

VOSHA Review Board (VRB)
FY24 Budget and Federal Funds Explained
February 2023

Vermont was approved by the federal government to operate as an Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) state plan. This means Vermont independently enforces OSHA Regulations that are at least as effective as federal OSHA regulations and enforcement. Each year the OSHA State Plan Grant provides grant money to various states for the purpose of operating their own OSHA Plan. Vermont is one of those states and is called the VOSHA Program under the Department of Labor. Grants to state plans are required to be matched on a 50% federal and 50% state match. Therefore, funds received from the Federal Government must be matched by the same amount to run the program. Some of this money is allocated for the VOSHA Review Board (VRB) expenditures.

The FY24 Governor's recommended budget is \$102,008 in spending authority. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the DOL, VRB and the Agency of Administration (AoA) it has always been understood that half of the VRB's expenses are paid for through this Grant and half through the general fund. **Half of the FY24 Governor's recommended budget is \$51,004.**

When completing the grant application for the state plan, the Vermont Department of Labor is tasked with estimating expenditures for each Federal Category. The VRB recently became aware that the DOL has not been updating the VRB's expenses on the Grant for many, many years. More specifically it has been over 20 years since the grant numbers for VRB were in alignment with VRB actual expenses. Although the MOU specifies that it is the DOL's responsibility to keep track of the VRB expenses, the VRB felt compelled to inform the DOL of its intent to request a full-time position increase. It is because of this that the VRB is including the DOL in its budget discussions.

In addition, the position increase request was not supported by the Agency of Administration and not in the Governor's recommended budget. However, 21 VSA 203(b) states that the Board is empowered to hire a clerk and reporter as needed, without the approval of the Secretary of Administration. The Commissioner of Finance and Management specified that "... such request [should] not have adverse consequences for VDOL, with whom VRB shares an MOU that obligates an interdepartmental transfer. If a request for a full-time Clerk is being made, please coordinate with VDOL as needed prior to your meeting with Committee, to ensure that they can support the request and the plan for funding it."

The total spending authority needed for the Clerk position to shift to full time is \$36,626. Half of which is \$18,313 if funded through the State Plan Grant.

After meeting with Representative Toleno, it was unclear if the Committee could support the position increase request without full knowledge of many other budgets presented. Therefore, it is the Review Board's intent to continue with the request through appropriations.