

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2013-14 Performance Report

Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST)

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

Foster innovation in existing and developing businesses by supporting basic and applied research, facilitating technology transfer between research laboratories and firms and farms, providing seed capital for new innovative firms and their products, and fostering enhanced competitiveness of OK companies and small and medium sized manufacturing firms through productivity and modernization initiatives.

(O.S. Title 74 Section 5060.3)

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST) at its meeting on October 14, 1987 in the Governor's Large Conference Room in the State Capitol Building. [OCAST Board of Directors became the Oklahoma Science and Technology Research and Development (OSTRaD) Board of Directors when the Oklahoma Science and Technology Research and Development Act was amended effective July 1, 2002.]

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

C. Michael Carolina, Executive Director  
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GOVERNANCE:

Executive Director is hired by the Oklahoma Science and Technology Research and Development (OSTRaD) Board of Directors, OCAST's governing board. Except for two non-voting legislators as defined by statute, the 21-member Board is appointed by the Governor with Senate confirmation. The list of board members and criteria for appointment are attached.

The OSTRaD Board has an Executive Committee made up of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and 3 additional members of the Board appointed by the Chair.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

A quorum of OSTRaD Board members must be present at meetings to vote on official business, but an attendance policy for board members is prescribed neither in statute nor in rules, and none is followed.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

OCAST continues to work to reduce costs and improve productivity and efficiency. Examples since July 1, 2010 include the proactive consolidation of the agency's information technology functions to the Office of State Finance prior to state consolidation initiatives in 2011. In addition, OCAST's telephone and Internet services are provided by the Oklahoma

State Regents for Higher Education's OneNet system. The agency also implemented improvements in its database integration, archiving and electronic applications-submittal processes resulting in cost savings while allowing it to be more efficient and responsive in meeting client and stakeholder needs while effectively managing general administration (G&A) costs. Tracking of detailed financial information for each individual grant has been modernized through the internal development of a database, replacing more than 7 individual spreadsheets, simplifying both data entry and reporting.

Additionally, OCAST transitioned to the State's OK Grants system as its grant administration system. The adoption of OK Grants generated reduced costs while increasing client satisfaction and improving overall usability. The agency's G&A costs at four (4) percent are best in class among technology-based economic development agencies in other states and as compared to other agencies of state government.

CORE MISSION:

All activities undertaken by the agency are consistent with the agency's core mission of technology-based economic development. Program reviews take place at multiple levels, for example our governance process (OSTRaD Board), our technology advisers and peer reviewers that consist of national experts in their respective fields to ensure alignment of activities with the mission and purpose of the agency.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

There are no duplicate services performed by the private sector and the agency has not been approached about privatizing any of its functions. OCAST is a model for public/private collaboration through its contracts with 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit companies i2E and the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance. OCAST contracts its technology commercialization programs (including seed capital) to i2E and manufacturing support to the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, which has the mission of helping Oklahoma companies, become more competitive in their markets.

OCAST defines the state's role in technology-based economic development and offers oversight advantages through a governance process that ensures accountability and transparency.