
Ethics Commission

MISSION STATEMENT

The Ethics Commission exercises authorities granted to it under the Public Ethics Law to promote the public's trust of County government and to ensure the impartiality of County employees, including elected officials, in the execution of their responsibilities.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The total approved FY14 Operating Budget for the Ethics Commission is \$337,007, an increase of \$29,231 or 9.5 percent from the FY13 Approved Budget of \$307,776. Personnel Costs comprise 92.2 percent of the budget for three full-time positions, and a total of three FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 7.8 percent of the FY14 budget.

LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULT AREAS

While this program area supports all eight of the County Result Areas, the following are emphasized:

- ❖ ***A Responsive, Accountable County Government***

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INITIATIVES

- ❖ ***The Commission implemented a new online lobbying registration system.***
- ❖ ***The Commission revised the methodology used for charging lobbying fees ensuring lobbyist pay the registration fee for each client they represent.***
- ❖ ***Implementation of a new lobbying reporting function is planned for completion in FY13.***
- ❖ ***The Commission is engaged in a review of the financial disclosure provisions of the Public Ethics Law and will recommend changes, as necessary, to better address the potential for conflicts of interest.***
- ❖ ***Commission staff is working with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Department of Technology Services to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the financial disclosure system.***
- ❖ ***The Commission is working with the Police Department to identify and streamline the Outside Employment application and approval process.***

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Robert Cobb of the Ethics Commission at 240-777-6674 or Phil Weeda of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2780 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Ethics Program Compliance

Financial Disclosure: The Public Ethics Law requires filing of financial disclosure reports by certain County employees. The Ethics Commission prepares and distributes financial disclosure forms and maintains reports filed by employees; it administers the electronic filing system for reporting and coordinates with the Office of Human Resources and all County agencies as regards to the status of filers, and resolves all anomalous circumstances and questions from filers that routinely arise associated with the filing of financial disclosure reports and the administration of the system designed for that purpose.

Outside Employment: The Public Ethics Law requires that County employees obtain approval from the Ethics Commission prior to engaging in any employment other than County employment. The Ethics Commission prepares and makes available Outside Employment request forms and administers a process pursuant to which agency approvals are obtained. The Ethics Commission staff prepares all requests for consideration by the Ethics Commission, to include obtaining additional information from requestors and County agencies and conducting preliminary legal analysis of requests. The Ethics Commission approves requests, as appropriate, setting conditions on approval as necessary to ensure compliance with ethics requirements, and staff notifies requestors by letter of the disposition of requests. The Ethics Commission publishes and updates approved Outside Employment information required to be

made public by the Public Ethics Law.

Lobbying: The Public Ethics Law requires certain persons who spend or receive over \$500 to communicate with County officials and employees to register as lobbyists and to file semi-annual activity reports with the Ethics Commission. Annual registration fees are required and are paid to the Ethics Commission and processed and deposited in the General Fund. The Ethics Commission publishes and updates information required to be made public by the Public Ethics Law.

Complaints, Investigations and Hearings: Pursuant to the Public Ethics Laws, the Ethics Commission receives complaints and, as appropriate: conducts investigations, conducts hearings, makes findings, and imposes sanctions and penalties if warranted.

Advisory Opinions, Waivers, Advice: In accordance with the Public Ethics Law, the Ethics Commission answers inquiries on the application of the Ethics law, publishes opinions, and grants waivers of Ethics Law requirements, as appropriate.

Education: The Ethics Commission conducts public education and other information programs regarding the Ethics Law.

Legislative and Regulatory: The Ethics Commission recommends and prepares new ethics legislation and regulations.

Coordination and Outreach: The Staff of the Ethics Commission coordinates with the County Attorney's Office and the Office of the Inspector General as necessary on legal and investigative matters; the Staff also serves as the principal public resource on the County's ethics laws, to include managing a website that reflects Ethics Commission programs, activities, and publications such as annual reports, approvals of outside employment requests, lobbying data, and waivers and opinions.

Administration: The Staff of the Ethics Commission is responsible for assuring that Ethics Commission meetings are run in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and other applicable law and the Ethics Commission members are informed and advised as to all material matters under their jurisdiction; Ethics Commission staff are also responsible for budget, procurement, human resources, and resource management for the operation of the office in accordance with Montgomery County policies, and attend required training in these and other office management areas.

BUDGET SUMMARY

| | Actual FY12 | Budget FY13 | Estimated FY13 | Approved FY14 | % Chg Bud/App |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| COUNTY GENERAL FUND | | | | | |
| EXPENDITURES | | | | | |
| Salaries and Wages | 149,109 | 198,829 | 200,360 | 248,836 | 25.2% |
| Employee Benefits | 23,311 | 47,667 | 42,284 | 61,738 | 29.5% |
| County General Fund Personnel Costs | 172,420 | 246,496 | 242,644 | 310,574 | 26.0% |
| Operating Expenses | 19,036 | 61,280 | 61,280 | 26,433 | -56.9% |
| Capital Outlay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| County General Fund Expenditures | 191,456 | 307,776 | 303,924 | 337,007 | 9.5% |
| PERSONNEL | | | | | |
| Full-Time | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | — |
| Part-Time | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| FTEs | 2.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | — |
| REVENUES | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous Revenues | 24,345 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| Other Charges/Fees | 0 | 15,000 | 15,000 | 15,000 | — |
| County General Fund Revenues | 24,345 | 15,000 | 15,000 | 15,000 | — |

FY14 APPROVED CHANGES

| | Expenditures | FTEs |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| COUNTY GENERAL FUND | | |
| FY13 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION | 307,776 | 3.00 |
| Other Adjustments (with no service impacts) | | |
| Increase Cost: Annualization of FY13 Personnel Costs | 50,070 | 0.00 |
| Increase Cost: Group Insurance Adjustment | 9,831 | 0.00 |
| Increase Cost: IT Maintenance | 9,000 | 0.00 |
| Increase Cost: FY14 Compensation Adjustment | 7,008 | 0.00 |
| Increase Cost: Printing and Mail Adjustment | 73 | 0.00 |
| Decrease Cost: Retirement Adjustment | -678 | 0.00 |
| Decrease Cost: Elimination of FY13 \$2,000 Lump Sum | -2,153 | 0.00 |
| Decrease Cost: Elimination of One-Time Items Approved in FY13 | -43,920 | 0.00 |
| FY14 APPROVED: | 337,007 | 3.00 |

