

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Fiscal Year 2019 Budget



Volume I – General Government and Quasi-Public Agencies

Gina M. Raimondo, Governor

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 independent, non-partisan Rhode Island Ethics Commission was established pursuant to an amendment to the Rhode Island Constitution, approved by the voters on November 4, 1986. The Commission's first members were appointed on July 25, 1987, pursuant to Title 36, Chapter 14 of the Rhode Island General Laws. The operations of the Ethics Commission include formulating policies and regulations relating to the conduct of public officials and employees; investigating and adjudicating complaints alleging violations of the Code of Ethics; maintaining files on more than 4,000 Financial Disclosure Statements per year; issuing advisory opinions to public officials and employees at their request regarding the application of the Code of Ethics to a specific situation, and educating public officials, employees and members of the public as to the requirements of the Code of Ethics and the functions of the Commission. The staff of the Commission is headed by an Executive Director/Chief Prosecutor, who is hired by the Commission. The Commission's operations are funded solely with state general revenues.

Statutory History

Article III, sections 7 and 8 of the Rhode Island Constitution mandates the establishment of the Ethics Commission, empowers the Commission to adopt a code of ethics, sets forth its jurisdiction over all elected and appointed officials and employees of state and local government, and authorizes the Commission to investigate code violations and to impose penalties. Title 36, Chapter 14 of the Rhode Island General Laws sets forth the legislative provisions of the Code of Ethics and defines the Commission's advisory, investigative and adjudicative procedures.

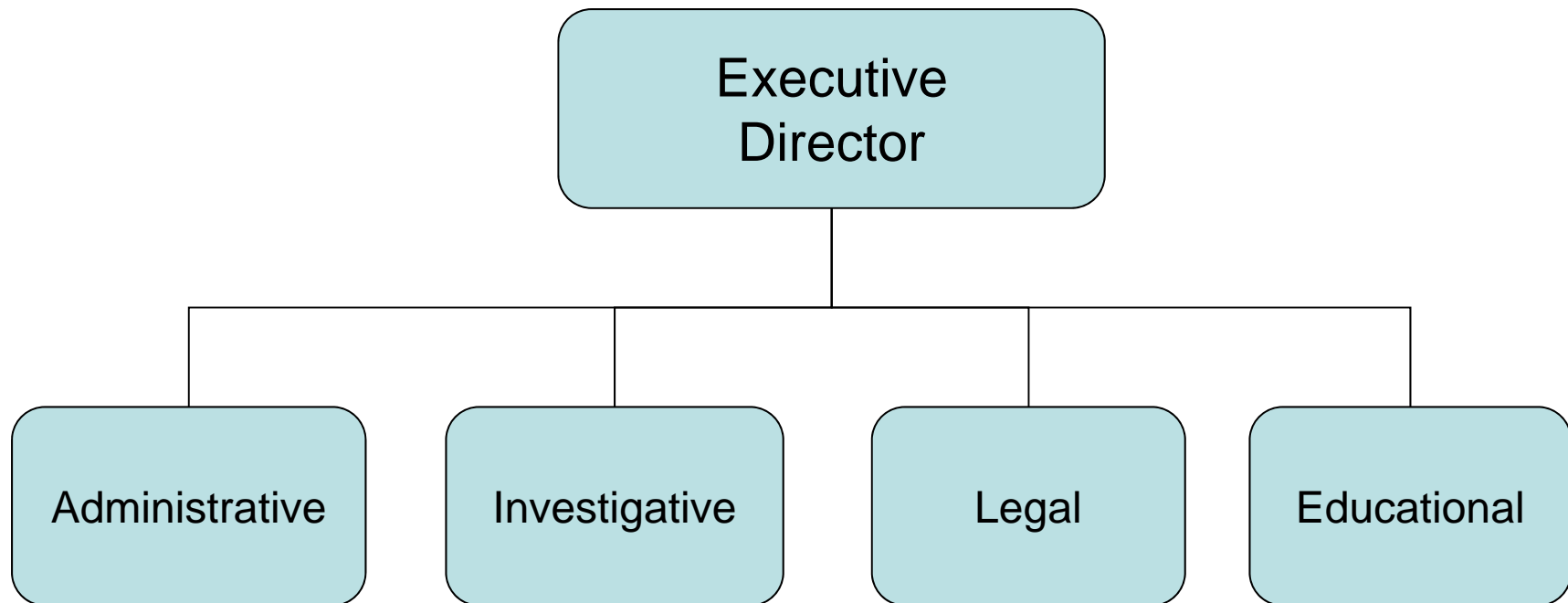
Budget

RHODE ISLAND ETHICS COMMISSION

	2016 Actuals	2017 Actuals	2018 Enacted Budget	2018 Revised Budget	2019 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
RI Ethics Commission	1,546,331	1,604,233	1,665,873	1,733,293	1,770,560
Total Expenditures	1,546,331	1,604,233	1,665,873	1,733,293	1,770,560
Expenditures by Object					
Salary And Benefits	1,368,067	1,423,900	1,457,159	1,454,173	1,491,090
Contract Professional Services	20,720	22,301	32,001	57,001	57,001
Operating Supplies And Expenses	154,218	153,616	172,387	217,793	218,143
Subtotal: Operating	1,543,005	1,599,817	1,661,547	1,728,967	1,766,234
Capital Purchases And Equipment	3,326	4,416	4,326	4,326	4,326
Subtotal: Other	3,326	4,416	4,326	4,326	4,326
Total Expenditures	1,546,331	1,604,233	1,665,873	1,733,293	1,770,560
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
General Revenue	1,546,331	1,604,233	1,665,873	1,733,293	1,770,560
Total Expenditures	1,546,331	1,604,233	1,665,873	1,733,293	1,770,560

The Agency

Rhode Island Ethics Commission



Performance Measures

RHODE ISLAND 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 percentage of financial disclosures submitted online. [Notes: 2017 data is as of 8/31/2017. Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: Calendar Year</i>				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Target	75.10%	80.00%	80.00%	85.00%	85.00%
Actual	75.10%	79.30%	82.30%	0.00%	

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

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Target	1,269.00	1,650.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Actual	1,269.00	1,016.00	1,479.00	0.00	

Timeliness of Response to Access to Public Records Act Requests

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>				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Target	93.60%	85.00%	85.00%	85.00%	95.00%
Actual	93.60%	95.50%	95.00%	0.00%	