
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

November 29, 2017



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET HEARING — DEPARTMENT FOR THE BLIND

Budget Hearing. On November 29, 2017, Governor Kim Reynolds held a budget hearing for the Department for the Blind. Director Emily Wharton noted that the Department is requesting status quo funding for FY 2019. She highlighted the importance of maintaining that funding in order to meet the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement for federal funding. Approximately 87.0% of the Department's annual General Fund appropriation matches federal Vocational Rehabilitation funding at a ratio of 21 to 79. The State must spend an amount equal to or greater than the amount spent the second previous year in order to meet the MOE requirement or risk the imposition of a penalty by the federal government.

Department Restructuring. Director Wharton noted that the Department is undergoing a major restructuring, with the elimination of 10 positions in nonessential areas to make room for new positions to meet 21st-century needs. The Director also discussed the Department's commitment to transparency, community involvement, and innovative program design.

Workforce Considerations. Director Wharton presented information on the net benefit to the community of paying for services to help blind people find and keep employment. The Director also noted examples of the need to educate employers about the ability of blind people to participate in the workforce.

Governor Reynolds thanked Director Wharton and the Department for participating in the Future Ready Iowa initiative. Department of Management Director David Roederer asked whether there were still problems with the ability of State job application systems to handle Braille job applications. Director Wharton said the systems are now working well.

LSA Staff Contact: Robin Madison (515.281.5270) robin.madison@legis.iowa.gov