



Description

The Ethics Commission is an independent City department and body of appointed City officials with a staff of six. It was formed in 2001 for the purpose of monitoring, administering, and enforcing the City's governmental ethics laws. The Commission is composed of seven members appointed by the Mayor from a pool of nominees nominated by the Council and City Attorney and confirmed by Council.

The Commission regulates City officials, including elected officials and unclassified City employees, as well as candidates, campaign committees, and lobbyists. Through its staff, the Commission conducts audits and investigations, provides formal and informal technical legal advice to City officials and others, provides live training, and administers online training programs. The Commission enforces the government ethics laws through the administrative hearing process and has the authority to impose fines for violations of the City's ethics, lobbying, and election and campaign control ordinances. The Commission also proposes reforms to the City's ethics laws. 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 government ethics laws.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: *Provide more educational opportunities to City officials, unclassified employees, City candidates, campaigns, lobbyists, and the general public about the City's government ethics laws.*

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

Budget Equity Impact Statement

Equity Highlights

Examples from the current fiscal year.

- The Commission's role in City government and the government ethics laws are not widely understood by the public it serves. The Commission created a LinkedIn account where it posts its monthly meeting agendas and educational information, providing greater public access to meetings and information about the government ethics laws. The Commission intends to gradually join other social media platforms to reach a wider audience across all City Districts.
- The Commission is not serving all employees who file Statements of Economic Interests (SEIs) The Commission continues its efforts to implement the City Auditor's recommendation that classified employees who file SEIs should fall within the Commission's jurisdiction. The most recent step was drafting a legislative package to present to the Rules Committee that recommends the addition. Currently, these employees do not receive training on the City's Ethics Ordinance or the Political Reform Act, yet those employees are under the jurisdiction of the Fair Political Practices Commission for enforcement of state government ethics laws. If the Auditor's recommendation is implemented, both classified and unclassified employees who file SEIs will be subject to the Ethics Commission's jurisdiction for education and enforcement purposes.
- The unclassified employees did not have access to in person ethics training in the recent past. Commission staff provide four virtual training sessions for unclassified employees. The Commission added two additional sessions that will be held in person in an effort to provide more opportunities and flexibility for unclassified employees who require ethics training every two years.

Budget Equity Lens Summary

Ongoing Operations

Is there an opportunity to adjust the department's ongoing operations to mitigate the impacts of identified disparities, gaps, and deficiencies?

NO

The Commission operates on the leanest budget within the City. Most of the Commission's non-personnel expenditure (NPE) budget is allocated to core services that are non-discretionary and cannot be reduced pursuant to Charter section 41.3. Each core service is staffed by one employee and one executive director who supervises all five core programs. Any changes would result in a negative impact to ongoing operations.

Budget Adjustment(s)

Do the adjustments impact any department disparities, gaps, and deficiencies?

YES

TEP Goal 2, Objective 1: The addition of a discretionary IT budget for a case and document management system will support department operations and case intake, processing, and tracking. Additionally, it will make investigations, the enforcement process, and reporting more efficient.

Ethics Commission

Key Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Definition	Baseline	FY2026 Performance	Goal
Authorized Investigations - Time to complete	Percentage of investigations completed within 360 calendar days	96.00%	87.00%	90.00%
Complaint Reviews	Percentage of complaints reviewed within 30 calendar days	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Ethics Law Training	Percentage of regulated community due to attend required ethics law training that the Ethics Commission trained within 90 days of their due date.	93.00%	90.00%	95.00%
Legislative Updates	Percentage of educational materials updated within 30 days of legislative changes (both State and local)	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
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	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Department Summary

	FY2025 Actual	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Adopted	FY2026-2027 Change
FTE Positions (Budgeted)	6.25	6.00	6.00	0.00
Personnel Expenditures	\$1,742,547	\$1,810,549	\$1,693,794	(\$116,755)
Non-Personnel Expenditures	149,066	242,030	289,456	47,426
Total Department Expenditures	\$1,891,613	\$2,052,579	\$1,983,250	(\$69,329)
Total Department Revenue	\$500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

General Fund

Department Expenditures

	FY2025 Actual	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Adopted	FY2026-2027 Change
Ethics Commission	\$1,891,613	\$2,052,579	\$1,983,250	(\$69,329)
Total	\$1,891,613	\$2,052,579	\$1,983,250	(\$69,329)

Department Personnel

	FY2025 Budget	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Adopted	FY2026-2027 Change
Ethics Commission	6.25	6.00	6.00	-
Total	6.25	6.00	6.00	-

Budget Adjustments

	FTE	Expenditures	Revenue
Case Management System	-	\$50,000	\$ -
Addition of non-personnel expenditures to implement a modern case intake and data management system.			
Non-Discretionary Adjustment	-	1,051	-
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	-	(3,625)	-
Adjustment to expenditure allocations according to an annual review of information technology funding requirements.			
Salary and Benefit Adjustments	-	(116,755)	-
Adjustments to reflect savings resulting from vacant positions for any period of the fiscal year, retirement contributions, retiree health contributions, and labor negotiations.			
Total	0.00	(\$69,329)	\$ -

Ethics Commission

Expenditures by Category

	FY2025 Actual	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Adopted	FY2026-2027 Change
PERSONNEL EXPENDITURES				
Personnel Cost	1,170,923	1,144,510	1,194,611	50,101
Fringe Benefits	571,624	666,039	499,183	(166,856)
PERSONNEL SUBTOTAL	1,742,547	1,810,549	1,693,794	(116,755)
NON-PERSONNEL EXPENDITURES				
Supplies	5,162	9,342	9,397	55
Contracts & Services	94,858	175,578	176,574	996
<i>External Contracts & Services</i>	<i>70,434</i>	<i>157,507</i>	<i>157,507</i>	-
<i>Internal Contracts & Services</i>	<i>24,424</i>	<i>18,071</i>	<i>19,067</i>	996
Information Technology	42,174	44,010	90,385	46,375
Energy and Utilities	2,443	2,600	2,600	-
Other Expenses	4,429	10,500	10,500	-
NON-PERSONNEL SUBTOTAL	149,066	242,030	289,456	47,426
Total	\$1,891,613	\$2,052,579	\$1,983,250	(\$69,329)

Revenues by Category

	FY2025 Actual	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Adopted	FY2026-2027 Change
Fines Forfeitures and Penalties	\$500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total	\$500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Personnel Expenditures

Job Number	Job Title/Wages	FY2025 Budget	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Adopted	Salary Range	Total
FTE, Salaries and Wages						
20001220	Executive Director	1.25	1.00	1.00	79,643 - 292,822	\$248,851
20001222	Program Manager	5.00	5.00	5.00	79,643 - 292,822	931,976
	Vacation Pay In Lieu					13,784
FTE, Salaries and Wages Subtotal		6.25	6.00	6.00		\$1,194,611

	FY2025 Actual	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Adopted	FY2026-2027 Change
Fringe Benefits				
Employee Offset Savings	9,365	11,970	4,536	(7,434)
Flexible Benefits	94,407	93,511	90,606	(2,905)
Long-Term Disability	4,048	5,732	5,147	(585)
Medicare	16,995	16,395	17,122	727
Other Post-Employment Benefits	26,525	24,432	18,972	(5,460)
Retiree Medical Trust	2,061	1,829	2,574	745
Retirement 401 Plan	8,187	7,317	10,296	2,979

Ethics Commission

	FY2025 Actual	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Adopted	FY2026-2027 Change
Retirement ADC	376,475	465,854	323,411	(142,443)
Risk Management Administration	8,720	9,996	9,522	(474)
Supplemental Pension Savings Plan	18,385	23,940	9,072	(14,868)
Unemployment Insurance	-	1,075	1,028	(47)
Workers' Compensation	6,456	3,988	6,897	2,909
Fringe Benefits Subtotal	\$571,624	\$666,039	\$499,183	(\$166,856)
Total Personnel Expenditures			\$1,693,794	