

Oregon Commission for the Blind (OCB)

Case Study: Increased General Funding to Serve More Citizens With Vision Loss

Problem

For the past five years, the number of applications for older blind clients had been flat. This issue came into greater focus during a recent OCB Quarterly Target Review when it was reported that this measure was in “red.” The number of applications for new clients is an important driver of funding and impacts the agency’s “number of clients served” measure. This measure was prioritized for 7-Step Problem Solving and a cross-functional team was launched to investigate root causes.

Solution

The team identified four primary root causes and developed a recommended solution. Their recommendation was articulated in a business case, which sought funding for additional staff based on a detailed analysis of how field teachers spent their time serving clients across the state. This business case was presented to the Governor’s office and the State Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO).

Results and Impact

The Governor’s office and LFO approved an 81% increase in general funding dollars for the commission. This increased OCB’s budget from \$1.6 million to \$2.9 million. These additional funds enabled OCB to add three more FTE to generate more outreach and referrals, which will increase their total number of clients served up from 1,210 to 1,630 in a biennium in their Older Blind Independent Living Program. OCB had been seeking this increase for several budget cycles and two factors caused LFO to grant this significant budget increase for the 2015-2017 biennium. The first factor was the recognition that the blind population in Oregon has been increasing for years and was expected to continue to grow. The second factor was that OCB Executive Director, Dacia Johnson, presented OCB’s Results Management System[®] to the Ways and Means Committee demonstrating all of their core processes, outcome and process measures, and the tangible improvements they were already achieving. The Results Management System resulted in an increase to the OCB operating budget more than six times the cost of the system, representing over 600% in ROI in less than two years.

Quote from the Executive Director, Dacia Johnson

“Our Results Management System, our agency scorecard, and the work by our problem solving team provided us with the necessary framework to create a strong business case for additional resources to expand our services to Oregonians who experience vision loss. This is a total ‘game changer’ for our agency.”