



THE DIGEST OF ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS TO THE GOVERNOR FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

At a Glance

The Connecticut Office of State Ethics is charged with administering and enforcing the Connecticut Codes of Ethics. The Office accomplishes its mission to ensure honesty, integrity, and accountability in state government through educating and providing guidance to those covered by the Codes of Ethics: public officials, state employees, lobbyists, and state contractors.

Peter Lewandowski, *Executive Director*

Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board Members:

Dena Castricone (*Chair*), term ending September 30, 2026;

Nichelle Mullins (*Vice-Chair*), term ending September 30, 2023;

Mary Bigelow, term ending September 30, 2025;

Charles Chiusano, term ending September 30, 2025;

Karen Christiana, term ending September 30, 2023;

N. Beth Cook, term ending September 30, 2026;

Jason K. Farrell, term ending September 30, 2024;

Cheryl Lipson, term ending September 30, 2023; and

Laura A. Schuyler, term ending September 30, 2024

Established - July 1, 2005

Statutory authority - Chapter 10, Connecticut General Statutes, Section 1-79 *et seq.*

Central office - 165 Capitol Avenue, Suite 1200, Hartford, CT 06106; 860-263-2400

Number of full-time employees - 15

Recurring operating expenses - \$ 1,947,408 for Fiscal Year 2023

Organizational structure - Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board
Executive Director
Legal Division
Enforcement Division

Mission

The Office of State Ethics practices and promotes the highest ethical standards and accountability in state government by providing education and legal advice, ensuring disclosure, and impartially enforcing the Codes of Ethics.

Statutory Responsibility

The Office of State Ethics (“OSE”) administers Connecticut General Statutes, Chapter 10, Part I for Public Officials, Part II for Lobbyists, and Part IV, Ethical Considerations Concerning Bidding and State Contracts.

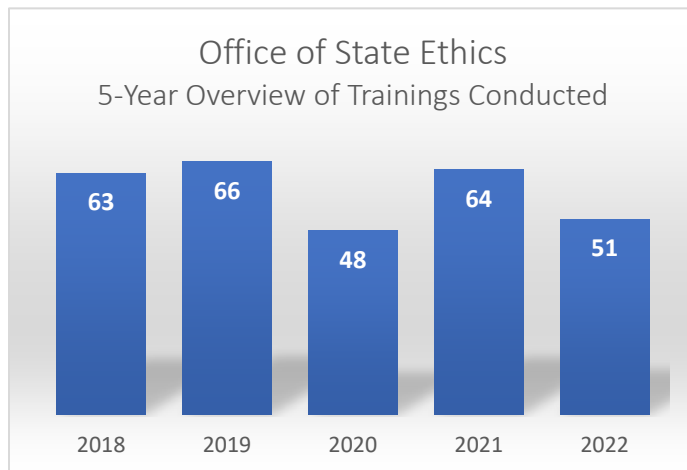
The statutory responsibilities of the OSE are broken down into four main categories: education, interpretation, enforcement, and disclosure. The OSE is charged with providing education, guidance, and advice to state employees, public officials, lobbyists, and state contractors on the Codes of Ethics. The Citizen’s Ethics Advisory Board (“CEAB”) is responsible for adjudicating cases brought under the Codes of Ethics and making findings of violations, as well as issuing advisory opinions – interpretations of the Codes as they apply to specific situations. All investigation and prosecution matters are the responsibility of the Ethics Enforcement Officer. The OSE is also statutorily obligated to administer all lobbyist financial reports along with Statements of Financial Interests (“SFIs”) filed by public officials and state employees.

Public Service

The OSE is committed to carrying out its mission in the most user-friendly and transparent manner possible. To this end, the OSE continues to update and improve its website by adding new and historical material, as well as continually improving and updating the online filing systems utilized by lobbyists and public officials. It is important to note that these systems are also utilized by members of the public and the media for information and research.

Improvements/Achievements 2022-23

Education and Communications Outreach



- In FY 2022-2023 the OSE conducted **51** Code of Ethics trainings for Public Officials, State Employees, Lobbyists, and Contractors, and offered trainings that would meet agency-specific needs. This year's trainings included the statutorily required (CGS with § 1-81c) training for all members of the General Assembly every four years and upon first election.

- The OSE continued to offer the self-service online training program, in-person, online, and hybrid trainings to

provide option and opportunity to any resident, official and/or state agency that requested training. This flexibility has allowed the OSE to continue to effectively meet its mandate to provide yearly training to all state employees. Since training drives compliance by increasing accessibility and awareness, so increased the requests for advice and filing of complaints. OSE constantly strives to expand training offerings.

- Our monthly electronic newsletter was distributed to all agency ethics liaisons and compliance officers.
- Our website (ct.gov/ethics) is continually updated and improved to ensure easy access for members of the regulated communities and the public.
- We issued press releases and e-alerts for the adoption of Advisory Board Opinions, Declaratory Rulings, and enforcement action settlements. Additionally, we regularly received requests from members of the press and responded quickly and thoroughly.

Advisory Opinions

- With assistance from the OSE's Legal Division staff, the CEAB issued five Legal Opinions. Summaries and the full text of all opinions and rulings are available on the OSE's website (ct.gov/ethics).
- The Legal Division staff responded to approximately 702 requests for advice concerning the application of the Codes of Ethics; approximately 457 written staff opinions were completed during the reporting period, and legal advice via the telephone or in person was provided on 245 occasions.

Enforcement

- The Enforcement Division received or opened a total of twenty-three (23) confidential investigations of potential violations of the Code of Ethics.
- The Enforcement Division opened seventy-five (75) enforcement matters for violations of the filing requirements of the Code of Ethics.
- Seventy-two (72) matters were settled publicly. A total of \$48,400.00 in penalties were received. Five (5) of the resolved matters resulted from confidential investigations and involved a range of violations. Sixty-seven (67) matters were resolved as Uniform Administrative Procedures Act matters and involved the failure to file forms in the manner required by the law. All penalties are directly paid to Connecticut's General Fund.
- The OSE completed, and the CEAB approved, thirteen (13) audits of registered client and communicator lobbyists.

Lobbyist Filings and Disclosure

- During FY 2022-2023 the OSE processed, via its electronic filing system, thousands of financial reports filed by business organizations (firms that employ communicator lobbyists), client lobbyists, and in-house communicator lobbyists.
- The 3584 biennial lobbyist registrations for 2022-2023 generated \$965,550 in fees, collected by the OSE and deposited into the state's General Fund.

Statements of Financial Interests

On May 1, 2023, 98% of the required filers completed their 2022 Statements of Financial Interests by the filing deadline and filed electronically. The OSE handled 2,675 SFI filings. Sixty Agencies, Offices, Commissions, and Quasi-Public Agencies achieved 100% timely compliance.

Miscellaneous

Twenty-two (22) Freedom of Information requests were processed.

Conclusion

The OSE promotes integrity in government by providing advice, guidance, and education to public officials, state employees, and lobbyists; by sensibly interpreting and, when necessary, fairly and impartially enforcing the applicable laws; by administering the lobbyist and financial disclosure filing systems; and by providing the public with access to certain public information. The OSE principles are reflected in its logo: honesty, integrity, and accountability. The CEAB and the OSE staff will continue to strive for innovation and progress that will result in cost savings and efficiency. Through transparency and access, the OSE will lead by example to promote an environment of public trust and open government in Connecticut.