

# State Elections Enforcement Commission



*The Digest of Administrative Reports to the Governor*

*Fiscal Year 2024-2025*

*At-a-Glance*

*Agency: State Elections Enforcement Commission*

*Commission Members: Stephen Penny (Chair), Michael Ajello (Vice Chair), Shannon Bergquist, Gregory Piecuch, Sonia Worrell Asare*

*Established: 1974*

*Statutory Authority: Connecticut General Statutes §§ 9-7a, 9-7b*

*Central Office: 55 Farmington Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06105*

*Number of Authorized Employees: 35*

*Recurring Operating Expenses - \$ 3,814,203*

***Organizational Structure:*** The agency is organized into an Enforcement Unit; a Public Campaign Financing and Compliance Unit; a Fiscal, Administrative and Grant Payment Unit; Campaign Disclosure & Audit Unit; and Information Technology Services Unit. The Executive Director and General Counsel reports to the five-member Commission and the various units report to the Executive Director and General Counsel. The managerial staff as of June 30, 2025, are Interim Executive Director and General Counsel Clare Kindall; Director of Legal Programs Shannon C. Kief; Director of Disclosure and Audit Salman Munir; Fiscal Administrative Supervisor Shauna M. Khang; IT Manager (vacant); and Director of Enforcement (request pending).

## **Mission**

*The State Elections Enforcement Commission ensures free, fair, and clean elections by enforcing Connecticut's election laws, providing clear campaign finance guidance, and promoting equal access to elected office through the Citizens' Election Program, a public funding initiative that fosters broad and competitive participation in state elections.*

## **Statutory Responsibility**

The Commission's original statutory responsibility was to enforce provisions of state election laws pertaining to elections, primaries and referenda. With the passage of Public Act 05-5, the Commission's responsibilities now include administering the Citizens' Election Program and developing and maintaining eCRIS. With the passage of Public Acts 10-187 and 13-180, the Commission began to provide increased transparency for independent expenditures in state elections. The Commission is the campaign finance filing repository for all campaign finance records for candidate committees organized for state elections, party committees, and political committees formed to aid or promote the success or defeat of state candidates or Constitutional questions. The Commission is charged with the specific responsibility to conduct investigations of election and referendum complaints, issue compliance advice concerning requirements of the campaign finance laws, and suggest revisions to the election laws to the Connecticut General Assembly.

## **Public Service**

The Commission is an independent watchdog agency within the executive branch of state government and serves as an impartial arbiter of complaints alleging violations of the election laws. The Commission takes a proactive approach to educate candidates, campaign officials, political parties and citizens of their rights, duties and obligations under the election laws in order to ensure voluntary compliance with the law.

Voter fraud and the security of our voting systems continued to be topics of national discussion. Our agency responded to inquiries from the media, advocacy groups, concerned citizens and other agencies at both the state and national levels, answering numerous requests for information and statistics.

In the past year, the State Elections Enforcement Commission worked closely with both federal and local agencies to secure critical election infrastructure. We worked in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secretary of the State, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, the Attorney General's Office, the Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, as well as DAS/BITS in an effort to disseminate critical information in a timely manner so as to better respond to cyber threats and malicious activities.

## **Improvements/Achievements FY 2024-2025**

### **Public Campaign Financing**

Connecticut's landmark public campaign financing program, the Citizens' Election Program, was successfully administered for the 2024 cycle, which extended into 2025, and which has included three special elections. The Program is financed by the Citizens' Election Fund (CEF), a separate, non-lapsing fund within the state's General Fund.

In fiscal year 2024-2025, the Commission issued \$13,359,091 in grant monies. This includes \$1,431,995 for primary grants and \$11,631,777 in general election grant for 2024 election year. It also includes \$295,330 for six grants in three special elections in 2025.

Staff administered the return to the CEF of \$542,318 in surplus funds as part of the wrap-up of prior elections.

In addition, in the fiscal year, Audit staff completed seventy-three (73) post-election reviews of randomly selected General Assembly committees that were presented to the Commission for consideration, including eighteen (18) from the 2024 election cycle.

During the fiscal year, staff completed its survey and analysis of the treasurers and candidates who participated in the CEP during the 2024 election cycle. Of those surveyed, 75% of treasurers and 72% of candidates were satisfied with their experience using the Program. The agency's customer service also received high marks, with 91% of candidates and 92% of treasurers agreed that their questions were answered in a timely manner.

### **Compliance & Training**

SEEC compliance attorneys and election officers work closely with candidates running for municipal, statewide, General Assembly, and judge of probate offices, providing candidates and campaign treasurers with materials and training necessary to understand Connecticut campaign finance laws and CEP requirements.

SEEC published numerous handbooks, guides and other informational materials and provided virtual and in-person trainings for candidates and treasurers, town clerks and registrars of voters. The attorneys and elections officers answered approximately 3,678 compliance questions regarding state and local elections, referenda, fundraising and the CEP. We responded to approximately 168 Freedom of Information requests as well.

The agency also managed to provide effective training with our online training options. We offered training modules for using our electronic campaign finance filing system, eCRIS, with these modules being viewed over 6,600 times during this fiscal year. Our online trainings for CEP candidates and treasurers were viewed over 6,000 times. Finally, we continued to have municipal compliance training modules available online, which were viewed over 3,400 times.

In an effort to ensure that the elections are administered fairly in every city and town in Connecticut, the SEEC also runs a telephone hotline in conjunction with the Secretary of the

State’s Office so that anyone with knowledge of election fraud or voting rights abuses can report them. For this fiscal year, including the fourteen days of early voting, SEEC staff handled over 818 calls on primary and election days.

In addition, the agency works closely with the Attorney General’s office to assess challenges to certain provisions of Connecticut campaign finance laws. The agency also works with other state law enforcement agencies and federal enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Department of Justice, where fact patterns overlap with cases on our docket.

**Legislative Proposals**

SEEC staff coordinates the Commission’s legislative activities, as well as acting as liaisons with legislators and other executive administrative branch agencies. This fiscal year, SEEC proposed legislation to improve the clean elections program, make SEEC the filing repository for all municipal filings, and update referenda and independent expenditure law. These proposals resulted in the following bills. None were passed into law.

Topic	Government Administration and Elections	Government Oversight
Municipal Campaign Finance Filings	<a href="#">HB 7221</a>	<a href="#">SB 1409</a>
Various Campaign Finance Reforms	<a href="#">HB 7222</a>	<a href="#">HB 7089</a>
Referenda, IE, and Other Changes	<a href="#">SB 1517</a>	<a href="#">HB 7093</a>

Updates to election laws and changes to the structure of SEEC were enacted in Public Act 25-26.

**Campaign Disclosure**

Overall, for the fiscal year, we had approximately 1,173 entities registered with the SEEC: 402 candidates (356 candidate committees, 46 candidate exemption committees), 57 exploratory committees, 374 party committees, 340 other political committees—321 of which were traditional political committees, 16 of which were independent expenditure political committees and 3 were referendum political committees.

All together, these filers submitted approximately 8,691 campaign finance disclosure reports and amendments during the fiscal year. All of these were available to the public and searchable through our electronic filing system, eCRIS.

**Information Technology Systems and Services**

SEEC’s responsibilities as the repository for campaign filings, the administrator of the CEP, the year-round answer desk for election law questions, and the agency tasked with enforcing all election laws has required the development of highly specific, customized in-house computer systems. These have been routinely maintained, upgraded and improved by our IT staff. The systems include eCRIS (Electronic Campaign Reporting Information System), Candidate Tracking System (CTS), and SEEC Support (internal call and query tracking system). The IT Unit continued active development projects on all of these in-house systems, which is necessary

to maintain the flow of information and online application infrastructure to the eCRIS customer base. IT staff, along with other SEEC staff, also have continued to enhance and refine the LaserFiche document management workflow system to organize our internal case-flow for the Enforcement Unit.

During this fiscal year, the eCRIS Helpdesk had nearly 1,000 contacts (including on holidays and weekends). SEEC information technology staff run the Helpdesk, providing technical support to the regulated community who are required to submit electronic campaign finance filings. The Helpdesk is critical to the successful electronic filing initiative. Through our continued outreach effort by staff, we have been able to continually increase electronic filing via eCRIS. This continues to result in a major savings in data entry costs, staff resources, and expenses for storage of paper documents.

The IT Staff continued with direct staff engagements and solicited customer feedback to enhance and make improvements to the CTS interface, while continuing to provide additional functionality to enhance the audit tracking function of CTS in order to leverage the existing data and make reporting and fact finding more relevant. The Audit Tracking functionality offers streamlined workflow and provides productivity gains in the Audit Review process. IT staff continues to assist staff attorneys in responding to regular, frequent large-volume FOI requests from the public.

### **Investigations and Enforcement**

The Commission docketed 133 new cases in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Of the new cases, fifty-six (56) were the result of sworn citizens' complaints and thirty-nine (39) were a result of referrals from outside election officials. Thirty-eight (38) cases were initiated by the Commission on its own motion. Six (6) were referred to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney for criminal prosecution. These new matters involve a multitude of election issues, including matters of election administration, the process of voting, campaign finance laws including non-filer matters and the Citizens' Election Program. The Unit collected \$15,250 in late filing fees, civil penalties and forfeitures for violations of election laws, which were deposited in the General Fund.

Of the ninety-five (95) new cases docketed as a result of a sworn citizen's complaint or referral during this fiscal year, the following municipalities had more than one matter:

*Bridgeport, Coventry, East Haven, Fairfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Goshen, Hartford, Mansfield Center, Middletown, Newington, Oakdale, Preston, Rocky Hill, Southington, Torrington, Waterbury, Westport*

SEEC closed a total of one hundred and sixty-six (166) matters during the fiscal year. Of these, sixty-six (66) were new cases and one hundred (100) were from prior fiscal years. Of the closures, twenty-five (25) resulted in monetary penalties or other forms of sanctions (civil penalties, forfeitures, permanent or temporary prohibitions in serving specified campaign finance roles, reprimands or orders to comply), ninety-seven (97) were dismissed with a finding of no violation or with no further action because either adequate compliance was reached or there was insufficient evidence to make a determination, thirty-two (32) were administratively closed, three (3) were withdrawn, and nine (9) determined unnecessary to investigate. Eight (8) were referred to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney for criminal prosecution.