

Oklahoma Education Association

WHERE DO YOUR UNION DUES GO?

A LOOK AT OEA SPENDING IN FISCAL YEAR 2025 (Sept 1, 2024 – Aug 31, 2025)

The Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) is the largest teachers union in Oklahoma. Of the \$7.9 million OEA disbursed in FY 2025, the top expense categories tell a story of an organization that prioritizes its own staff and event calendar over direct member services. Other salaries and wages absorbed \$3.0 million, officer compensation another \$449,511, employee benefits and pension accruals \$881,073, and payroll taxes \$268,330 — a combined \$4.6 million of compensation-related spending.¹ Conferences, conventions, meetings, and travel together swallowed \$888,667 — more than 11% of the union's entire budget, categorized as program activity rather than direct teacher representation.²

OEA's political machine operates through two state-registered political action committees that together directed \$299,333 in tracked expenditures to Oklahoma candidates and committees. Among OEA-FCPE's recipients is Rep. Jacob Rosecrants (D-Norman), who collected \$10,750 across six contributions from 2017 through 2024, a legislator who has publicly opposed Oklahoma House Bill 3130, a measure that would seek to greatly restrict the immoral and extremely damaging “gender affirming care” for minors.³

OEA's financial position has improved dramatically over the past seven years, but the gains have flowed into reserves and overhead, not to the members. Total revenue grew from \$6.2 million in FY 2019 to \$8.0 million in FY 2025, a 30% expansion. Over the same period, net assets swung from a \$423,849 deficit to an \$8.2 million surplus, a \$8.6 million reconstruction of the balance sheet.⁴ The union got richer; the rank-and-file teacher member did not.

In sum, OEA's own filings tell a consistent story. A teachers' union that exists, by its own mission statement, to advocate for education professionals and unite Oklahomans behind public education has built itself into an \$8.2-million-net-asset organization that distributes its funds in support of representatives who push for gender transitioning for minors, and a budget where funds are consumed by its staff and not allocated to support its members. Members deserve to know that the dues, contributions, and program-service-revenue dollars they fund are bankrolling an organization whose financial priorities have visibly tilted toward the people who run it.

FINANCIAL POSITION

OEA closed FY 2025 with \$9.6 million in total assets, \$1.4 million in total liabilities, and \$8.2 million in net assets.⁵ The financial reconstruction was dramatic: as recently as FY 2019, OEA reported negative \$423,849 in net assets, with \$7.1 million in liabilities exceeding \$6.7 million in assets.

Item	Amount
Total Assets	\$9,553,261
Total Liabilities	\$1,362,067
Net Assets	\$8,191,194

SPENDING BREAKDOWN

OEA's \$7.9 million in FY 2025 functional expenses break down as follows. The single largest line item is officer compensation and other salaries combined (\$3.4 million — Lines 5 + 7), absorbing 43.5% of every dollar before any benefits or payroll taxes are paid. Layered on top are employee benefits (\$685,678 — Line 9), pension accruals (\$195,395 — Line 8), and payroll taxes (\$268,330 — Line 10), bringing total compensation-related spending to \$4.6 million, or 58.1% of the entire budget. Beyond payroll, conferences and travel together consumed \$888,667 (Lines 17 + 19). Other professional fees (\$611,349 — Line 11g) and membership processing (\$476,334 — Line 24a) round out the largest remaining categories. Notably, OEA reports zero on Line 11d (Fees for services — Lobbying), a disclosure that does not align with the union's active state-lobbyist registration footprint discussed in the Lobbyist Connections section.⁶⁷

Category	Amount	% of Total
Other Salaries & Wages	\$2,996,285	37.9%
Conferences/Conventions/Meetings	\$557,404	7.0%
Other Employee Benefits	\$685,678	8.7%
Fees for Services — Other	\$611,349	7.7%
Membership Processing	\$476,334	6.0%
Compensation of Current Officers	\$449,511	5.7%
Travel	\$331,263	4.2%
Incentive & Student Rebates	\$295,709	3.7%
Payroll Taxes	\$268,330	3.4%
Depreciation	\$237,586	3.0%
Occupancy	\$229,459	2.9%

Pension Plan Accruals	\$195,395	2.5%
Repair & Maintenance	\$117,280	1.5%
Dues and Subscriptions	\$106,322	1.3%
Other Expenses	\$204,581	2.6%
Insurance	\$64,904	0.8%
Office Expenses	\$64,040	0.8%
Interest	\$23,051	0.3%
Fees for Services — Lobbying	\$0	0.0%

What Do These Categories Mean?

Compensation of Current Officers/Directors: Total compensation paid to officers, directors, trustees, and key employees as reported on Part VII Section A.
Other Salaries and Wages: Compensation paid to non-officer staff: organizers, field reps, communications, administrative, and other rank-and-file employees.
Pension Plan Accruals and Contributions: Employer contributions to staff retirement plans plus actuarial accruals for future pension obligations.
Other Employee Benefits: Health insurance, dental, disability, life insurance, and other non-pension benefits paid for employees.
Payroll Taxes: Employer-side FICA, Medicare, and federal/state unemployment taxes.
Fees for Services — Lobbying: Payments to outside lobbyists or lobbying firms for federal, state, or local lobbying activities. Required disclosure when the organization engages outside lobbyists.
Fees for Services — Other: Professional fees not categorized as management, legal, accounting, lobbying, fundraising, or investment management — typically consulting, IT services, or specialized contractors.
Travel: Transportation, lodging, meals, and other costs for travel by officers, employees, board members, and others on union business.
Conferences, Conventions, and Meetings: Registration, venue, catering, materials, and related costs for conferences and conventions. Distinct from travel expenses for attendees.
Other Expenses (Itemized): Categories not separately captured by Lines 1-23; the organization names each and reports the amount. OEA itemizes membership processing, incentive rebates, repair, dues/subscriptions, and a residual 'Other.'

PAC POLITICAL SPENDING

OEA operates two state-registered PACs — the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education (OEA-FCPE) and the smaller Friends-of-OEA — which together directed \$299,333 in tracked contributions to Oklahoma candidates and committees across 2017–2024, much of it to legislators on the leftward fringe of the state's culture-war debates. Rep. Jacob Rosecrants (D-Norman) alone collected \$10,750 across six contributions; he advocates for the gender transitioning of minors and, testifying against House Bill 3130 (2026), demanded, “If you believe that [gender dysphoria is] a mental illness, then why in the world would you prevent counseling?” He is not alone: Rep. Mickey Dollens (D-Oklahoma City, \$2,000) opposed Oklahoma's 2023 ban on gender-transition procedures for minors and House Democratic Leader Cyndi Munson (D-Oklahoma City, roughly \$4,500) ranks among the Legislature's most vocal opponents of any limit on gender-related care.

OEA-FCPE's checks have likewise backed candidates running against Oklahoma's consensus on abortion and guns. On abortion, where the state now enforces one of the nation's strictest bans, the fund gave \$5,000 each to Joy Hofmeister's 2022 run for governor (in which she called abortion “a healthcare decision between a woman and her doctor”), Drew Edmondson's 2018 gubernatorial campaign (reproductive decisions “should not involve the Legislature”), and Jena Nelson's 2022 bid for State Superintendent. On guns, every House Democrat, including OEA-FCPE recipient Rep. Collin Walke (D-Oklahoma City, \$2,000), voted against Oklahoma's permitless “constitutional carry” law (House Bill 2597, 2019), while Dollens has pressed for mandatory training and red-flag-style “common sense gun reform” that the Legislature's pro-Second Amendment majority rejects.

STATE LOBBYING

The Oklahoma Ethics Commission's Guardian System registers ten OEA-affiliated lobbyist registrations (nine distinct individuals) representing the Oklahoma Education Association and the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education across active and historical status flags. Of these, three carry an Active registration status as of May 2026: Sydney Fred Jordan Jr., Ivy Riggs, and Tyler Outlaw. The remaining seven appear on the OEA principal page with status flags of Terminated (Chancen Ray Flick, Ivy M Riggs, Trent Lee Ratterree, Ellen Pogemiller, Jacob A Tharp, Renee S Montgomery) or Non-Renewed (Carolyn Crowder — the same Past Executive Director who appears in OEA's Part VII compensation disclosures at \$165,261 in FY 2025).⁸

Sydney Fred Jordan Jr.

OEA's primary current contract lobbyist, registered Active in the Guardian System. Also represents nine other Oklahoma principals on page 1 of his client roster (with more potentially on additional pages): CVS Health, The Williams Companies, the Muscogee Creek Nation, Tulsa County, Jenks Public Schools, Jenks Public Works Authority, Golden Spread Electric Cooperative, Healthy Minds Policy Initiative, and the Oklahoma Association for Justice. The combination — corporate pharmacy, energy pipeline, tribal sovereignty, public-sector electric cooperative, and trial lawyers — illustrates the cross-client channel through which OEA's policy positions reach the capitol.⁹

Ivy Riggs

Active OEA lobbyist registered in the Guardian System. The current LobbyDetail page for Ivy Riggs (Organization ID 7789) shows no additional registered principals as of May 2026; Riggs may operate as an in-house OEA lobbyist or represent only OEA in current registrations.¹⁰

Tyler Outlaw

Active OEA lobbyist registered in the Guardian System. The current LobbyDetail page for Tyler Outlaw (Organization ID 10631) shows no additional registered principals as of May 2026.¹¹

Carolyn Crowder

Past Executive Director of OEA, listed in Form 990 Part VII at \$165,261 in FY 2025 compensation. Also registered in the Guardian System with a Non-Renewed lobbyist status — indicating she was at one point a registered lobbyist for OEA but the registration was allowed to lapse. The overlap between the highest-paid compensation figure on the 990 and the principal-side lobbyist roster is worth flagging.¹²¹³

Patterns and Themes

Oklahoma's lobbying-disclosure regime is the weakest among the states with a structured public reporting system. The Guardian System publishes only itemized gifts, meals, and principal events — not compensation paid to lobbyists, not an aggregate annual lobbying-spend figure, and not a per-principal expense report.¹⁴ OEA's Oklahoma lobbying footprint — ten registered lobbyists across active and historical status flags — does not match the zero-dollar lobbying disclosure on the union's federal tax filings. The disclosure gap and the cross-client roster of OEA's primary lobbyist together establish a state-level political and influence operation that is invisible from the 990 alone.

TOP COMPENSATION

OEA's compensation structure is unusual: two of the three highest-paid officers in FY 2025 carry the prefix 'Past' on their titles. Carolyn Crowder, listed as Past Executive Director, drew the highest compensation in the filing — \$161,107 in reportable compensation from the organization plus \$4,154 in other compensation, totaling \$165,261.¹⁵ Katherine Bishop, listed as Past President, took home \$151,018 (\$110,265 reportable plus \$40,753 other). Cari Elledge, the current President, drew \$104,440 (\$79,362 reportable plus \$25,078 other). The arrangement places two former leaders ahead of the sitting president on the compensation roster. Across all officers and directors combined, total compensation was \$420,719.

Employee	Total Compensation
1. Carolyn Crowder	\$165,261
2. Katherine Bishop	\$151,018
3. Cari Elledge	\$104,440

TOTAL TOP 3 OFFICERS	\$420,719
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EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

OEA spent \$881,073 on employee benefits and pension accruals in FY 2025 — Line 8 (Pension plan accruals and contributions): \$195,395, and Line 9 (Other employee benefits): \$685,678.¹⁶ Combined with \$268,330 in payroll taxes (Line 10), the total non-wage employment cost was \$1.1 million — adding 38% to OEA's \$3.0 million in other salaries (Line 7) and \$449,511 in officer compensation (Line 5).

Benefit Type	Amount
Pension Plan Accruals and Contributions (Line 8)	\$195,395
Other Employee Benefits (Line 9)	\$685,678
Payroll Taxes (Line 10)	\$268,330
TOTAL BENEFITS	\$1,149,403

YOUR RIGHT TO LEAVE

Oklahoma public school employees are covered by the Supreme Court's 2018 Janus v. AFSCME decision, which prohibits public-sector employers from compelling employees to pay union dues or agency fees as a condition of employment.¹⁷ Every OEA member has the legal right to resign membership and stop paying dues at any time — regardless of contract status, school district policy, or seniority. For educators who conclude that OEA's \$4.6 million staff payroll, support of representatives that push the transitioning of minors and unreported state-lobbying footprint do not align with their priorities, the path to leave is straightforward and legally protected. For more information on union resignation procedures, visit americansforfairtreatment.org or call (833) 969-FAIR.

Data sourced from the Oklahoma Education Association's IRS Form 990 filings (EIN 73-0384310) for fiscal years ending August 31, 2019 through August 31, 2025, retrieved from IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search and locally archived TEOS XML. PAC spending data drawn from the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education (OEA-FCPE) and Friends-of-OEA committees, accessed via state-pac-widgets.vercel.app (derived from state campaign finance filings via the American Accountability Foundation State PAC Partisan Tracker). Oklahoma state lobbying registration data drawn from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission Guardian System (guardian.ok.gov), accessed May 2026. Citation for Rep. Jacob Rosecrants's position on House Bill 3130: Oklahoma Voice news coverage, March 30, 2026. Rep. Mickey Dollens's characterization of House Bill 2177: OU Daily, February 28, 2023. Rep. Cyndi Munson's quoted criticism: The Advocate, August 3, 2023. OEA-FCPE recipient amounts (Dollens \$2,000; Munson \$4,500 across the

CYNDI/CYNDI A/CYNDI ANN filing variants) tabulated from the AAF State PAC Partisan Tracker OEA-FCPE dataset (2017–2024). OEA-FCPE contribution amounts to Hofmeister, Edmondson, Nelson, and Walke tabulated from the AAF State PAC Partisan Tracker OEA-FCPE dataset (2017–2024). Joy Hofmeister's 2021 party switch and 2022 abortion position: NPR and KOKH Fox 25, 2022. Drew Edmondson's 2018 reproductive-rights position: VoteSmart / OnTheIssues, 2018. House Bill 2597 (2019) passing the House 70–30 with every Democrat present, including Rep. Collin Walke, opposed: Tulsa World and OU Daily, 2019. Rep. Mickey Dollens's gun-reform advocacy: KOKH Fox 25 and Public Radio Tulsa, 2022.

NUMBERS TO HIGHLIGHT

Key statistics from OEA's FY 2025 (year ending August 31, 2025) 990 filing

58.1%	Share of OEA's FY 2025 budget consumed by salaries, benefits, payroll taxes, and pension accruals
\$165,261	FY 2025 compensation for OEA's Past Executive Director Carolyn Crowder — highest on the filing
\$151,018	FY 2025 compensation for OEA's Past President Katherine Bishop
\$888,667	Combined FY 2025 conference, convention, meeting, and travel spending — 11.2% of total budget
10	OEA-affiliated lobbyist registrations — nine individuals — in Oklahoma's Guardian System (3 Active, 7 Terminated/Non-Renewed)
\$10,750	Cumulative OEA-FCPE contributions to Rep. Jacob Rosecrants (6 transactions, 2017-2024), who publicly opposed restricting “gender affirming care” for minors with gender dysphoria
51	Employees on OEA's payroll in FY 2025 — unchanged from FY 2020 despite 24% revenue growth

¹ IRS Form 990 (EIN 73-0384310), Part IX, Lines 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10 (officer compensation, other salaries and wages, pension accruals, other employee benefits, payroll taxes), FY 2025.

² IRS Form 990 (EIN 73-0384310), Part IX Line 19 (Conferences, conventions, and meetings): \$557,404; Line 17 (Travel): \$331,263. FY 2025 — totaling \$888,667 in conference and travel spending.

³ Andrea Eger, 'Lawmakers overhaul bill seeking to block Oklahoma adults from receiving gender-affirming care,' Oklahoma Voice (oklahomavoice.com), March 30, 2026 (Rep. Jacob Rosecrants quoted opposing House Bill 3130, which removes behavioral health and mental health counseling from the existing exception to Oklahoma's gender-transition-procedure ban).

⁴ IRS Form 990 (EIN 73-0384310), Part X (Balance Sheet), fiscal years 2019 and 2025; net assets reconstruction from -\$423,849 deficit to +\$8,191,194 surplus.

⁵ IRS Form 990 (EIN 73-0384310), Part I and Part X, fiscal year ending August 31, 2025; Part X net assets reported at \$8,191,194 with \$1,362,067 in liabilities.

⁶ IRS Form 990 (EIN 73-0384310), Part IX (Statement of Functional Expenses), fiscal years ending August 31, 2019 through August 31, 2025.

⁷ IRS Form 990 (EIN 73-0384310), Part IX Line 11d (Fees for services — Lobbying), reported as \$0 for fiscal years 2019 through 2025. Oklahoma Ethics Commission Guardian System registers three lobbyists with Active status for OEA as of May 2026 — a registration footprint not reflected on OEA's tax filings.

⁸ Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Guardian System — Lobbyist Principal Search and Lobbyist Detail pages (guardian.ok.gov), accessed May 2026; current registration snapshot. The search returned ten Oklahoma-registered lobbyists representing the Oklahoma Education Association and the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education, with status flags of Active, Terminated, or Non-Renewed.

⁹ Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Guardian System — LobbyDetail.aspx for Sydney Fred Jordan Jr. (Organization ID 7320), accessed May 2026. The page lists Jordan's current registered lobbyist principals.

¹⁰ Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Guardian System — Lobbyist Principal Search and Lobbyist Detail pages (guardian.ok.gov), accessed May 2026; current registration snapshot. The search returned ten Oklahoma-registered lobbyists representing the Oklahoma Education Association and the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education, with status flags of Active, Terminated, or Non-Renewed.

¹¹ Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Guardian System — Lobbyist Principal Search and Lobbyist Detail pages (guardian.ok.gov), accessed May 2026; current registration snapshot. The search returned ten Oklahoma-registered lobbyists representing the Oklahoma Education Association and the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education, with status flags of Active, Terminated, or Non-Renewed.

¹² Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Guardian System — Lobbyist Principal Search and Lobbyist Detail pages (guardian.ok.gov), accessed May 2026; current registration snapshot. The search returned ten Oklahoma-registered lobbyists representing the Oklahoma Education Association and the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education, with status flags of Active, Terminated, or Non-Renewed.

¹³ IRS Form 990 (EIN 73-0384310), Part VII Section A, FY 2025 (Crowder, Bishop, Elledge total compensation lines including reportable comp from organization plus other compensation).

¹⁴ Oklahoma Ethics Commission, Guardian System — Lobbyist Principal Search and Lobbyist Detail pages (guardian.ok.gov), accessed May 2026; current registration snapshot. The search returned ten Oklahoma-registered lobbyists representing the Oklahoma Education Association and the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education, with status flags of Active, Terminated, or Non-Renewed.

¹⁵ IRS Form 990 (EIN 73-0384310), Part VII Section A, FY 2025 (Crowder, Bishop, Elledge total compensation lines including reportable comp from organization plus other compensation).

¹⁶ IRS Form 990 (EIN 73-0384310), Part IX Line 5 (Compensation of current officers/directors): \$449,511; Line 7 (Other salaries and wages): \$2,996,285; Line 8 (Pension plan accruals): \$195,395; Line 9 (Other employee benefits): \$685,678; Line 10 (Payroll taxes): \$268,330. FY 2025.

¹⁷ *Janus v. AFSCME*, Council 31, 138 S. Ct. 2448 (2018); the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that public-sector workers cannot be compelled to pay union dues or agency fees as a condition of employment. OEA represents public school employees, who fall squarely within Janus's scope.