

### **Role and Overview**

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the state's residential utility advocate, represents the interest of 4.5 million households on issues regarding the services they receive from investor owned 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, programs, and policies that may potentially lower the rates that consumers pay. Each year, the OCC assists thousands of consumers who have inquiries or complaints regarding their utility service through its Consumer Services Division.

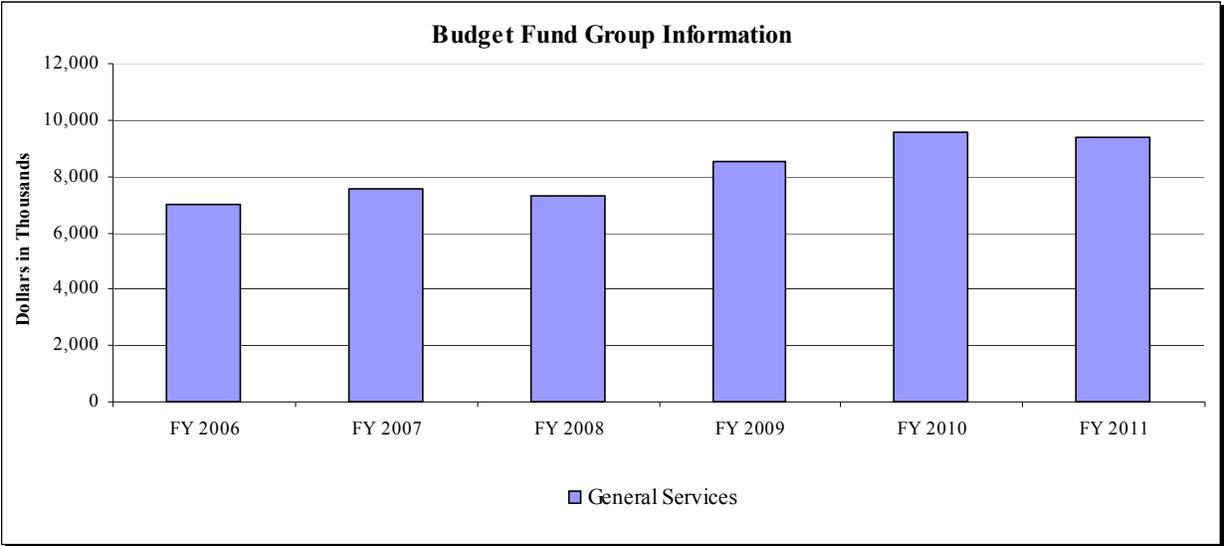
The OCC participated in more than 170 state and federal proceedings during 2007. The counsel also educates consumers about utility issues through their website, by the distribution of newsletters, and by making presentations to groups and organizations throughout Ohio - organizations comprised of residential customers including seniors and low-income customers. The OCC has 73 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 serves three-year terms and represents 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/](http://www.pickocc.org/).

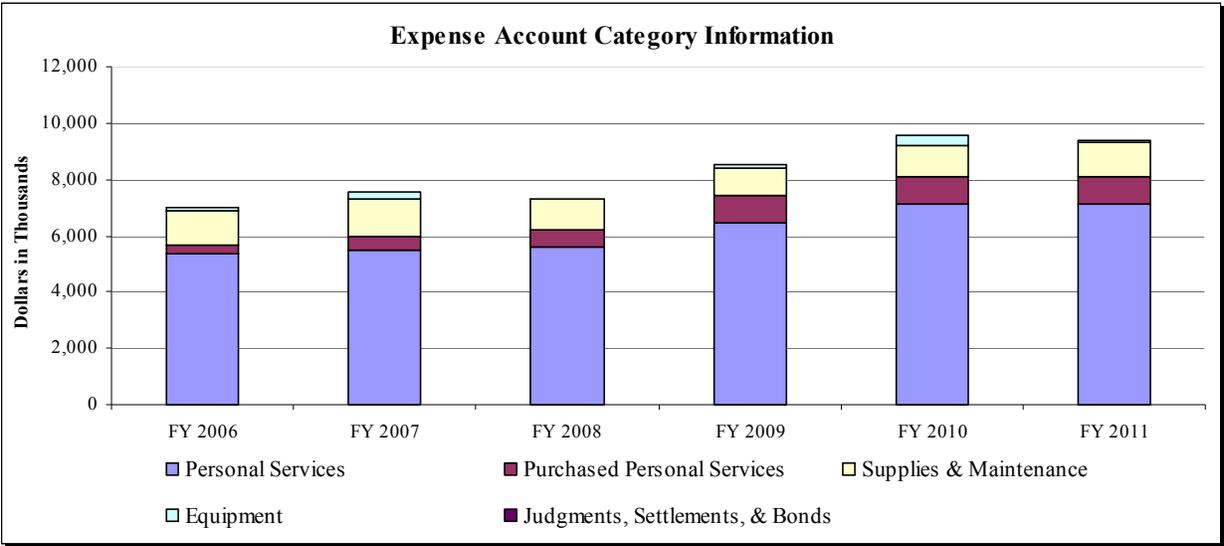
### **Agency Priorities**

- Serve as the statutory advocate on behalf of Ohio's 4.5 million residential utility households 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, including 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.
- 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.
- Continue to be an active voice for residential consumers as Ohio's energy policy is being implemented by the utilities and others, and overseen by the PUCO.
- Educate the state's residential consumers about their utility services and respond to their requests for information.
- Support integrated resource planning by the electric utilities so that they achieve the lowest possible rates for consumers now and into the future through an array of energy options and choices.
- Support and promote energy efficiency programs, governmental aggregation programs, and renewable energy projects through advocacy and cooperative work with other organizations.
- Support measures to assure that affordable choices in telecommunications services are available throughout the state.

**Summary of Budget History and Recommendations**



(In Thousands) BUDGET FUND GROUP	ACTUAL			EST.	%	RECOMMENDED			%
	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 08-09	FY 2010	CHANGE	FY 2011	CHANGE
General Services	7,009	7,562	7,318	8,498	16.1	9,543	12.3	9,378	-1.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,009</b>	<b>7,562</b>	<b>7,318</b>	<b>8,498</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>9,543</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>9,378</b>	<b>-1.7</b>



State of Ohio  
Ohio Consumers' Counsel

(In Thousands) EXPENSE ACCOUNT CATEGORY	ACTUAL			EST.	% CHANGE	RECOMMENDED			
	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 08-09	FY 2010	% CHANGE	FY 2011	% CHANGE
Personal Services	5,332	5,453	5,615	6,446	14.8	7,121	10.5	7,121	0.0
Purchased Personal Services	319	516	593	980	65.3	992	1.2	956	-3.6
Supplies & Maintenance	1,240	1,326	1,093	1,008	-7.8	1,112	10.4	1,216	9.4
Equipment	116	268	18	64	261.9	318	396.9	84	-73.7
Judgments, Settlements, & Bonds	1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,009</b>	<b>7,562</b>	<b>7,318</b>	<b>8,498</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>9,543</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>9,378</b>	<b>-1.7</b>

**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 fund the following objectives:**

- Allow OCC to continue to represent the interests of residential utility consumers in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts;
- Provide funding for the education of the public in issues concerning utility service for gas, electric, water and telecommunications through presentations, brochures, handbooks, press releases, and other media sources;
- Continue the operation of a call center that provides education and assistance to thousands of consumers to address and resolve their utility questions and complaints; and
- 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.

FUND				RECOMMENDED	
GROUP	FUND	ALI	ALI NAME	FY 2010	FY 2011
GSF	5F50	053601	Consumers' Council Operating	9,543,196	9,377,610
<b>TOTAL FOR PROGRAM</b>				<b>9,543,196</b>	<b>9,377,610</b>

**LINE ITEM SUMMARY - Ohio Consumers' Counsel**

FUND	ALI	ALI NAME	FY 2006 ACTUAL	FY 2007 ACTUAL	FY 2008 ACTUAL	FY 2009 ESTIMATE	FY 2010 RECOMMENDED	% CHANGE	FY 2011 RECOMMENDED	% CHANGE
5F50	053601	Consumers' Council Operating	7,008,857	7,562,136	7,318,221	8,498,000	9,543,196	12.3	9,377,610	-1.7
<b>TOTAL General Services</b>			<b>7,008,857</b>	<b>7,562,136</b>	<b>7,318,221</b>	<b>8,498,000</b>	<b>9,543,196</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>9,377,610</b>	<b>-1.7</b>
<b>TOTAL Ohio Consumers' Counsel</b>			<b>7,008,857</b>	<b>7,562,136</b>	<b>7,318,221</b>	<b>8,498,000</b>	<b>9,543,196</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>9,377,610</b>	<b>-1.7</b>