

Role and Overview

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) is the advocate for Ohio's 4.5 million residential utility consumers on issues regarding the services they receive from electric, gas, telephone, and water utilities. OCC represents consumers in cases before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), federal regulatory agencies, and state and federal courts. OCC's advocacy provides decision-makers with the residential consumer perspective in regulatory and judicial processes where other stakeholders, such as public utilities and large business customers, are typical participants. The agency may also conduct long-range studies concerning various topics, such as the quality of utility service that consumers receive and programs and policies that may potentially lower the rates that consumers pay. Each year, the OCC assists thousands of consumers who have inquiries regarding their utility service through its Consumer Services Division.

The OCC participated in approximately one hundred state proceedings and numerous federal matters during 2006. The counsel also educates consumers about utility issues through their website, distribution of newsletters, and makes presentations to groups and organizations throughout Ohio including customers that are rural, urban, low-income or elderly. The OCC has approximately 70 employees and an annual budget of \$8.5 million.

The nine-member governing board of the OCC, appointed by the Ohio Attorney General, is a bi-partisan board whose members serve three-year terms and represent three organized groups: residential consumers, family farmers and labor. The board is responsible for hiring the Consumers' Counsel and the Deputy Consumers' Counsel to run the day-to-day operations of the agency. Additional information regarding the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is available at www.pickocc.org/.



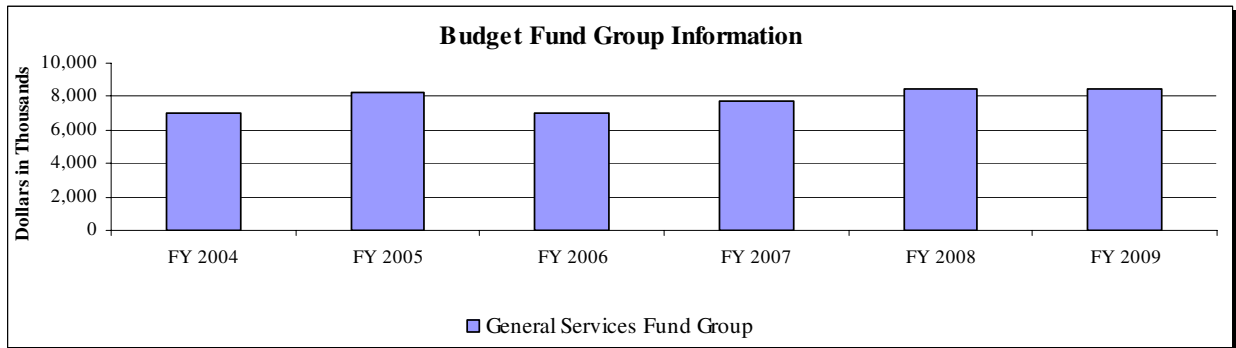
Turnaround Ohio Initiatives

- Advocate for a comprehensive, statewide energy policy that provides for price stability and diversity of resources.
- Support and promote energy efficiency programs to improve local economic development.

Agency Priorities

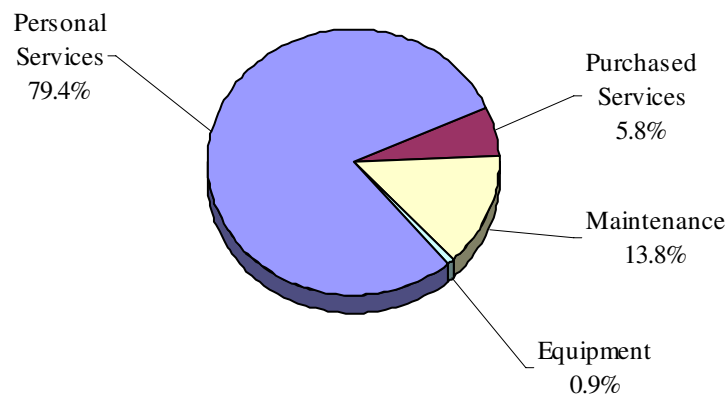
- Serve as the statutory advocate on behalf of Ohio's 4.5 million residential utility consumers in issues regarding the services they receive from electric, gas, telephone and water utilities.
- Participate on behalf of residential consumers in utility cases before the PUCO and the Ohio Supreme Court and other forums as necessary.
- Analyze utility companies' compliance with laws and rules that are intended to ensure adequate service quality and reasonable rates for consumers, and take legal action when necessary to protect Ohioans.
- Participate on behalf of consumers in legal proceedings in which public utilities and other stakeholders recommend policy and regulations that affect the affordability, reliability, and quality of service for residential consumers.
- Educate the state's residential consumers about their utility services and respond to their requests for information.

Summary of Budget History and Recommendations



(In thousands) BUDGET FUND GROUP	ACTUAL			ESTIMATE	% CHANGE	RECOMMENDED			
	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 06-07	FY 2008	% CHANGE	FY 2009	% CHANGE
General Services Fund Group	7,026	8,240	7,007	7,770	10.9	8,498	9.4	8,498	.0
TOTAL	7,026	8,240	7,007	7,770	10.9	8,498	9.4	8,498	.0

FY 2008-09 Biennial Appropriation by Expense Category



(In thousands) OBJECT OF EXPENSE	ACTUAL			ESTIMATE	% CHANGE	RECOMMENDED			
	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 06-07	FY 2008	% CHANGE	FY 2009	% CHANGE
Personal Services	5,419	6,095	5,332	5,843	9.6	6,656	13.9	6,845	2.8
Purchased Services	319	397	319	505	58.1	590	16.8	395	(33.1)
Maintenance	1,197	1,322	1,240	1,310	5.6	1,192	(9.0)	1,158	(2.9)
Equipment	91	426	116	112	(3.7)	60	(46.7)	100	67.8
TOTAL	7,026	8,240	7,007	7,770	10.9	8,498	9.4	8,498	.0

PROGRAM SERIES 01: Consumer Advocacy

This program series maintains the general operations of the Consumers' Counsel and provides support for advocacy, representation, complaint resolution, and outreach and education activities on behalf of the residential utility consumers.

Program 01.01: Consumer Advocacy

This program supports the operations of the OCC in its role as the residential utility consumer advocate representing the interests of the public through education, legal proceedings, and consumer mediation.

The Executive Recommendation will:

- Provide funding for the education of the public in issues concerning utilities management and telecommunications through presentations, brochures, handbooks, press releases, and other media sources;
- Allow OCC to continue to represent the interests of residential utility consumers in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts;
- Support agency initiatives that seek to provide the benefits of utility competition, emerging communications technology and energy efficiency while maintaining fair rates, service quality, and consumer protections; and
- Fund the operation of a call center that provides education and assistance to thousands of consumers to address and resolve their utility questions and complaints.

FUND				RECOMMENDED	
GROUP	FUND	ALI	ALI NAME	FY 2008	FY 2009
GSF	5F5	053-601	Operating Expenses	8,498,070	8,498,070
TOTAL FOR PROGRAM				8,498,070	8,498,070

LINE ITEM SUMMARY - Consumers' Counsel

FUND	ALI	ALI TITLE	FY 2004 ACTUAL	FY 2005 ACTUAL	FY 2006 ACTUAL	FY 2007 ESTIMATE	FY 2008 RECOMMENDED	% CHANGE	FY 2009 RECOMMENDED	% CHANGE
5F5	053-601	Operating Expenses	7,025,929	8,239,755	7,007,426	7,770,070	8,498,070	9.4	8,498,070	.0
TOTAL General Services Fund Group			7,025,929	8,239,755	7,007,426	7,770,070	8,498,070	9.4	8,498,070	.0
TOTAL Consumers' Counsel			7,025,929	8,239,755	7,007,426	7,770,070	8,498,070	9.4	8,498,070	.0