

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

A Report on Pennsylvania Health and Human Services Hotlines

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House Resolution 2019-507 (HR 2019-507) directed the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to conduct a study analyzing the current Pennsylvania health and human services hotlines and their costs with regard to the following six Commonwealth of Pennsylvania state agencies and quasi-state agencies and one nonprofit during FY 2016-17, FY 2017-18, and FY 2018-19: 1) Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA), 2) Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), 3) Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), 4) Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), 5) Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), 6) Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), and 7) Pennsylvania 211 (PA 211) powered by United Way of Pennsylvania (UWP). Highlights of our report include the following:

❖ **HR 2019-507 defines the term “hotline” as:**

A hotline under this resolution include[s] a call that is live answered or a call that uses an interactive voice response to direct the caller to a staff person who answers that call within the operating hours of the hotline with the goal of identifying appropriate services to address the caller’s needs.

Note: The various agencies may refer to those lines as call centers, helplines, or hotlines.

❖ **Six agencies and one non-profit operated or contracted with other entities to provide for a total of 66 hotlines at a combined cost of more than \$75.4 M in FY 2018-19.**

Not all hotline costs were available from the agencies.

❖ **Section II – PDA contracts with other entities to provide for seven call centers, helplines, and hotlines.**

Annual costs for PDA hotlines were \$6.3 M in FY 2018-19 and required 142 full-time/23 part-time employees.

❖ **Section III – DDAP contracts with other entities to provide for two hotlines.**

Annual costs for both hotlines were \$990,973 and required 25 full-time/27 part-time employees.

❖ **Section IV – DOH operates and contracts with other entities to provide for 22 call centers and hotlines.**

Annual costs for 16 of the hotlines were \$5.9 M in FY 2018-19. Costs for the other hotlines were not available. The 22 hotlines required 71 full-time employees with 13 of the hotlines contracted.

❖ **Section V – DHS has six program areas, five of which utilize 30 helplines and hotlines, along with the DHS Fraud Tipline/Hotline for a total of 31 hotlines it operates or contracts with other entities to provide.**

OMAP. OMAP operated three hotlines, with annual costs of \$4.2 M during FY 2018-19. The hotlines are all agency operated with a total of 71 full-time employees (some of which are contracted).

OLTL. Five of the ten OLTL hotlines were agency run, with the remainder being contracted, and required

185-196 full-time/eight part-time employees. Annual costs were not available, except for \$1.04 M during FY 2018-19 for the CHC Participation Hotline.

OIM. OIM operated three hotlines at an annual cost of \$35.8 M in FY 2018-19 and required 422 full-time/195 part-time employees,

ODP. ODP’s three hotlines were all agency run and required seven full-time employees/five part-time employees. DHS was not able to provide costs.

OCYF. The nine OCYF hotlines were both contracted and agency operated. In FY 2018-19, costs to operate all lines were \$10.3 M, and required 170 full-time/13 part-time employees.

OCDEL. The two OCDEL hotlines are contracted. Annual costs in FY 2018-19 were \$99,995 and required two full-time employees.

OA Welfare Fraud Tipline/Hotline. The DHS Welfare Fraud Tipline/Hotline is contracted and had annual costs of \$69,786 for FY 2018-19.

❖ **Section VI – PHFA operates and contracts with other entities to provide for two hotlines/call centers.**

Annual operating costs were \$1.3 M in FY 2018-19; the hotlines are mainly self-funded. The Customer Solutions Center (CSC) Hotline is agency-operated, with 12 full-time employees. PAHousingSearch.com is contracted to Socialserve, which serves multiple states.

❖ **Section VII – PUC’s Bureau of Consumer Services operates and maintains a sole complaint hotline.**

The PUC Consumer Hotline has 15 to 50 full-time/part-time employees as calls increase significantly after the winter heating season. In FY 2018-19 costs were \$6.1 M.

❖ **Section VIII – PA 211 (nonprofit) operates and maintains a sole hotline with the same nomenclature.**

Annual costs were \$3.3 M in FY 2018-19 with \$750,000 from DHS. County United Way organizations and county/municipal governments also provide funding. PA 211 has 44 full-time/34 part-time employees.

For a full copy of the report, email us at lbfcinfo@palbfc.us or download a copy at <http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/>.