

Office of Human Rights

Department Director: Betina Baron
OMB Budget Analyst: Kallysia Raymond

Department Purpose

The Office of Human Rights (OHR) is committed to protecting all residents of Pinellas County from cases of discrimination in the areas of fair housing, employment, public accommodations, wage theft assistance, and government programs and assistance.

Budget Summary

0001- General Fund

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
Personnel Services	\$1,125,190	\$1,217,491	\$1,266,283	\$1,287,190	\$1,244,160
Operating Expenses	\$104,522	\$119,419	\$122,839	\$213,520	\$192,760
Grand Total	\$1,229,712	\$1,336,910	\$1,389,122	\$1,500,710	\$1,436,920

	FY26 Gen. Fund	FY26 Non-Gen. Fund	FY26 Budget	FY27 Gen. Fund	FY27 Non-Gen. Fund	FY27 Budget
FTE	10.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	10.0

Efficiencies and Cost-Saving Measures

The Agency is supported entirely by the General Fund. Because the Agency’s budget is largely service driven, opportunities for further efficiencies are limited.

FY27:

- The Agency reviewed the average expenditure for the past three fiscal years to determine an appropriate and defensible budget request.
- The Office of Human Rights’ budget is primarily dedicated to core personnel and program functions, leaving limited opportunities for reductions without impacting service delivery. Despite this, the Agency is reducing its operating budget by \$21,000 through targeted decreases in Travel & Per Diem, Legal (Other than Court), and Other Contractual Services.

FY26:

- The agency reduced Other Contractual Services (Interpreter Services) to offset increases in Personnel Services by \$8,000 due to higher retirement contributions.
- The Agency submitted three recurring decision packages addressing the rising cost of interpreter services, the replacement of aging computer equipment, and increased postage expenses associated with mandated mailings for employment, public accommodations, and wage-theft cases.

FY25:

- Through targeted efficiencies, the agency achieved a total cost reduction of \$6,000 for the FY25 submission.
- Specific actions included the following:
 - Reducing Other Contractual Services by \$4,000, supported by having two staff members obtain mediator certification in FY24.

- Reducing Training & Education costs by \$2,000 based on expenditure trends.
- Reducing Rentals & Leases, Printing & Binding, and Promotional Activities, resulting in a combined reduction of \$1,000.

Budget Drivers

The Office of Human Rights FY27 Budget decreases \$64,000 (4.3%) to \$1.437M.

Revenue increases \$48,000 (27.4%) to \$223,000.

- This is due to increases in revenue from Office of Human Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Cooperative Agreement and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) / Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) Cooperative Agreement. These are reimbursement revenues and based on anticipated number of inquiries and referrals for HUD and EEOC case intakes.

Personnel Services decreases \$43,000 (3.3%) to \$1.244M.

- Recent personnel changes, including the retirement of the prior Director, the promotion of a new Director, and the hiring of a Compliance Manager, resulted in a natural net decrease of \$43,000 in the personnel services budget.
- Authorized FTE remains unchanged at 10 positions.

Operating Expenses decreases \$21,000 (9.7%) to \$193,000.

- Travel and Per Diem reduces \$6,000 based on historical usage while ensuring staff can still meet mandatory professional/compliance training related to the agency's functions.
- Based on the peak usage in past fiscal years and current caseload, Other Contractual Services decreases \$12,000 in Mediation Services. There is no anticipated impact on service because of this decrease.
- Legal Fees decreases \$6,000 to align funding for special magistrate services and legal providers with anticipated case processing needs and current litigation trends. The FY27 budget request remains substantially consistent with the FY26 adopted budget due to ongoing fair housing litigation matters.

The Office of Human Rights is working with the Office of Budget and Management to look further into the recommendations stemming from the Consultant's report.

FY27 Decision Packages

The Agency has not requested any Decision Packages.

Summary of Proposed Changes to User Fees for FY27

The Agency does not have any user fees.

CIP Report

There are no CIP projects proposed by this Agency for FY27.

Agency Context and Considerations

Agency to provide operational and environmental context from their development of the FY27 Budget.

FY26 Accomplishments

- Completed Substantial Equivalency for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and continued certification with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), certifying OHR to enforce the law(s) associated with HUD and EEOC, meet contractual obligations, and ensure that the Ordinance language meets federal approval.
- Satisfied EEOC Work-sharing Agreements and successfully completed HUD Case Processing Performance Review.
- Maintained a robust Wage Theft and Recovery program and Special Magistrate Hearings.
- Maintained effective mediation and conciliation services for Housing, Employment, Public Accommodations and Wage Theft cases.
- Continued outreach and community engagement with non-profits, community organizations, housing providers, legal providers, businesses, and employers. OHR participated in over 90 outreach, education, and training activities. Continue to provide support, guidance and training to employees, departmental leadership, internal and external stakeholders, community organizations, housing providers, and businesses. OHR continues to provide support for Civil Rights grant assurances.
- Maintained a longstanding relationship with the Tampa Bay Fair Housing Consortium (TBFHC). Coordinated an impactful 2026 Fair Housing Symposium and Art Contest to commemorate April Fair Housing Month.

Budget Summary by Program and Fund

Office of Human Rights

Protects residents of the county from discrimination in employment and places of public accommodations (establishments open to the public for commerce). Prepares reports mandated by federal government (EEO-4, Workforce Utilization), and ensures county compliance with a multitude of applicable civil rights laws. Provides training to internal and external clients, and conducts education and outreach. Enforces County ordinance requiring gas retailers to provide refueling assistance to persons with disabilities. Protects residents of the county from theft of wages earned, but unpaid by employer.

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
General Fund	\$635,180	\$537,597	\$558,834	\$602,910	\$592,950
Grand Total	\$635,180	\$537,597	\$558,834	\$602,910	\$592,950

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
FTE	4.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9

Fair Housing Assistance

Enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, and Pinellas County Code, Chapter 70, to protect citizens from Housing Discrimination. Engages in education and outreach efforts.

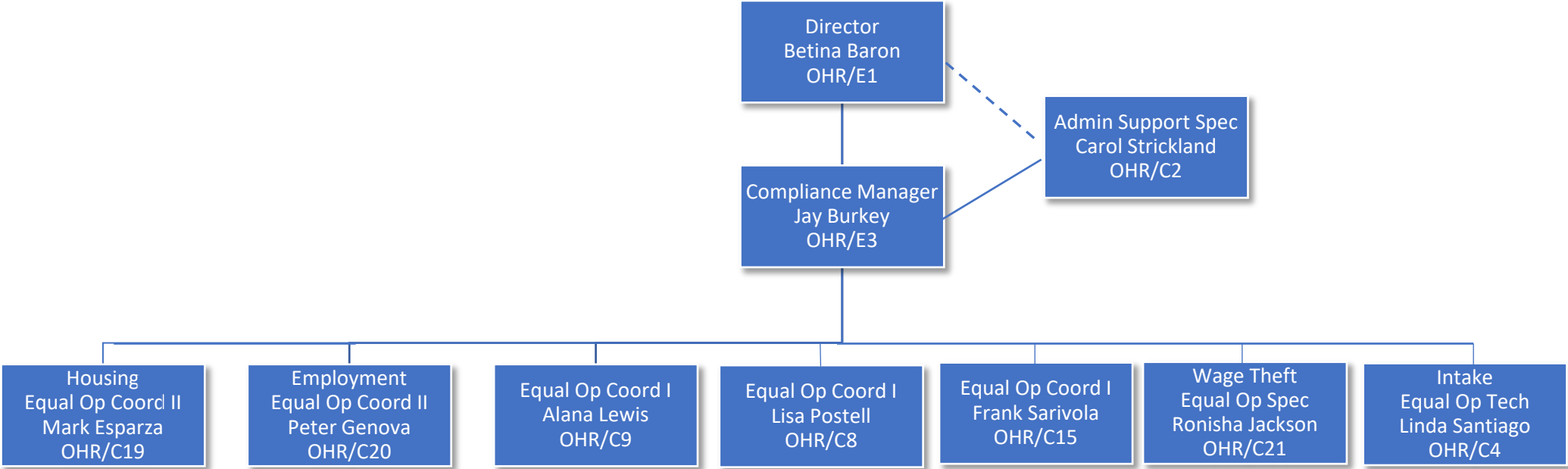
	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
General Fund	\$594,532	\$799,313	\$830,288	\$897,800	\$843,970
Grand Total	\$594,532	\$799,313	\$830,288	\$897,800	\$843,970

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
FTE	5.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1

Attachments:

1. Organization Chart (pg. 5)
2. FY27 Office of Human Rights Budget Request by Fund – Revenue (pg. 6)
3. FY27 Office of Human Rights Budget Request by Fund - Expenditures (pg. 7)
4. Vacancy Report (pg. 8)
5. Budget Submittal Memo (pgs. 9-13)
6. Budget Reduction Scenarios (N/A)
7. User Fees (N/A)

Pinellas County Office of Human Rights FY27 Organization Chart



Office of Human Rights General Fund

Account	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY23 - FY25 Average	FY26 Budget	FY27 Request	FY27 vs. Average Change	FY27 vs. Average % Change	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	OMB Notes
3316901 - Fed Grant-HS-Other	249,200	244,410	(19,075)	158,178	150,000	187,000	28,822	18.22%	37,000	24.67%	U.S. Department of HUD/FHEO Cooperative Agreement. Revenues received for processing cases, training, and administrative costs.
3699313 - Inter-Reimb EEOC	77,400	46,128	33,447	52,325	25,000	68,730	16,405	31.35%	43,730	174.92%	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Cooperative Agreement. Revenues received for processing cases and conducting training.
3699399 - Wage Theft Costs Recovery-Ord 15-613	0	0	34	11	0	240	229	1997.29%	240	-	Wage theft cost recovery.
Revenues Total	326,600	290,538	14,406		175,000	255,970			80,970	46.27%	

Office of Human Rights General Fund

Account	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY23 - FY25 Average	FY26 Budget	FY27 Request	FY27 vs. Average % Change	FY27 vs. Average % Change	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	OMB Notes
5110001 - Executive Salaries	233,124	256,121	272,270	253,838	276,890	244,030	(9,808)	-3.86%	(32,860)	-11.87%	
5120001 - Regular Salaries & Wages	534,970	560,843	576,474	557,429	583,700	585,190	27,761	4.98%	1,490	0.26%	
5140001 - Overtime Pay	3,472	364	18,573	7,470	0	0	(7,470)	-100.00%	0	-	
5210001 - FICA Taxes	56,218	58,988	63,167	59,458	64,880	62,800	3,342	5.62%	(2,080)	-3.21%	
5220001 - Retirement Contributions	119,425	140,384	159,253	139,687	153,730	144,270	4,583	3.28%	(9,460)	-6.15%	
5230001 - Hlth,Life,Dntl,Std,Ltd	182,071	200,791	198,113	193,658	207,990	207,870	14,212	7.34%	(120)	-0.06%	
5299991 - Reg Salary&Wgs-Contra-Prj	(3,086)	0	(16,913)	(6,666)	0	0	6,666	-100.00%	0	-	- Related to storm/hurricane related support.
5299992 - Benefits-Contra-Projects	(1,004)	0	(4,654)	(1,886)	0	0	1,886	-100.00%	0	-	- Related to storm/hurricane related support.
5311031 - Legal (Other Than Court)	9,434	18,462	30,045	19,314	54,000	48,000	28,686	148.53%	(6,000)	-11.11%	Legal fees for EEOC cause cases, Wage Theft Special Magistrate services (\$6,000 annually), and estimated public accommodation/EEOC legal costs (\$1,000), total \$7,200 and reflect anticipated contractual amendments and new agreements. Legal fees for HUD fair housing cause cases are based on prior averages and current contract rates (\$14,000 per NSU case; \$6,000 per Allen case), with a request aligned to two NSU cases and adjusted for litigation trends and future provider contingencies.
5340001 - Other Contractual Svcs	33,658	59,318	43,425	45,467	78,200	66,700	21,233	46.70%	(11,500)	-14.71%	This account covers ASL Interpretation, Language Line, and mediation services. Mediation services is adjusted to reflect current spending.
5400001 - Travel and Per Diem	15,959	14,431	7,258	12,549	25,970	20,000	7,451	59.37%	(5,970)	-22.99%	Right-sized training and education costs between OHR and FHA programs to support staff that require compliance training.
5410001 - Communication Services	1,728	1,649	1,538	1,638	1,660	2,410	772	47.12%	750	45.18%	Cell phone stipend for Director and Compliance Manager and Mifi.
5420001 - Freight	30	0	0	10	0	0	(10)	-100.00%	0	-	
5420002 - Postage	5,838	4,693	7,069	5,867	7,500	9,000	3,133	53.41%	1,500	20.00%	Increased from FY26 based on past years actuals and their current case load. See by program notes for more detail.
5440001 - Rentals and Leases	1,769	1,868	1,861	1,833	1,600	2,000	167	9.12%	400	25.00%	Supports daily operations and increased caseload printing needs.
5470001 - Printing and Binding Exp	1,019	473	171	554	500	570	16	2.83%	70	14.00%	
5480001 - Promotional Activities Exp	0	0	848	283	800	1,100	817	289.15%	300	37.50%	To replenish outreach event supplies. Outreach remains consistent (13-17 events annually, 600-1300 attendees). See program worksheet for more detail.
5490001 - Othr Current Chgs&Obligat	239	0	3,940	1,393	1,620	2,200	807	57.93%	580	35.80%	Covers DOAH / Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) court-related costs (filings, court reporters, accommodations), excluding legal fees.
5490070 - Employee Celebrations & Recognition	0	0	0	0	300	300	300	-	0	0.00%	
5496551 - Intgv Sv-Risk Financing	9,510	7,530	7,940	8,327	5,500	5,500	(2,827)		0		
5510001 - Office Supplies Exp	5,137	3,532	4,491	4,387	5,000	4,700	313	7.14%	(300)	-6.00%	General office supplies
5520001 - Operating Supplies Exp	0	104	0	35	0	0	(35)	-100.00%	0	-	
5520098 - PC Purchases under \$5,000	12,855	0	189	4,348	17,820	17,000	12,652	290.98%	(820)	-4.60%	Annual equipment replacement per BTS recommendation.
5540001 - Bks, Pub, Subscrp&Membrshps	1,330	890	1,270	1,163	1,200	1,580	417	35.82%	380	31.67%	Includes mediation certifications, bar fees, Pinellas Realtor Association, and IAOHRA dues.
5550001 - Training&Education Costs	6,018	6,469	12,793	8,427	11,850	11,700	3,273	38.85%	(150)	-1.27%	Right-sized training and education costs between OHR and FHA programs to support staff that require compliance training.
Expenditures Total	1,229,712	1,336,910	1,389,123		1,500,710	1,436,920			(63,790)	-4.25%	

VACANCY REPORT							
Position Title	Position Number	Grade	Department	Division	Vacancy Date	Annual Base Salary	Hiring Status
NONE							

Date: February 27, 2026
To: Barry Burton, County Administrator, Office of County Administration
THROUGH: Chris Rose, Director, Office of Management & Budget
From: Betina Baron, Director, Office of Human Rights
Subject: Annual Budget Submission for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27)

Statement of Submission

Please find attached the Office of Human Rights (OHR) annual budget submission for the upcoming fiscal year. As part of this budget submission, OHR affirms that all requirements outlined in the FY27 Budget Submittal Checklist have been thoroughly addressed. This includes completing all necessary entries in Questica for operating (including personnel) and capital project budgets, containing supporting detail in each account line in Questica, providing justification for decision packages and user fee changes, submitting updates via SharePoint for unfunded CIP project requests, and ensuring all required documents, including revenue spreadsheets and organizational charts, are attached. We have diligently ensured compliance with all guidelines to present a comprehensive and transparent budget proposal. Below, we have outlined the key components of our request and the methodology used in its formulation:

1. Budget Request Overview

- **By Department:**
 - **\$1,411,500**
- **By Fund:**
 - Fund 1: \$1,411,500, General Fund
- **By Program:**
 - Program 7101 Office of Human Rights \$584,530
 - Program 7102 Fair Housing Assistance \$826,970

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pinellas.gov/department/office-of-human-rights

2. Steps to Achieve a Flat Budget

The flat budget target agreed upon by OHR and OMB is \$1,500,710 in the General Fund. The difference between this amount and the FY26 Adopted Budget is: \$0.00.

We reviewed the last three years of expenditures. Doing so allowed us to continue to set realistic expectations for each line item on the budget, and we were able to right-size some of the line items.

We looked at expectations by those we have contracts with to provide our service.

The final outcome shows our FY27 budget request is 94.1% of the FY26 budget.

3. Revenue Sources for Expenditures

For all expenditures outlined in this budget request, the following revenue and funding sources have been identified (complete and attach the [FY27 RevenueProjections .xlsx](#) with your submittal memo):

- Source 1: Fair Housing Assistance, US Department of HUD/FHEO Cooperative Agreement, \$168,500.
- Source 2: Office of Human Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Cooperative Agreement, \$34,450.
- Source 3: Office of Human Rights, Wage Theft Costs Recovery, \$250.

4. Service Level Impacts

To ensure transparency, we have provided a detailed breakdown of service level impacts resulting from decisions made during the formulation of this budget:

- **Impact of Flat Budget:** Due to the retirement of the director, promotion of the new director and the hiring of the new compliance manager, there was some change in the personnel services budget.
- **Impact of New Initiatives:** We have no new initiatives.
- **Other Implications:** Adjustments to historic federal funding may impact the portion of services covered by the general fund, making it essential to proactively align resources. Our team has been central to advancing civil rights and enforcing antidiscrimination laws in the community, and operating the Wage Theft and Recovery Program, which protects workers and ensures they receive the compensation they are owed. Our process includes mediation, offering individuals a fair, accessible and efficient path to resolving disputes. Adjustments in operations could slow complaint processing, jeopardizing timely investigations, relief for those in the community and compliance with civil rights grant requirements.

OHR's agreements with HUD and EEOC mandate investigations be completed within strict timelines (100 days for HUD, 180 days for EEOC). Any disruption to staffing or resources would make meeting these deadlines challenging, potentially impacting our ability to fulfill federal obligations, and maintaining the effectiveness of the Ordinance. Maintaining adequate funding is essential to sustain the progress we've achieved over the years and to continue delivering timely, effective enforcement while securing the federal support that enables this work.

5. Cost Savings and Efficiencies for Three (3) Fiscal Years

- **FY27**
 - The department took the following actions to their FY27 budget request to submit a flat budget:
 - Looked at the average of the previous three fiscal years to determine the best request.
 - Looked at the trend of the previous three fiscal years. If the trend showed increased spending each year, then a percentage was applied to the request rather than utilizing the average spending.
 - Between these two points of view, as well as the retirement of the director, the department was able to go under the requested flat budget from FY26.
- **FY26**
 - The department took the following actions to their FY26 budget request in order to submit a flat budget:
 - Reduced Other Contractual Services in the interpreter category to cover the increase in Personnel Services.
- **FY25**
 - The department took the following actions in the FY25 Budget that allowed for a total reduction of \$5,840 for the FY25 Budget Submission. This included the following actions:
 - Reduced Other Contractual Services in the Mediation category by \$3,850 as our office has two back-up mediators on staff.
 - We decreased the Training & Education costs by \$1,650 based on review.

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- We reduced Rentals and Leases by \$410, based on historic spending
- We reduced Printing and Binding, and Promotional Activities by \$350, based on historic spending.
- We increased our budget in travel and per diem, postage, and other current charges and obligations due to rising costs. We receive funding to assist with these costs.

6. Environmental Factors

In preparing this budget submission, the following internal and external environmental factors that may impact our department's financial planning have been identified:

- **Internal Factors:**
 - Legal (Professional Services) was adjusted to more closely match the average paid in the previous fiscal years, and also considered current contracts in place.
 - Interpreter services usage increased from FY22 to FY23 by 26%. From FY23 to FY24, usage increased by 54%. From FY24 to FY25, usage increased 4.3%. Comparing the first quarter FY25 to the first quarter FY26, usage has decreased by 6%, the first decrease in 4 years.
 - Increases were made in the training area to allow for the new compliance manager to receive necessary training for the role.
 - The requirement by our federal grantors for certified mailing increases our need for additional monies in that account.
- **External Factors:** Funding from HUD, EEOC, or both could be impacted for a variety of reasons, including changes to federal program requirements or priorities.

7. Stress Tests: Items identified in this section must be recurring items. Also, this section should identify the net impact of the of identified reductions.

- **General Fund – 3 percent Stress Test (Financial Goal is a recurring reduction of \$45,020)**

Since we are submitting a budget that is already reduced by 7.8%, we are not submitting a 3% or 5% stress test based on FY26 flat budget.

OHR has memorandums of understandings with HUD and EEOC which mandates that we conclude investigations within a specific time frame. HUD requires OHR to complete an investigation in 100 days, EEOC 180 days.

Notably, OHR is the enforcement agency to administer Chapter 70 of the Pinellas County Code of Ordinances. OHR oversees the day-to-day operations of the Wage Theft and

Recovery Program, conducts investigations, and provides recommendations for cases involving Housing, Employment, and Public Accommodations, including internal complaints. OHR is also responsible for administering the Refueling Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Ordinance and for ensuring compliance with civil rights grant assurances, thereby maintaining federal obligations and program integrity.

8. Additional Information

We remain committed to delivering high-quality services to our community while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Betina Baron, Director, 727-464-5356, bbaron@pinellas.gov.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Betina Baron, Director
Office of Human Rights

Enclosed Attachments

- FY27 Department Organizational Chart
- Revenue Projections Worksheet

cc: Chris Rose, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Belinda Amundson, Budget and Financial Management Analyst 1, Office of Management and Budget
Maria Cascone, Office Support Specialist, Office of Management and Budget

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