

VISION

Our vision for the future is one in which the leaders of the Commonwealth have integrity and honesty, and serve the people of the Commonwealth in an independent and impartial manner while upholding the public trust in all areas of their public service and private lives.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Executive Branch Ethics Commission (the "Commission") is to promote the ethical conduct of elected officials, officers and other employees in the executive branch of state government, thereby increasing the public trust in the administration of state government.

The Commission seeks to fulfill its mission through:

- Education of state employees and lobbyists;
- Guidance to state employees concerning their ethical conduct, including the issuance of advisory opinions;
- Investigation of possible violations and enforcement of the provisions of the Code of Ethics;
- Financial disclosure by state officers and elected constitutional officials;
- Regulation of executive agency lobbyists; and
- Improvements to the Code of Ethics.

WHO WE ARE

In 1992, the General Assembly established the Executive Branch Code of Ethics ("Code of Ethics") created by Kentucky Revised Statutes KRS Chapter 11A, the ethical standards that govern the conduct of all executive branch employees. The Executive Branch Ethics Commission, authorized by KRS 11A.060, is an independent agency of the Commonwealth that is responsible for administering and enforcing the provisions of the Code of Ethics. The Commission is composed of five citizen members who serve staggered terms of four years each.

WHAT WE DO

EDUCATION

The Commission continues to believe that its primary goal is to educate employees in an effort to improve honesty and integrity in state government. Through education, the Commission seeks to prevent rather than punish ethics violations. Employee education is a multi-faceted effort consisting of response to inquiries, training, a web site, agency ethics officers, publications, and newsletter articles. The Commission offers an online ethics class through the Governmental Services Center, the training branch for state government. In addition, Commission staff provides regularly scheduled ethics classes as well as ethics classes to individual state agencies upon request. To schedule a class for your agency, contact Debbie Briscoe at (502) 564-7954 or Debbie.Briscoe@ky.gov.

INQUIRIES

The Commission considers and responds to all inquiries from persons requesting information or advice on any aspect of the Code of Ethics. Such inquiries may be made in person, by mail, through e-mail, or by telephone. Commission staff resolves the majority of these requests after reviewing the statutes and advisory opinions. In some instances, the staff recommends that advice be sought from the Commission through its advisory opinion process detailed below. The staff of the Commission also meets individually with state officials, employees, and lobbyists to provide information or explanation concerning the Code of Ethics. Reasonable attempts will be made to keep the subject of such meetings confidential.

ADVISORY OPINIONS

The Commission is directed by statute to issue written advisory opinions. If an employee, agency head, or member of the general public is unclear about a provision in the Code of Ethics, or if a situation is not specifically addressed in the Code, an advisory opinion may be requested, in writing, from the Commission. Copies of written advisory opinions are distributed periodically to state agencies, employees and members of the general public who request them.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Commission conducts investigations of alleged violations of the Code of Ethics to determine if probable cause of a violation of law exists.

MEETINGS

The Commission holds bi-monthly meetings to consider advisory opinion requests, conduct business, open investigations and issue final orders from administrative proceedings. Investigations and litigation discussions are conducted in closed, executive session. Notice of open meetings is sent to the press pursuant to Kentucky's Open Records Law, KRS 61.810. The public is welcome to attend the open session of the Commission's meetings.

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT

A citizen of the Commonwealth may submit a complaint signed under penalty of perjury alleging a violation of KRS Chapter 11A. The provisions of KRS 11A.080 require the Commission to investigate such a complaint. Additional guidance regarding the filing of a "sworn complaint" is contained in 9 KAR 1:015, which may be accessed through the Commission's website at <http://ethics.ky.gov/>. Additionally, the Commission may initiate a preliminary investigation of an alleged violation upon its own motion. Such actions may be based upon information provided informally to the Commission. Information concerning alleged violations of the Code of Ethics may be provided to a staff member by letter, e-mail, telephone, or in person. Confidentiality in such matters is assured.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

- 📖 Biennial Reports
- 📖 Guide to the Executive Branch Code of Ethics
- 📖 Advisory Opinions
- 📖 Executive Agency Lobbying Handbook
- 📖 Brochures
 - Leaving State Government?
 - Acceptance of Gifts
 - Ethical Guidelines for Members of Executive Branch Boards and Commissions

MORE INFORMATION

Individuals may contact the Commission staff during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) on regular state workdays. In addition, our web site includes information on advisory opinions, executive agency lobbying, statements of financial disclosure, ethics officers, training dates, the Code of Ethics, laws and regulations, commission members and staff, and more. You may make comments and suggestions to staff members through e-mail on our web site as well. Visit <http://ethics.ky.gov/>.

Prepared by Kentucky's
Executive Branch Ethics Commission
April 2006
Last Update June 2019

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

EXECUTIVE BRANCH ETHICS COMMISSION



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