



Ethics Commission

RECOMMENDED FY26 BUDGET

\$365,818

FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

2.00

 ERIN O'CONNOR, DIRECTOR

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 recommended FY26 Operating Budget for the Ethics Commission is \$365,818, a decrease of \$50,655 or 12.16 percent from the FY25 Approved Budget of \$416,473. Personnel Costs comprise 89.47 percent of the budget for two full-time position(s) and no part-time position(s), and a total of 2.00 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 10.53 percent of the FY26 budget.

COUNTY PRIORITY OUTCOMES




While this program area supports all seven of the County Executive's Priority Outcomes, the following is emphasized:

Effective, Sustainable Government

INITIATIVES

-  Enhance the Commission's training program by creating a process by which all County employees will receive one hour of ethics training in accordance with the training mandate contained within the Public Ethics Law. The process will include both live virtual training and an alternative video training for those unable to attend the live sessions.

INNOVATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

-  Enhanced the Commission's ability to offer increased training opportunities for County employees.
-  Implemented a training video to support the mandatory one-hour online ethics training program for new employees. This video is available for those unable to attend the live on-line training provided by Commission staff.
-  Implemented an improvement to the lobbying activity reporting system to require reporting of the specific matters on which lobbying has occurred. When activity reports were filed in July 2024, lobbyists were required to list each matter on which lobbying occurred during the reporting period, using bill numbers, formal designations, or other specific references or details to

describe the matter.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Hiwote Yohannes of the Ethics Commission at 240-777-6674 or Eva Acevedo of the Office of Management and Budget at 240-777-2763 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for this department are included below (where applicable). The FY25 estimates reflect funding based on the FY25 Approved Budget. The FY26 and FY27 figures are performance targets based on the FY26 Recommended Budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY27.

Measure	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimated FY25	Target FY26	Target FY27
Program Measures					
Number of financial disclosure statements required (calendar year)	1,892	1,964	1,964	1,964	1,964
Number of formal opinions, waivers, and guidance (calendar year)	21	15	15	15	15
Number of lobbyist activity reports (calendar year)	255	261	261	261	261
Number of lobbyists registered (calendar year)	156	162	162	162	162
Number of outside employment requests processed (calendar year)	1,852	1,506	1,506	1,506	1,506
Percentage of Executive Branch public financial disclosure filers in compliance with ethics training requirement	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Ethics Program Compliance

Financial Disclosure: The Public Ethics Law requires filing of financial disclosure reports by certain County employees. The Ethics Commission administers the electronic filing system for reporting and coordinates with the Office of Human Resources and all County agencies regarding the status of filers. It resolves all anomalous circumstances and questions from filers that routinely arise associated with the filing of financial disclosure reports and 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 administers an online process pursuant to which requests are made and reviewed by the employee's agency. The Ethics Commission staff prepares all requests for consideration by the Ethics Commission, including 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, and/or hearings; makes findings; and imposes sanctions and penalties, if warranted.

Advisory Opinions, Waivers, and Advice: In accordance with the Public Ethics Law, the Ethics Commission answers inquiries on the application of the Public 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 Public 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 Office of the County Attorney 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, including 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 ensuring that Ethics Commission meetings are conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. The Ethics Commission members are informed and advised as to all material matters under their jurisdiction.

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Estimate FY25	Recommended FY26	%Chg Bud/Rec
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	251,577	308,825	225,088	258,675	-16.2 %
Employee Benefits	57,703	69,294	58,333	68,632	-1.0 %
County General Fund Personnel Costs	309,280	378,119	283,421	327,307	-13.4 %
Operating Expenses	38,208	38,354	38,354	38,511	0.4 %
County General Fund Expenditures	347,488	416,473	321,775	365,818	-12.2 %
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	2	2	2	2	—
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	—
FTEs	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	—
REVENUES					
Miscellaneous Revenues	20,875	20,000	20,000	20,000	—
County General Fund Revenues	20,875	20,000	20,000	20,000	—

FY26 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
FY25 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	416,473	2.00
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Increase Cost: FY26 Compensation Adjustment	8,944	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY25 Compensation Increases	5,076	0.00
Increase Cost: Retirement Adjustment	1,207	0.00
Increase Cost: Printing and Mail Adjustment	157	0.00
Decrease Cost: Annualization of FY25 Personnel Costs	(66,039)	0.00
FY26 RECOMMENDED	365,818	2.00

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CE RECOMMENDED (\$000S)

Title	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31
COUNTY GENERAL FUND						
EXPENDITURES						
FY26 Recommended	366	366	366	366	366	366
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Subtotal Expenditures	366	366	366	366	366	366