

Ethics Commission



Description

Founded in 2001, the Ethics Commission is an independent City entity responsible for monitoring, administering, and enforcing the City's governmental ethics, campaign, and lobbying laws. The Ethics Commission conducts audits and investigations, provides formal and informal technical legal advice to persons within its jurisdiction, conducts live training sessions, administers online training programs, and proposes reforms to the City's ethics laws. The Commission provides training to City officials, including elected officials and unclassified City employees, as well as candidates, campaigns, political committees, and lobbyists. For more information, please visit the Ethics Commission's website at www.sandiego.gov/ethics.

The vision is:

To advance the principles of open government, transparency, and an informed citizenry by monitoring and enforcing compliance with City ethics laws, including the timely disclosure of required financial information by candidates, political committees, lobbyists, and City officials.

The mission is:

To preserve public confidence in City government through education, advice, and the prompt and fair enforcement of local governmental ethics laws.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Educate City officials, unclassified employees, City candidates, campaigns, and lobbyists about the City's governmental ethics laws

- Provide prompt informal advice regarding the City's ethics, campaign, and lobbying laws, by telephone, email, and in person

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- Provide live and online training courses on the City's ethics, campaign, and lobbying laws for those within the Commission's jurisdiction, including City officials, unclassified employees, candidates, and lobbyists
- Prepare and disseminate educational materials, such as fact sheets and manuals, to assist compliance with local laws
- Issue formal advisory opinions

Goal 2: *Ensure compliance with the City's governmental ethics laws through audits and enforcement activities*

- Conduct efficient and thorough investigations into alleged violations of the City's ethics laws, campaign laws, and lobbying laws
- Conduct compliance audits of City candidate committees and ballot measure committees

Goal 3: *Propose legislative amendments to ensure that the City's governmental ethics laws are effective in preventing corruption and the appearance of corruption*

- Review existing laws, receive public input, and study laws in other jurisdictions
- Prepare proposed legislative amendments for City Council approval

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Budget Equity Impact Statement

Equity Highlights

Examples from the current fiscal year.

- Increased Campaign Law Training for candidates and campaign staff. Commission staff offered and provided additional live training sessions and outreach to those seeking elective office and those working on their campaigns. This training advances the goal of empowering all who wish to run for elective office and their campaign staffs by providing the best possible education regarding the City's campaign laws. The Commission's Education Program helps those who are new to the political process, as well as seasoned campaign officials who need a refresher course to avoid violating the law. The training works hand-in-hand with the Commission's 24/7 technical legal advice line, which candidates and campaign staff can call to seek individual advice before taking actions.

Budget Equity Lens Summary

Ongoing Operations

Is there an opportunity to adjust the department's ongoing operations to mitigate the impacts of existing or potential disparities?

No

Budget Adjustment(s)

Do the requests impact existing or potential disparities?

N/A

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Key Performance Indicators

| Performance Indicator | Definition | Baseline | FY2025 Performance | Goal |
|--|--|----------|--------------------|------|
| Authorized Investigations - Time to complete | Percentage of investigations completed within 360 calendar days | 96% | 88% | 90% |
| Complaint Reviews | Percentage of complaints reviewed within 30 calendar days | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Legislative Updates | Percentage of educational materials updated within 30 days of legislative changes (both state and local) | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Technical Legal Assistance Response Time | Percentage of requests for technical legal assistance (informal advice regarding campaign, lobbying, and ethics laws) responded to within 24 hours | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Ethics Law Training ¹ | Percentage of regulated community due to attend required ethics law training that the Ethics Commission trained within 90 days of their due date. | N/A | 93% | 95% |

1. New KPI for Fiscal Year 2025.

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Department Summary

| | FY2024 Actual | FY2025 Budget | FY2026 Adopted | FY2025-2026 Change |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| FTE Positions (Budgeted) | 6.00 | 6.25 | 6.00 | (0.25) |
| Personnel Expenditures | \$ 1,534,087 | \$ 1,589,669 | \$ 1,810,549 | \$ 220,880 |
| Non-Personnel Expenditures | 111,437 | 239,669 | 242,030 | 2,361 |
| Total Department Expenditures | \$ 1,645,524 | \$ 1,829,338 | \$ 2,052,579 | \$ 223,241 |
| Total Department Revenue | \$ 23,020 | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |

General Fund

Department Expenditures

| | FY2024 Actual | FY2025 Budget | FY2026 Adopted | FY2025-2026 Change |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Ethics Commission | \$ 1,645,524 | \$ 1,829,338 | \$ 2,052,579 | \$ 223,241 |
| Total | \$ 1,645,524 | \$ 1,829,338 | \$ 2,052,579 | \$ 223,241 |

Department Personnel

| | FY2024 Budget | FY2025 Budget | FY2026 Adopted | FY2025-2026 Change |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Ethics Commission | 6.00 | 6.25 | 6.00 | (0.25) |
| Total | 6.00 | 6.25 | 6.00 | (0.25) |

Significant Budget Adjustments

| | FTE | Expenditures | Revenue |
|--|---------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Salary and Benefit Adjustments | (0.25) | \$ 207,096 | \$ - |
| Adjustments to reflect savings resulting from vacant positions for any period of the fiscal year, retirement contributions, retiree health contributions, and labor negotiations. | | | |
| One-Time Additions and Annualizations | 0.00 | 13,784 | - |
| Adjustment to reflect one-time revenues and expenditures, and annualization of revenues and expenditures implemented in Fiscal Year 2025. | | | |
| Non-Discretionary Adjustment | 0.00 | 3,350 | - |
| Adjustment to expenditure allocations that are determined outside of the department's direct control. These allocations are generally based on prior year expenditure trends and examples of these include utilities, insurance, and rent. | | | |
| Support for Information Technology | 0.00 | (989) | - |
| Adjustment to expenditure allocations according to an annual review of information technology funding requirements. | | | |
| Total | (0.25) | \$ 223,241 | \$ - |

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Expenditures by Category

| | FY2024 Actual | FY2025 Budget | FY2026 Adopted | FY2025-2026 Change |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| PERSONNEL | | | | |
| Personnel Cost | \$ 961,638 | \$ 1,042,981 | \$ 1,144,510 | \$ 101,529 |
| Fringe Benefits | 572,449 | 546,688 | 666,039 | 119,351 |
| PERSONNEL SUBTOTAL | 1,534,087 | 1,589,669 | 1,810,549 | 220,880 |
| NON-PERSONNEL | | | | |
| Supplies | \$ 3,829 | \$ 7,757 | \$ 9,342 | \$ 1,585 |
| Contracts & Services | 61,575 | 173,813 | 175,578 | 1,765 |
| <i>External Contracts & Services</i> | <i>53,055</i> | <i>157,507</i> | <i>157,507</i> | - |
| <i>Internal Contracts & Services</i> | <i>8,520</i> | <i>16,306</i> | <i>18,071</i> | <i>1,765</i> |
| Information Technology | 40,338 | 44,999 | 44,010 | (989) |
| Energy and Utilities | 2,079 | 2,600 | 2,600 | - |
| Other | 3,616 | 10,500 | 10,500 | - |
| NON-PERSONNEL SUBTOTAL | 111,437 | 239,669 | 242,030 | 2,361 |
| Total | \$ 1,645,524 | \$ 1,829,338 | \$ 2,052,579 | \$ 223,241 |

Revenues by Category

| | FY2024 Actual | FY2025 Budget | FY2026 Adopted | FY2025-2026 Change |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Fines Forfeitures and Penalties | \$ 23,020 | \$ - | \$ - | - |
| Total | \$ 23,020 | \$ - | \$ - | - |

Personnel Expenditures

| Job Number | Job Title / Wages | FY2024 Budget | FY2025 Budget | FY2026 Adopted | Salary Range | Total |
|--|----------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| FTE, Salaries, and Wages | | | | | | |
| 20001220 | Executive Director | 1.00 | 1.25 | 1.00 | \$ 78,886 - 290,057 | \$ 253,599 |
| 20001234 | Program Coordinator | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 36,364 - 218,225 | - |
| 20001222 | Program Manager | 4.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 78,886 - 290,057 | 877,127 |
| | Vacation Pay In Lieu | | | | | 13,784 |
| FTE, Salaries, and Wages Subtotal | | 6.00 | 6.25 | 6.00 | | \$ 1,144,510 |

| | FY2024 Actual | FY2025 Budget | FY2026 Adopted | FY2025-2026 Change |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Fringe Benefits | | | | |
| Employee Offset Savings | \$ 10,306 | \$ 9,706 | \$ 11,970 | \$ 2,264 |
| Flexible Benefits | 88,335 | 91,639 | 93,511 | 1,872 |
| Long-Term Disability | 3,980 | 3,776 | 5,732 | 1,956 |
| Medicare | 14,159 | 15,124 | 16,395 | 1,271 |
| Other Post-Employment Benefits | 26,987 | 25,862 | 24,432 | (1,430) |
| Retiree Medical Trust | 1,550 | 1,799 | 1,829 | 30 |
| Retirement 401 Plan | 6,161 | 7,195 | 7,317 | 122 |
| Retirement ADC | 385,275 | 358,050 | 465,854 | 107,804 |
| Risk Management Administration | 7,993 | 8,663 | 9,996 | 1,333 |
| Supplemental Pension Savings Plan | 20,227 | 19,412 | 23,940 | 4,528 |
| Unemployment Insurance | 1,083 | 1,073 | 1,075 | 2 |
| Workers' Compensation | 6,393 | 4,389 | 3,988 | (401) |
| Fringe Benefits Subtotal | \$ 572,449 | \$ 546,688 | \$ 666,039 | \$ 119,351 |
| Total Personnel Expenditures | | | \$ 1,810,549 | |