

**VOLUME I: GENERAL GOVERNMENT
AND QUASI-PUBLIC AGENCIES**

**RHODE ISLAND ETHICS
COMMISSION**

Agency Summary

Rhode Island Ethics Commission

Agency Mission

Ensure that public officials and employees adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct, respect the public trust, avoid the appearance of impropriety, and not use their position for private gain or advantage. Respond efficiently and thoroughly to public inquiries regarding requirements of the Code of Ethics for public officials and employees. Thoroughly investigate complaints alleging violations of the provisions of the Code of Ethics in a timely manner. Expand the use of technology in all aspects of the Commission's operations and ensuring greater public access to information and more effective use of investigative and informational resources. Provide educational and informational seminars, programs, and publications for public officials and employees and the public-at-large regarding codes of conduct for public servants and the workings of the Ethics Commission.

Agency Description

The Rhode Island Ethics Commission was created as an independent, non-partisan division of Rhode Island Government by the voters of Rhode Island through a 1986 amendment to the Rhode Island Constitution. The Commission's constitutional authority includes adopting a Code of Ethics that applies to all state and municipal elected officials, appointed officials and public employees in such areas that expressly include, but are not limited to, conflicts of interest, confidential information, use of position, contracts with government agencies, and financial disclosure. Its constitutional authority also includes the investigation and enforcement of alleged violations of the Code of Ethics and the imposition of penalties for noncompliance. The Ethics Commission administers and enforces a financial disclosure requirement for more than 4,000 public officials annually and makes such filings readily available for public inspection. It issues numerous written advisory opinions each year, maintains public contact with dozens of inquiring citizens each week, and provides regular training to state and municipal public officials and employees as to the requirements of the Code of Ethics. The nine-member Ethics Commission is appointed by the Governor, with a majority of its members nominated by legislative leaders. The staff of the Ethics Commission is headed by an Executive Director/Chief Prosecutor, who is hired by the Commission. The Ethics Commission's operations are funded solely with state general revenues.

Statutory History

Article III, sections 7 and 8 of the Rhode Island Constitution were approved by the voters on November 4, 1986. Title 36, Chapter 14 of the Rhode Island General Laws, enacted in 1987, sets forth the legislative provisions of the Code of Ethics and defines the Ethics Commission's advisory, investigative and adjudicative procedures. Pursuant to its Constitutional authority, the Ethics Commission has adopted both substantive ethics laws and procedural regulations, which can be found in Title 520 of the Rhode Island Code of Regulations. A further amendment to Article III, Section 8 of the Rhode Island Constitution in 2016 clarified that members of the General Assembly are subject to the Code of Ethics and the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission.

Budget

Rhode Island Ethics Commission

	2023 Actuals	2024 Actuals	2025 Enacted Budget	2025 Revised Budget	2026 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
RI Ethics Commission	1,923,524	2,028,754	2,234,502	2,326,169	2,419,632
Total Expenditures	1,923,524	2,028,754	2,234,502	2,326,169	2,419,632
Expenditures by Object					
Salary and Benefits	1,628,466	1,711,526	1,756,136	1,887,941	1,978,046
Contract Professional Services	19,770	29,155	62,275	62,275	62,275
Operating Supplies and Expenses	268,970	282,856	406,765	366,627	368,985
Subtotal: Operating	1,917,206	2,023,538	2,225,176	2,316,843	2,409,306
Capital Purchases and Equipment	6,318	5,216	9,326	9,326	10,326
Subtotal: Other	6,318	5,216	9,326	9,326	10,326
Total Expenditures	1,923,524	2,028,754	2,234,502	2,326,169	2,419,632
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
General Revenue	1,923,524	2,028,754	2,234,502	2,326,169	2,419,632
Total Expenditures	1,923,524	2,028,754	2,234,502	2,326,169	2,419,632
FTE Authorization	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0

Personnel Agency Summary

Rhode Island Ethics Commission

	FY 2025		FY 2026	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Unclassified	12.0	1,180,112	12.0	1,239,275
Subtotal	12.0	1,180,112	12.0	1,239,275
Total Salaries		1,180,112		1,239,275
Benefits				
FICA		89,518		93,986
Health Benefits		154,469		164,287
Payroll Accrual		6,910		7,229
Retiree Health		46,496		40,276
Retirement		376,212		397,054
Subtotal		673,605		702,832
Total Salaries and Benefits	12.0	1,853,717	12.0	1,942,107
Cost Per FTE Position		154,476		161,842
Statewide Benefit Assessment		34,224		35,939
Payroll Costs	12.0	1,887,941	12.0	1,978,046
Purchased Services				
Clerical and Temporary Services		5,000		5,000
Information Technology		6,000		6,000
Legal Services		51,000		51,000
Other Contracts		275		275
Subtotal		62,275		62,275
Total Personnel	12.0	1,950,216	12.0	2,040,321
Distribution by Source of Funds				
General Revenue	12.0	1,950,216	12.0	2,040,321
Total All Funds	12.0	1,950,216	12.0	2,040,321

Personnel

Rhode Island Ethics Commission

RI Ethics Commission

		FY 2025		FY 2026	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Unclassified					
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE	0814 A	1.0	48,762	1.0	51,894
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	0819 A	1.0	54,023	1.0	57,543
CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS	0836 A	1.0	116,437	1.0	123,309
COORDINATOR- SPECIAL PROJECTS	0827 A	1.0	88,799	1.0	92,351
DEPUTY CHIEF INVESTIGATOR	0826 A	1.0	76,251	1.0	80,676
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CHIEF PROSECUTOR	0845 A	1.0	180,866	1.0	188,101
SENIOR CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATOR	0832 A	1.0	101,058	1.0	107,000
SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR	0833 A	1.0	102,921	1.0	110,967
STAFF ATTORNEY II	0830 A	2.0	181,382	2.0	188,636
STAFF ATTORNEY IV	0834 A	1.0	105,401	1.0	109,617
STAFF ATTORNEY V	0836 A	1.0	124,212	1.0	129,181
Subtotal Unclassified		12.0	1,180,112	12.0	1,239,275
Subtotal		12.0	1,180,112	12.0	1,239,275
Total Salaries			1,180,112		1,239,275
Benefits					
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Rhode Island Ethics Commission

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Performance Measures

Rhode Island Ethics Commission

RI Ethics Commission

Online Filing of Financial Disclosure

The Ethics Commission is Constitutionally mandated to adopt provisions relating to financial disclosure of public officials. Approximately 4,000 elected and appointed public officials, candidates for elective office, and some public employees file annual financial statements with the Ethics Commission. Such statements are available for public inspection. In 2012, the Commission implemented an online financial disclosure filing system, which benefits both the filer and the Commission through cost savings, ease of filing, and greater efficiency. Filers may choose either to file online or to continue filing a hard copy form. The figures below represent the percent of financial disclosures submitted online. [Note: CY 2024 data is as of August 2024]

	<i>Reporting Period: Calendar Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Target	90%	91%	91%	91%	91%
Actual	90.1%	90.1%	91.2%	--	--

Timeliness of Response to Access to Public Records

The Ethics Commission is the repository for various public documents filed by, and concerning, public officials and employees. Such documents include yearly financial statements, conflict of interest statements ("recusal forms"), advisory opinions and request letters and complaint materials. Public access to these documents is crucial to fostering and maintaining openness and accountability in public service. RI's Access to Public Records Act (APRA) requires that public documents be made available within 10 business days of a request, unless an extension is necessary. Because of the importance of honoring these requests in a timely fashion, the Ethics Commission has committed to completing the majority of requests within a single business day. Records are made available electronically in most cases to avoid any cost to the person making the request. The figures below represent the percent of APRA requests completed within one business day.

	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Actual	99.0%	98.0%	94.1%	--	--

Ethics Education Training Attendance

The Ethics Commission is statutorily authorized to educate public officials, employees and citizens about the State Code of Ethics. This education occurs through the Commission's website and educational publications, as well as via a public contact system whereby one member of the Commission staff is always on call to speak with members of the public having questions or concerns. The primary method of education is seminars, trainings and workshops provided to public officials, employees and members of the public. Sessions vary in duration and content depending upon the needs and goals of the agency or group receiving training. The figures below represent the number of ethics education training attendees in-person and online.

	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Target	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,900	1,900
Actual	2,274	2,075	2,260	--	--