generally aligns with best practices, the framework falls short in two key areas—statewide training and monitoring. House Concurrent Resolution 018 directs the Department of Administration to develop a strategy to implement the report's recommendations. The report has several best practice checklists for both the department and other state agencies to incorporate into their contracting process.
7. The Legislature passed Senate Bill 1027 to restructure Idaho's state-funded scholarship program. The catalyst for this change was a recommendation in the report *Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education* (January 2012) for policymakers to find ways to increase the number of need-based scholarships statewide. Senate Bill 1085 was also introduced during the 2013 legislative session. As recommended by the report, this bill was intended to increase the number of school counselors statewide; evaluators found that Idaho's current student-to-counselor ratio was nearly double the national standard.
8. The Legislature passed Senate Bill 1127 to reduce the unnecessary regulatory burden on nonprofit organizations and the workload of the Lottery staff. The passage of this bill directly implements recommendations from the report *Lottery Operations and Charitable Gaming* (February 2012).
9. Identified in the report *Equity in Higher Education Funding* (November 2011), policy of the State Board of Education had not defined a standard and measure for equitable funding levels, which was one of the root causes driving persistent equity concerns for the past three decades. OPE's follow-up in June 2013 demonstrated that the board and the four institutions had made progress collaborating and defining a standard for equity as recommended in the evaluation report.

10. In a third report on *Delays in Medicaid Claims Processing* (November 2012), the office noted that the Department of Health and Welfare had recovered all but 1 percent of \$117 million it issued to providers as interim payments while launching a new Medicaid claims processing system. OPE also found that since the release of its initial report, the number of pended claims had decreased significantly from 90,000 per week in June 2011 to less than 6,000 since May 2012.
11. The report *Governance of EMS Agencies* (November 2010) describes attributes to include in the development of EMS systems across the state. OPE reported in a follow-up in June 2013 that local stakeholders have created at least three countywide systems using a design that mirrors these attributes.
12. Promoting confidence and accountability in state government, the office made nine presentations:
  - Discussed OPE's evaluation process to the board of the Idaho Transportation Department (March 2013).
  - Presented findings and recommendations from the report *Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education* to Idaho's Workforce Development Council (November 2012).
  - Participated in a panel on charter school authorization at the Charter School Forum, sponsored by the Legislative Education Staff Network, St. Louis, MO (June 2013).
  - Gave a plenary speech on managing the politics of evaluation at the annual conference of the Eastern Evaluation Research Society in Galloway, NJ (April 2013).
  - Participated in three panels at the annual conference of the American Evaluation Association in Minneapolis, MN (October 2012). The panels focused on contracting for evaluation, managing evaluation politics, and establishing trust with diverse stakeholders in complex evaluation environments.
  - Participated in two panels at the fall conference of the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society in Atlanta, GA (October 2012). One panel focused on using research methods in evaluation and the other panel discussed ways to ensure quality in evaluation work.

**Part II – Performance Measures**

Performance Measure	2010	2011	2012	2013	Benchmark
1. Provide useful recommendations to assist the Legislature in making policy and budget decisions. Performance is measured by the number of bills and resolutions introduced or enacted in response to OPE recommendations.	3	1	1	4	n/a
2. Identify cost-savings and opportunities to avoid unnecessary future costs. Performance is measured by estimated cost savings or cost avoidance as a result of OPE recommendations.	None identified	None identified	\$500,000 per year	None identified	n/a
3. Respond to the Legislature's information needs. Performance is measured by the number of "24-hour" limited reviews completed.	5	2	8	1	n/a
4. Respond to the Legislature's information needs. Performance is measured by the number of evaluation-related presentations made to the Legislature (does not include presentations to JLOC)	5	5	9	4	n/a
5. Promote confidence and accountability in state government through education and outreach to interested stakeholders and participation in professional associations. Performance is measured by the number of evaluation-related presentations made outside of the Legislature.				9*	n/a

\* New measure.

#### For More Information Contact

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