

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 is authorized for eight full-time equivalent 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. Make recommendations to agencies for program improvements
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 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
General Fund	\$950,200	\$983,800	\$1,030,000	\$1,063,900
Dedicated	0	0	0	0
Total	\$950,200	\$983,800	\$1,030,000	\$1,063,900
Expenditures	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Personnel Costs	\$777,612	\$846,811.39	\$899,832.15	\$890,123
Operating Expenditures*	\$76,228	\$126,336.74	\$65,678.46	\$71,743
Capital Outlay	\$7,175	0	0	\$3,510
Trustee/Benefit Payments	0	0	0	0
Total	\$861,015	\$973,148.13	\$965,510.61	\$965,377

* Some operating expenditures were appropriated in prior fiscal year.

Profile of Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Number of performance evaluation projects completed	6	4	3	4
Number of follow-up reviews for previous evaluations completed	0	0	0	4

OPE reports may be accessed at <https://legislature.idaho.gov/ope/reports/>.

FY 2024 Performance Highlights

OPE released the following evaluation reports:

- *Criminal Justice: Reentry*, July 2023
- *State Oversight of Idaho’s Health Information Exchange*, October 2023
- *State Transparency Policies in Child Abuse and Neglect Court Proceedings (Background Review)*, January 2024
- *Child Protection Ombuds: A 50 State Review (Background Review)*, January 2024
- *Medicaid Hospital Rates*, February 2024
- *County Coroners and Death Investigations*, February 2024
- *Criminal Justice: Prevention (Limited-Scope Study)*, June 2024

OPE received two awards:

- 2023 Impact Award of the National Conference of State Legislatures, *Volunteer Providers of Emergency Medical Services*
- 2023 Notable Document Award of the National Conference of State Legislatures, *Sustainability of Idaho’s Direct Care Workforce*

Part II – Performance Measures

Performance Measure		FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Goal 1						
Provide useful recommendations to assist the Legislature in making policy and budget decisions.						
1. Performance is measured by the number of bills and resolutions introduced or enacted in response to OPE recommendations.	actual	2	4	8	7	10
	target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Goal 2						
Respond to the Legislature’s information needs.						
2. Performance is measured by the number of “24-hour” limited reviews completed.	actual	1	0	1	2	2
	target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
3. Performance is measured by the number of evaluation-related presentations made to the Legislature (does not include presentations to JLOC).	actual	2	2	2	4	4
	target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Goal 3						
Promote confidence and accountability in state government through education and outreach to interested stakeholders and participation in professional associations.						
4. Performance is measured by the number of evaluation-related presentations made outside of the Legislature.	actual	11	4	5	6	5
	target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Performance Measure Explanatory Notes

Bills introduced

In our 2023 evaluation, *State Oversight of Idaho's Health Information Exchange*, we found that the state created the Idaho Health Data Exchange as a nonprofit corporation but did not establish meaningful state oversight mechanisms. One bill passed and two bills were introduced that addressed the findings of this report.

- H. 708a was signed into law and amended law to provide that the state shall not act as the incorporator of a corporation unless expressly authorized by the legislature. The law requires corporations that were created by the state through some vote or action other than through general laws passed by the legislature to submit a report to the Secretary of State.
- H. 643, which had a similar purpose to H. 708a, was drafted and sent to the House State Affairs Committee.
- HCR. 26 was drafted to request that the Board of Education reconsider authorizing the creation of a corporation for the purpose of affiliating the University of Idaho with the University of Phoenix.

In our 2023 evaluation, *Criminal Justice: Reentry*, we found that limited capacity in reentry center beds impedes reentry success.

- S. 1451, enhanced the Department of Correction budget with several staffing and funding increases, including staff for a new community reentry center in Pocatello and other staff to expand community reentry.

In our 2022 evaluation, *K–12 Public School Buildings*, we found that Idaho did not have a current facility assessment and there was a backlog of deferred maintenance in K–12 public school buildings.

- H. 521 was passed and invested in school facilities in three ways. First, \$125 million in ongoing sales tax revenue was dedicated to the School Modernization Facilities Fund. Second, the legislation increased the percentage of sales tax revenue directed to the School District Facility fund. Third, the legislation reduced income tax, allowing Idahoans to have more money to better support local bonds and levies related to school facilities.

In our 2021 evaluation, *Volunteer Providers of Emergency Medical Services*, we found that Idaho faces EMS funding and staffing challenges that could affect patient care, especially in rural communities.

- S. 1416 amended existing law to move the Emergency Medical Services Bureau to the Office of Emergency Management, designated EMS as an essential government service, and created the Emergency Medical Services Sustainability Fund.

In a series of four evaluations on the child welfare system, we found that gaps in placement services, program capacity, organizational culture, and system oversight prevented the child welfare system from performing well. We also found that there were not enough foster placements, guardians ad litem, or social workers to ensure that decisions affecting children in foster care consistently prioritized that child's best interest.

- S. 1367 amended existing law to create a fund to coordinate statewide payments for guardians ad litem representation.
- S. 1380 established an Office of the Health and Social Services Ombudsman to monitor and evaluate the compliance of public agencies and private entities in the provision of health and social services policy for children under the care of the state. The ombuds will respond to claims related to services provided to children in foster care, protective supervision, or residential treatment facilities in Idaho.
- S. 1459 appropriated \$470,000 to the Office of the Health and Social Services Ombuds.

In our 2020 evaluation, *State Response to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias*, we found that no entity is responsible for executing or updating the state plan, adopted by the Legislature, to address Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. We suggested the Legislature consider establishing a system-wide oversight entity to improve collaboration and accountability. We also recommended the state establish an ongoing position in the Division of Public Health dedicated to the state's response to dementia.

- S. 1247 created a legal and compassionate pathway to take someone with a major neurocognitive disorder in acute crisis, and a danger to themselves or others, to a hospital emergency room for a medical assessment to determine if an undiagnosed medical reason is the cause of the acute crisis.

Legislative presentations

- Child Protection Oversight Committee, presented two background reports on ombuds and transparency policies in other states and the results of the follow up for *Representation for Children and Youth in Child Protection Cases*.
- House State Affairs Committee, *State Oversight of Idaho's Health Information Exchange*

Presentations made outside the Legislature

- July 2023: Presentation of *Sustainability of Idaho's Direct Care Workforce* to the Community Care Advisory Council
- September 2023: Presented progress report to on the *County Coroners and Death Investigations* project to the Idaho State Association of County Coroners
- November 2023: Two presentations to Our Care Can't Wait about the findings and recommendations in *Sustainability of Idaho's Direct Care Workforce*
- March 2024: Presentation of *County Coroners and Death Investigations* to the Idaho Children at Risk Task Force

For More Information Contact

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