

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

**RHODE ISLAND  
ETHICS COMMISSION**

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## **Agency Summary**

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### **Rhode Island Ethics Commission**

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#### **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

	2020 Actuals	2021 Actuals	2022 Enacted Budget	2022 Revised Budget	2023 Recommended
<b>Expenditures by Program</b>					
RI Ethics Commission	1,803,364	1,832,318	1,867,351	1,969,646	2,029,145
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>1,803,364</b>	<b>1,832,318</b>	<b>1,867,351</b>	<b>1,969,646</b>	<b>2,029,145</b>
<b>Expenditures by Object</b>					
Salary And Benefits	1,554,892	1,580,453	1,533,112	1,632,550	1,684,537
Contract Professional Services	25,771	30,508	62,275	62,275	62,275
Operating Supplies And Expenses	214,268	218,310	263,138	265,995	273,507
<b>Subtotal: Operating</b>	<b>1,794,932</b>	<b>1,829,271</b>	<b>1,858,525</b>	<b>1,960,820</b>	<b>2,020,319</b>
Capital Purchases And Equipment	8,432	3,047	8,826	8,826	8,826
<b>Subtotal: Other</b>	<b>8,432</b>	<b>3,047</b>	<b>8,826</b>	<b>8,826</b>	<b>8,826</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>1,803,364</b>	<b>1,832,318</b>	<b>1,867,351</b>	<b>1,969,646</b>	<b>2,029,145</b>
<b>Expenditures by Source of Funds</b>					
General Revenue	1,803,364	1,832,318	1,867,351	1,969,646	2,029,145
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>1,803,364</b>	<b>1,832,318</b>	<b>1,867,351</b>	<b>1,969,646</b>	<b>2,029,145</b>
<b>FTE Authorization</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>

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## Performance Measures

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### Rhode Island Ethics Commission

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#### Online Filing of Financial Disclosure

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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 percentage of financial disclosures submitted online. [Note: Calendar year 2021 data is as of 8/18/2021.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: Calendar Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Target</b>	0.00%	86.00%	90.00%	90.00%	91.00%
<b>Actual</b>	86.10%	89.30%	89.70%	0.00%	

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#### Ethics Education Training Attendance

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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. [Note: Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Target</b>	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
<b>Actual</b>	1,890.00	1,367.00	1,662.00	0.00	

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#### Timeliness of Response to Access to Public Records Act Requests

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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 percentage of APRA requests completed within one business day. [Note: Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Target</b>	0.00%	95.00%	94.00%	95.00%	95.00%
<b>Actual</b>	98.00%	93.00%	99.00%	0.00%	

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# Personnel

## Agency: Rhode Island Ethics Commission

### RI Ethics Commission

	FY 2022		FY 2023		
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	
<b>Unclassified</b>					
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE	00814A	0.0	29,372	1.0	44,520
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	00816A	1.0	48,246	1.0	49,965
CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS	00836A	1.0	68,669	1.0	95,494
COORDINATOR- SPECIAL PROJECTS	00827A	1.0	80,494	1.0	82,507
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CHIEF PROSECUTOR	00845A	1.0	163,949	1.0	168,048
INVESTIGATOR I	00823A	1.0	65,396	1.0	67,031
RESEARCH AIDE	08610A	1.0	5,227	0.0	0
SENIOR CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATOR	00832A	1.0	93,262	1.0	95,593
SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR	00829A	1.0	83,074	1.0	85,151
STAFF ATTORNEY II	00830A	2.0	164,416	2.0	168,526
STAFF ATTORNEY IV	00834A	1.0	95,543	1.0	97,931
STAFF ATTORNEY V	00836A	1.0	112,594	1.0	115,408
<b>Subtotal Unclassified</b>		<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,010,242</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,070,174</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,010,242</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,070,174</b>
FY 2021 Retro COLA Payment			25,237		0
<b>Total Salaries</b>			<b>1,035,479</b>		<b>1,070,174</b>
<b>Benefits</b>					
FICA			78,109		80,867
Health Benefits			115,807		131,944
Payroll Accrual			5,902		0
Retiree Health			54,726		47,944
Retirement			301,482		311,336
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>556,026</b>		<b>572,091</b>
<b>Total Salaries and Benefits</b>		<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,591,505</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,642,265</b>
<b>Cost Per FTE Position</b>			<b>132,625</b>		<b>136,855</b>
Statewide Benefit Assessment			41,045		42,272
<b>Payroll Costs</b>		<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,632,550</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,684,537</b>
<b>Purchased Services</b>					
Clerical and Temporary Services			5,000		5,000
Information Technology			6,000		6,000
Legal Services			51,000		51,000
Other Contracts			275		275
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>62,275</b>		<b>62,275</b>
<b>Total Personnel</b>		<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,694,825</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,746,812</b>

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## Personnel

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**Agency: Rhode Island Ethics Commission**

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### RI Ethics Commission

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	FY 2022		FY 2023	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
<b>Distribution by Source of Funds</b>				
General Revenue	12.0	1,694,825	12.0	1,746,812
<b>Total All Funds</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,694,825</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1,746,812</b>

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