



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873
Email: fiscal.bureau@legis.wisconsin.gov • Website: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb>

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #161

Broadband Service Expansion (Board on Aging and Long-Term Care)

[LFB 2015-17 Budget Summary: Page 70, #4]

CURRENT LAW

The Board on Aging and Long-Term Care (BOALTC) is tasked with advocating for the interests of the state's long-term care consumers, informing those consumers of their rights, and educating the public at large about health care systems and long-term care. The Board operates the state's long-term care ombudsman program, the volunteer ombudsman program, the Medigap and the Medicare Part D and Prescription Drug Helplines, and assists in the resolution of complaints and concerns relating to long-term care services.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$17,000 (\$8,500 GPR and \$8,500 PR) annually to increase information technology (IT) bandwidth services available for use by the agency's staff.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The Board's staff uses certain web-based programs, including the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Part D Plan Finder, to support the operations of the Helplines. The ombudsman and Helpline staff also use web-based programs for data entry. Additionally, BOALTC uses the internet for webinars and YouTube training for staff members.

2. In 2013-14, BOALTC estimates that the agency spent approximately \$81,900 on IT services across all operations, including in its Madison office, as well as to support regionally-based BOALTC employees. These IT-related service costs consisted of computer supplies and materials, payment to DOA for certain DOA-provided services, payment for certain privately-provided IT

services, maintenance and repairs for IT equipment and software, and operating lease payments for IT equipment and software.

3. Currently, the agency's broadband service provides data transmission at a rate of 1.5 megabits per second (Mbps), which the Board indicates is inadequate for certain activities, such as running database programs for multiple users and streaming videos for counseling activities. For example, the Board notes that if one individual in the Madison office uses the Part D Plan Finder or accesses a webinar, it slows down the computer systems for the remainder of the office's 16 staff members. Additionally, the Board uses the State Transforming Agency Resources (STAR) system to open documents and view PowerPoint presentations that are necessary to its work. When the Part D Plan Finder is in use, employees of the Board are unable to access STAR.

4. Periodically, the Department of Administration's Division of Enterprise Technology (DET) installs security patches overnight on programs used by the Board's staff. A "security patch" is a software update that is intended to avoid problems for users, such as ensuring that program data is not vulnerable to exposure, and maintaining program performance. If any employees take computers home to work from home, the patch will download when they return to the office. Under the current bandwidth constraints, the rest of the Board's staff will experience delays in computer systems while the patches on those machines download.

5. The bill would provide \$17,000 annually to fund the cost of increasing the data transmission rate to 5.0 Mbps to support the Board's IT-related activities. The Board indicates that these amounts should be revised downward to \$8,400 annually (-\$4,200 GPR and -\$4,200 PR) to reflect DET bandwidth rates. The cost of the increased bandwidth services is estimated based on the difference between DET's monthly rate for 5 Mbps of bandwidth (\$1,206) and DET's monthly rate for the Board's current bandwidth of 1.5 Mbps (\$502). BOALTC indicates that if this item is approved, it would put in an immediate service request to DET to begin installing the increased bandwidth. Accordingly, there is no delay assumed in the cost estimate.

6. The cost of this item would be funded 50% with GPR and 50% with program revenue (PR), which is insurance fee revenue transferred from the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI). This source currently supports the costs of the Helplines. Under current law, at the end of each fiscal year, the unencumbered balance in the OCI general program operations appropriation that exceeds 10% of the fiscal year's expenditure under this appropriation lapses to the general fund. Consequently, any decrease in PR funding budgeted for OCI results in a corresponding GPR revenue increase, while any increase in PR funding budgeted for OCI results in a corresponding GPR revenue decrease. Accordingly, if this funding increase for BOALTC is not approved, the PR funding would lapse to the general fund.

7. If the Committee wishes to increase the Board's information technology-related capabilities and performance, it could approve the Governor's recommendation, with the modification of decreasing funding for this provision by \$17,200 (\$8,600 GPR and \$8,600 PR) in the biennium to reflect the revised estimates of monthly bandwidth expenses [Alternative 1].

8. Alternatively, the Committee could delete this provision [Alternative 2]. The Board has indicated that, without the funding increase, it would continue to purchase its current broadband

service, but does not have sufficient funding to expand the service.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to increase the Board's IT bandwidth services available for use by the agency's staff, and decrease the amount provided under the bill by \$8,600 (\$4,300 GPR and \$4,300 PR) annually to reflect DET monthly service rates for 5 Mbps of bandwidth. Increase GPR-earned estimates to OCI by \$4,300 annually.

ALT 1	Change to Bill
BOALTC	
GPR	- \$8,600
PR	<u>- 8,600</u>
Total	- \$17,200
OCI	
GPR-REV	\$8,600

2. Delete provision (-\$8,500 GPR and -\$8,500 PR annually). In addition, increase GPR earned estimates to OCI by \$8,500 annually.

ALT 2	Change to Bill
BOALTC	
GPR	- \$17,000
PR	<u>- 17,000</u>
Total	- \$34,000
OCI	
GPR-REV	\$17,000

Prepared by: Stephanie Mabrey