



Ethics Commission

APPROVED FY25 BUDGET

\$416,473

FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

2.00

ERIN CHU, 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 approved FY25 Operating Budget for the Ethics Commission is \$416,473, an increase of \$25,220 or 6.45 percent from the FY24 Approved Budget of \$391,253. Personnel Costs comprise 90.79 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 9.21 percent of the FY25 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

- Consistent with statutory requirements, the lobbying activity reporting system will be adjusted to require reporting of the specific matters on which lobbying has occurred. When activity reports are filed in July of 2024, lobbyists will be required to "list each matter on which lobbying occurred during the reporting period: use bill numbers, formal designations or other specific references or detail in describing the matter".
- Commission staff will implement a training video to support the mandatory one-hour online ethics training program for new County employees. This video will be available for those unable to attend the live online training provided by Commission staff.

INNOVATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

Changes to the Public Ethics Law through amendments to Montgomery County Code §11B-52 became effective in February

2023, resulting in Commission staff implementing new program requirements, including making changes to the financial disclosure system's reporting requirements.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Erin Chu of the Ethics Commission at 240.777.6676 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 FY24 estimates reflect funding based on the FY24 Approved Budget. The FY25 and FY26 figures are performance targets based on the FY25 Approved Budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY26.

Measure	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Estimated FY24	Target FY25	Target FY26
Program Measures					
Number of financial disclosure statements required (calendar year)	1,872	1,892	1,892	1,892	1,892
Number of formal opinions, waivers, and guidance (calendar year)	21	21	21	21	21
Number of lobbyist activity reports (calendar year)	287	255	255	255	255
Number of lobbyists registered (calendar year)	184	156	156	156	156
Number of outside employment requests processed (calendar year)	2,042	1,852	1,852	1,852	1,852
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 FY23	Budget FY24	Estimate FY24	Approved FY25	%Chg Bud/App
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	282,834	287,019	258,218	308,825	7.6 %
Employee Benefits	63,906	65,902	63,410	69,294	5.2 %
County General Fund Personnel Costs	346,740	352,921	321,628	378,119	7.1 %
Operating Expenses	970	38,332	38,332	38,354	0.1 %
County General Fund Expenditures	347,710	391,253	359,960	416,473	6.4 %
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	21,875	20,000	20,000	20,000	—
County General Fund Revenues	21,875	20,000	20,000	20,000	—

FY25 APPROVED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
FY24 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	391,253	2.00
<u>Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)</u>		
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY24 Compensation Increases	13,913	0.00
Increase Cost: FY25 Compensation Adjustment	12,191	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY24 Personnel Costs	2,934	0.00
Increase Cost: Printing and Mail	22	0.00
Decrease Cost: Retirement Adjustment	(3,840)	0.00
FY25 APPROVED	416,473	2.00

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CC APPROVED (\$000S)

Title	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30
COUNTY GENERAL FUND						
EXPENDITURES						
FY25 Approved	416	416	416	416	416	416
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Labor Contracts	0	5	5	5	5	5
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and other negotiated items.						
Subtotal Expenditures	416	421	421	421	421	421