Redbook

LBO Analysis of Executive Budget Proposal

State Employment Relations Board

Tom Wert, Senior Budget Analyst
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LBO Redbook

State Employment Relations Board

Quick look…

- The State Employment Relations Board (SERB) oversees more than 3,500 public employer collective bargaining contracts covering more than 332,000 public employees across the state.
  - SERB oversaw 225 union election or representation issues, 188 unfair labor practice investigations, and 48 mediations in FY 2024.
  - The Board's Research and Training Section provided training for more than 400 public employer human resources professionals in FY 2024.
- The State Personnel Board of Review (SPBR) under the administrative umbrella of SERB deals with matters concerning exempt and nonexempt employees in the classified civil service.
- As of January 2025, the agency employed 21 full-time employees, two part-time employees, and six fixed-term board members. This combined staff supported both SERB and SPBR.
- Recommended budget of approximately $4.7 million in FY 2026 and $4.8 million in FY 2027.
  - Uses of the budget: personal services (88.1%), supplies and maintenance (10.9%), purchased personal services (0.7%), and equipment and transfers (0.2%).

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimate	FY 2026 Introduced	FY 2027 Introduced
GRF ALI 125321, Operating Expenses					
$3,992,713	$4,041,909	$4,199,611	$4,375,000	$4,533,029	$4,655,023
% change	1.2%	3.9%	4.2%	3.6%	2.7%
Fund 5720 ALI 125603, Training and Publications					
$41,484	$76,256	$188,356	$162,149	$138,000	$138,972
% change	83.8%	147.0%	-13.9%	-14.9%	0.7%
Total funding:					
$4,034,197	$4,118,165	$4,387,968	$4,537,149	$4,671,029	$4,793,995
% change	2.1%	6.6%	3.4%	3.0%	2.6%

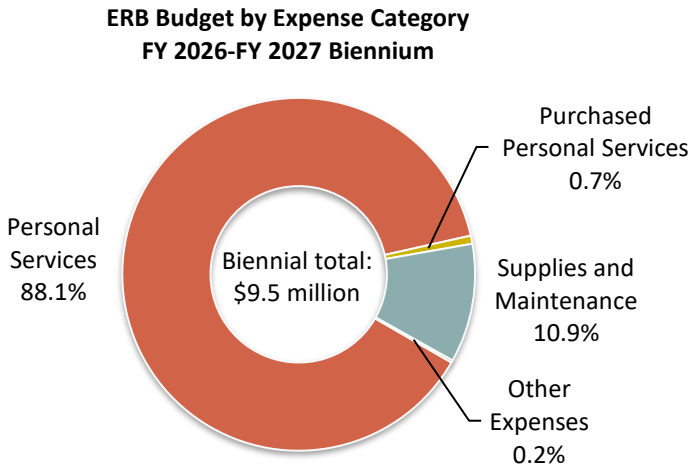
Agency overview

The State Employment Relations Board (SERB) acts as a neutral party in carrying out Ohio's collective bargaining laws as they pertain to public employers and employees. Its responsibilities include overseeing representation elections, certifying exclusive bargaining representatives, monitoring and enforcing statutory dispute resolution procedures, mediating collective bargaining negotiations, adjudicating unfair labor practice charges, determining unauthorized strike claims, and providing information and training to parties in contract

negotiations. Although the matters under its jurisdiction are different, the State Personnel Board of Review (SPBR) is under the administrative structure of SERB. SPBR is an appeals body that hears cases filed by classified exempt employees at the state and local levels but whose jurisdiction extends to other specific civil service matters. SERB and SPBR each have their own three-member boards.

Analysis of FY 2026-FY 2027 budget proposal

As with many smaller state agencies, personnel costs constitute the largest expense for SERB and SPBR and account for about $8.3 million (88.1%) of the total recommended appropriation for the FY 2026-FY 2027 biennium. That is followed by approximately $1.0 million (10.9%) for supplies and maintenance, $70,600 (0.7%) for purchased personal services, and equipment and transfers making up the remaining amount, $19,400 (0.2%) of the recommended budget.



Operating Expenses (ALI 125321)

This GRF ALI covers the combined operating expenses of SERB and SPBR. The majority of funding is budgeted for payroll costs, including board members, administrative law judges, labor relations specialists and mediators, researchers, and administrative staff working among the two boards. In all, the total amount of funding recommended for payroll under this ALI is just under $4.1 million in FY 2026 and approximately $4.2 million in FY 2027, 88.1% of total funding for the biennium.

SERB consists of seven functional sections: (1) Bureau of Mediation, (2) Business and Records, (3) Clerk's Office, (4) Hearings, (5) Representation, (6) Research and Training, and (7) Investigations. Nearly 1,700 labor contract-related cases were filed with the Board in 2024, including 1,328 mediations, 204 union election or representation issues, and 188 unfair labor practice investigations. The Board's Research and Training Section conducted two conferences, providing collective bargaining and labor law training to more than 400 public labor professionals. SERB also produces an annual Health Insurance Report that summarizes the cost of health care in Ohio's public sector workplaces. Another key research product is the annual Wage Settlement

Report that summarizes wage increase information contained in collective bargaining agreements across the state.

Training and Publications (ALI 125603)

This ALI is used to pay for research and training programs among the two boards. These activities are supported by the sale of various types of employee data collected by SERB, receipts from training seminars, and other sources of revenue deposited into the Training and Publications Fund (Fund 5720). Receipts from these sources were nearly $87,000 in FY 2024.

ERB/zg