

Budget Concerns About Staffing at the Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency

April, 2025

Two years ago, when the YRCAA worked on the agency budget for 2023-24, this table was compiled so the board could see how YRCAA monies were spent and how resources were allocated.

YRCAA FY 2023-24 Resource Allocation
All Costs by Division and Operation

Salaries by Operation										
Operation	Base Operations			Grant Operations			Enterprise Operations			
Division	Admin.	Engineering	Compliance	Admin.	Engineering	Compliance	Admin.	Engineering	Compliance	
Costs	\$ 232,888	\$ 194,073	\$ 219,950	\$ 176,182	\$ 0	\$ 21,050	\$ 18,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	Total
		Subtotal	\$ 646,911		Subtotal	\$ 197,232		Subtotal	\$ 18,000	\$ 862,143
			7.50 FTE			2.67 FTE			0.24 FTE	

Supplies, Services, and Capital Projects/Fixed Assets By Operations										
Operation	Base Operations			Grant Operations			Enterprise Operations			Totals
Division	Admin.	Engineering	Compliance	Admin.	Engineering	Compliance	Admin.	Engineering	Compliance	
Supplies	\$ 8,550	\$ 7,125	\$ 8,075	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,350	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 25,100
Services	\$ 65,772	\$ 54,810	\$ 62,118	\$ 516,225	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 14,400	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 713,325
Capital	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Subtotals	\$ 74,322	\$ 61,935	\$ 70,193	\$ 516,225	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 15,750	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 738,425
		T.Supplies	\$ 23,750		T.Supplies	\$ 0		T.Supplies	\$ 1,350	
		T.Services	\$ 182,700		T.Services	\$ 516,225		T.Services	\$ 14,400	
		Capital	\$ 0		Capital	\$ 0		Capital	\$ 0	

All Costs By Division						
Category	Salaries	Supplies	Services	Capital		Totals
Administrative	\$ 427,070	\$ 9,900	\$ 596,397	\$ 0	\$	1,033,367
Engineering	\$ 194,073	\$ 7,125	\$ 54,810	\$ 0	\$	256,008
Compliance	\$ 241,000	\$ 8,075	\$ 62,118	\$ 0	\$	311,193
Subtotals	\$ 862,143	\$ 25,100	\$ 713,325	\$ 0	\$	1,600,568

Such a table was missing from the draft budget last year and is missing from the draft budget for 2025-26. It is difficult, if not impossible, to analyze a budget without this information.

Why is this information missing? Could it be that the YRCAA has underestimated the volume of work involved in administering the agency and that staff do not have sufficient time to complete this and other important work?

Until 2017 the YRCAA operated with a staff of 12. At that time staffing was reduced to 10 when a new Executive Director (ED) convinced the board that he could do the work of both Compliance Supervisor and ED.¹ Prior to 2017 the YRCAA employed a Public Information/Education and Outreach officer. PR functions have recently been absorbed by others, primarily the ED.

¹ Currently the agency operates with 8 people. Many are recent hires. There are now two vacancies in Planning and Permitting

When the current Executive Director took the job of leading the YRCAA in 2022, he observed that 60% of the budget was dedicated to administration and 40% to carrying out agency operations. He reversed those percentages and received applause.

The current ED also took on the work of managing the YRCAA website and the job of public relations officer. He has responsibility for recruiting, orienting and training new staff, and at times fills in when there is no one else available to perform routine tasks. He has informed the YRCAA board that there are times when he is the only person in the office at YRCAA. At times he takes minutes for the YRCAA board meetings.

It is likely that executive duties have suffered because of this situation. Here are examples:

1. The Draft Budget for 2025-26 is missing vital information that the board and the public need before commenting and approving. Missing data includes:
 - a. Salaries and duties for different work categories at YRCAA so the board can ensure that women receive equal pay with men, that bilingual staff people are compensated for translating in addition to regular duties. Is staff time allocated for education and outreach? We don't find that in the proposed budget.
 - b. Priorities as well as time spent on activities in different programs. A proposed budget should show hours and salaries charged to different work programs so the board can determine where resources should be allocated. See Attachment 1 or review YRCAA budgets prior to 2020
 - c. Summaries of work completed – Number of permits issued, number of complaints investigated, number of educational events, improvement in air quality, etc. A proposed budget should analyze trends from year to year so the board can discuss where to focus resources.
2. The Permitting and Planning Division at YRCAA currently has only one engineer on staff with two positions vacant, including the vital position of Permitting and Planning Supervisor. Somehow the YRCAA must fill this position with someone who has adequate experience in air science, who is able to perform these duties very soon after being hired. There are tasks that the Permitting and Planning Supervisor performed that now fall on the ED's shoulders.
3. WA law requires the WA State Dept. of Ecology to confer with regional clean air agencies on implementation of the Climate Commitment Act with respect to Environmental Justice, writing and implementing WAC 173-448. Large amounts of money for Yakima County are at stake since there are three EJ communities in the county. WA law says that 40% of CCA monies should be spent in these

communities. The YRCAA ED does not have sufficient time to participate. Who will stand up for Yakima County when these rules and regulations are crafted?

4. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency completed a review of YRCAA Title V permitting in September of 2024. Available at [yrcaa-2024-round-1-final-report.pdf](#) The review noted 17 areas of concern that should be addressed. This will require time and effort.
5. The WA State Auditor's Office published an Accountability Audit Report for YRCAA for the years 2021 to 2023 last month. Available at [ViewReportFile](#) The report found that "The Agency lacked adequate internal controls over financial reporting to ensure compliance with state law requiring timely annual report submissions." This must be addressed prior to the next audit.
6. A YRCAA permit is being appealed before the WA State Pollution Control Hearings Board over an issue that could have been resolved with better communication and diplomatic negotiations. It is hard to believe that litigation will not consume a lot of the ED's time. He will have to explain to the PCHB why the people YRCAA serves are suing the agency. Relationships are important.
7. There are grants and loans available for regional clean air agencies to help the agencies better monitor and analyze air quality as well as impacts on public health and global warming. YRCAA qualifies for many of these grants, but it takes time and effort to write grant applications. Around 2010 community members helped YRCAA apply for extra funding. Since YRCAA is so short staffed, FOTC is prepared to do this again if YRCAA is willing and able to accept our help.

To summarize, many problems are accumulating on the YRCAA to-do list. It will take significant, expert staff time to address these issues.

Thank you for reading.

Friends of Toppenish Creek

Attachment 1

FY 2021 YRCAA Resource Allocation

Salaries by Work Program

Staff	*Rate	Compl Permit	Compl Non-per	Permit	Pub Ed	Planning	Small Bus Asst	Admin	Title V	Enterprise	Monitor	WS	Leave	Hr Total	\$ Total		
Hurley	\$ 55.74	200	311	140	39	187	20	311	297			210	365	2080	\$ 115,941		
Tahat	\$ 52.24	95		716		75			834					360	2080	\$ 108,660	
	\$ -																
Porter	\$ 27.97	425	140	550		410		50	405					100	2080	\$ 58,183	
Sanford	\$ 26.88	600	743								673			64	2080	\$ 55,908	
Brookshire	\$ 19.82	200	265	230	198		80	350	196	225				336	2080	\$ 41,223	
Herman	\$ 21.48	265	329	200	229	148	55	458	300					96	2080	\$ 44,688	
Owen	\$ 32.75			180	140		155	412	244	118	12	458	361	2080	\$ 68,129		
Vacant	\$ 23.29	297	284	150	299	130	267	335				222	96	2080	\$ 48,435		
Hamington	\$ 32.25	797	616			48		62	327		80		150	2080	\$ 67,075		
Eidler	\$ 35.16				150		128	54		240		1224	284	2080	\$ 73,125		
	Hr Totals	2,879	2,688	2,166	1,055	998	705	2,032	2,603	583	765	2,114	2,212	20800		\$ 681,375	
	Cost	\$ 86,408	\$ 80,022	\$ 78,840	\$ 27,840	\$ 33,572	\$ 19,677	\$ 60,702	\$ 100,316	\$ 16,756	\$ 21,050	\$ 74,921	\$ 81,272			\$ 681,375	
	Revenue Available	\$ 86,408	\$ 80,022	\$ 78,840	\$ 27,840	\$ 33,572	\$ 19,677	\$ 60,702	\$ 100,316	\$ 16,756	\$ 21,050	\$ 74,921	\$ 81,272			\$ 681,375	
	% of Available	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			100.0%	
*Rate = hourly wage + benefits average for the year																	
					Estimated Revenue	Available For Salary	Allocation Planning Formula										
		Revenue Source															
		Title V Fees	14.7%	\$	107,000	\$ 100,316	100% Title V after Audit & DOE Oversight Fees										
		Permit Fees (except T-V)	31.3%	\$	373,807	\$ 213,070	50% Compl Per; 50% Permit										
		Base Grants	15.1%	\$	183,122	\$ 102,548	33% Compl Non-per; 33% Pub Ed; 10% Planning; 10% Bus Asst; 10% Admin; 4% Monitor										
		Penalty	0.0%	\$	2,500												
		Supplemental Income	9.0%	\$	102,090	\$ 61,640	10% Planning; 40% Admin; 35% Compl Non-per; 15% Pub Ed										
		Enterprise	2.5%	\$	80,000	\$ 16,756	100% Enterprise										
		Grants:															
		PM 2.5	3.1%	\$	21,050	\$ 21,050	100% Monitor										
		WSE	0.7%	\$	4,588	\$ 4,588	100% WS										
		WSCO	10.3%	\$	292,334	\$ 70,333	100% WS										
		Interest & Misc. Income	0.5%	\$	3,575	\$ 3,575	15% Admin; 85% Compl Non-per										
		Fund Balance	12.8%	\$	125,000	\$ 87,500	47% Compl Non-per; 5% Pub Ed; 15% Planning; 33% Admin										
				100.0%	\$ 1,295,066	\$ 681,375											