



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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September 17, 2015

Benjamin Barnes, Secretary
Office of Policy and Management
450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106-1379

Dear Secretary Barnes:

This is in response to your memorandum requesting agencies to submit options for reducing their General Fund operating budgets with realistic and achievable reduction options.

I have examined our agency's accounts and determined that I cannot responsibly submit a reduction option. In fact, as discussed below, I believe that if we are to fulfill our mandates and continue to operate, we can sustain no further reductions in any area of our operation.

More than 90% of our General Fund appropriation supports the salaries of staff members, the overwhelming majority of whom are involved in direct client services, including investigation and safeguarding activities. We already have a very "flat", very lean organizational structure. All but three of our staff members are covered by the SEBAC concession/no-layoff agreement. Of those three, two are critical management positions needed to assure leadership, supervision, continuity of operations, accountability and direct advocacy representation and decision making in especially complex cases. In fact, in addition to their managerial duties, the incumbents in those positions also provide direct client services. The other non-bargaining unit position is filled by my Executive Secretary, who, in addition to managing the heavy flow of organizational demands associated with that position also maintains our network server and databases, and functions as our Agency's only IT staff. In a similar vein, our agency's Other Expenses account offers no opportunities for further reduction: we have already eliminated optional purchasing and eliminated and/or reduced sub-contracts. Any further reductions to OE will either leave us unable to meet operating expenses or unable to assure protections for vulnerable people now being served through our one remaining safeguarding sub-contract.

I have not reached this conclusion without a conscientious search for different ways to fulfill our mandates and still meet the expectations established in your memorandum. Our agency's safeguarding work is inherently labor-intensive, requiring extensive interviewing, investigating and negotiating. We have reduced sub-contracts and reorganized our programmatic configuration repeatedly over the past

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sixteen years in order to compensate for the loss of over a dozen staff positions and reductions in the dollars available from federal grants to meet salary and contracting costs. In fact, the recently announced increases in fringe benefit costs for federally funded staff members represents the loss of the equivalent of yet another full time advocate or investigator position. While I certainly appreciate that other agencies are confronting similar challenges, and that, as a State we must find ways to achieve leaner, more efficient governmental operations, in a small agency – one that is engaged in work that is inherently labor-intensive - there are limits to what creative re-design can accomplish within a small agency.

Thank you for your consideration. If you or your staff have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Craig B. Henrici
Executive Director

CBH