

Ohio Ethics Commission

Role and Overview

The Ohio Ethics Commission (ETH) is required to administer, advise upon, and enforce ethical conduct in government under state general law, the Ohio Ethics Law, and related sections of the Ohio Revised Code. The mission of the commission is to promote and enforce ethical conduct throughout state and local government through impartial and responsive advice, education, investigation, and financial disclosure processes. To fulfill its mission, the commission has focused upon educating and informing public servants, to create a practical understanding of ethics law, and where necessary, seek accountability.

The Ethics Commission is an independent, bi-partisan body that consists of six members, appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Day-to-day operations are headed by an Executive Director. The commission consists of five primary service divisions: Advice, Education, Financial Disclosure, Investigation, and Office Administration. Public officials and employees at every level of government within the State of Ohio, an estimated population of over 600,000 public officials and employees, are under the governance of the commission, except judges and members of the Ohio General Assembly, and their respective employees. The commission employs 20 full time employees.

In the past few years, significant state wide investigations conducted by the Ethics Commission have resulted in criminal referrals, pending cases, and convictions. The commission has also secured a 99 percent compliance rate in financial disclosure statement (FDS) filing compliance. In the past biennium, the commission has eliminated its backlog of pending advisory requests and rendered significant advice regarding new laws regulating casinos in Ohio and issues facing state and local officials. Additionally, the commission continues its outreach efforts to educate those in the public and private sector on the ethics law. The commission will also provide for online filing of financial disclosure statements for the first time in its history.

More information regarding the Ohio Ethics Commission is available at <http://www.ethics.ohio.gov>.

Agency Priorities

- Promote and enforce ethical conduct in public service to strengthen the public's confidence that state and local government business is conducted with impartiality and integrity.
- Through ethics advice, allow government entities and the commission to avoid costs related to unethical behavior, the investigation thereof, and resulting penalties to the public agency, by decreasing the likelihood that unethical behavior will occur if advice is sought and followed.
- Meet the statutory mandate that the commission provide continuing ethics education and materials concerning the provisions of the ethics law, conflicts of interest, and financial disclosure.
- Administer and enforce the financial disclosure statement (FDS) requirements of the Ohio Revised Code. The purpose of the disclosure is to make the filer, public, and commission aware of potential conflicts of interest.
- Implement the statutory requirement upon the commission to confidentially investigate allegations or complaints of ethics violations against public officials and employees, and those with whom they do business.

Funding Recommendation for 2014 and 2015

- GRF: Funding for fiscal year 2014 is \$1.4 million (or a 0.0% increase from fiscal year 2013). Funding for fiscal year 2015 is \$1.4 million (or a 2.0% decrease from fiscal year 2014).
- All Funds: Funding for fiscal year 2014 is \$2.0 million (or a 1.2% increase from fiscal year 2013). Funding for fiscal year 2015 is \$2.0 million (or a 1.2% decrease from fiscal year 2014).

The Executive Recommendation will fund the following objectives:

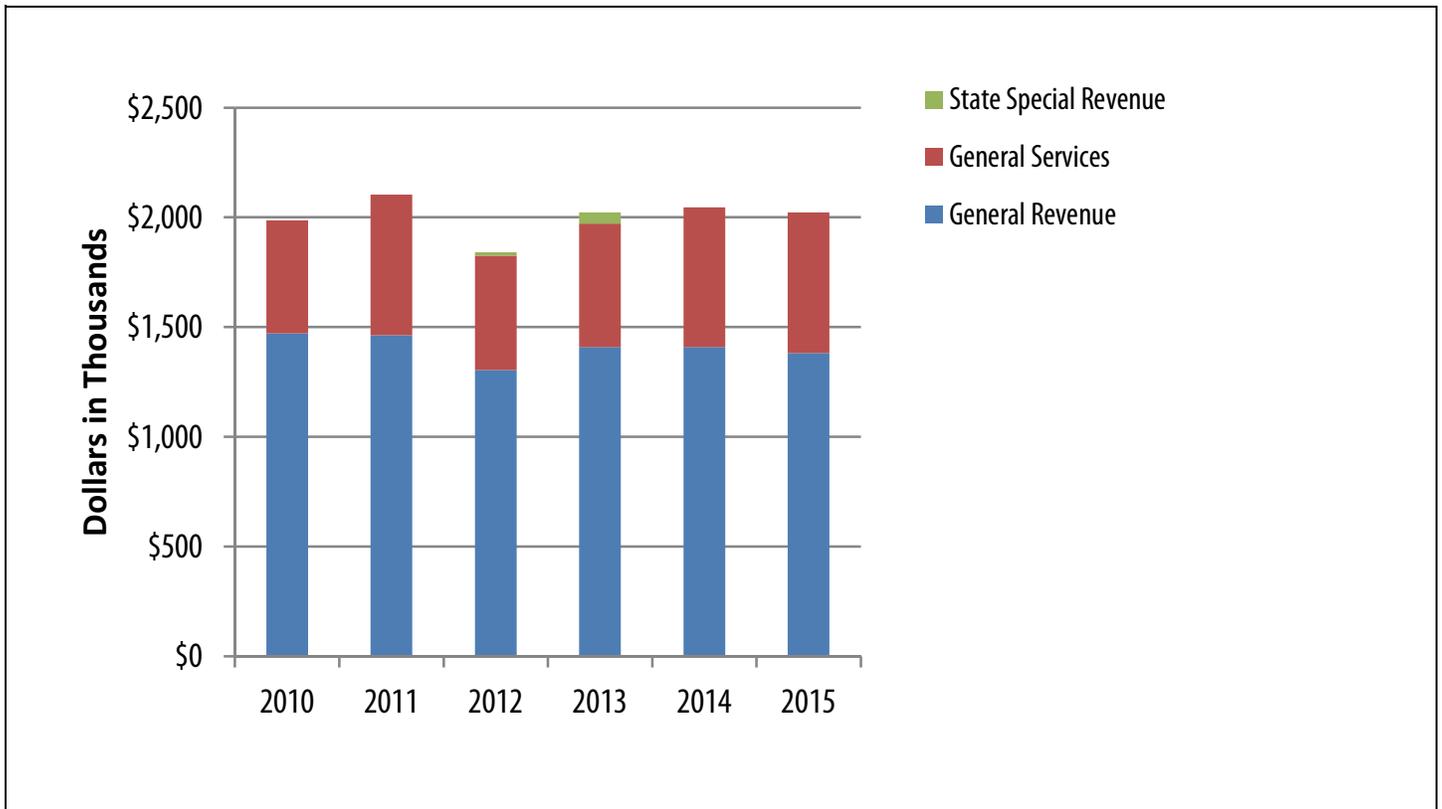
- Meet intensive service demand increases that have ranged from 30 to 183 percent across the commission's four functions with sufficient staffing levels.
- Provide timely advice by issuing approximately 200 advisory opinions within 30 to 45 days of their receipt, providing guidance to approximately 4,000 callers, and respond to 500 requests via email seeking interpretation and guidance related to the ethics law, conflicts of interest, and financial disclosure.
- Administer an effective ethics education and public outreach program to increase and support appreciation of Ohio ethics law, reduce ethics violations, and encourage requests for ethics advice. Efforts include coordinating, scheduling and conducting approximately 300 educational sessions each year, reaching over 25,000 attendees.

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- Disseminate and account for approximately 11,500 financial disclosure statements (FDS) per year from over 1,300 agencies, and individually review more than 2,500 of these for specific potential conflicts of interest.
- Secure a near 100 percent rate for FDS compliance, and make these statements available in response to public records requests, increasing transparency to the public.
- Provide timely information to the members of 87 state boards who are not paid for their duties and who file confidential FDS to assist in their recognition of conflicts of interest as independently identified by the commission.
- Assign special investigators to review, investigate, and where necessary, assist in required prosecution of those who violate the law.
- Manage a caseload of over 200 active cases, and investigate, in a timely manner, merited allegations of misconduct.
- Reduce timelines to factually review allegations and complete investigations.
- Disprove unwarranted assertions, and pursue and secure criminal investigations where serious evidence supports criminal unethical misconduct. Assist prosecutors as such cases proceed through the justice system.
- Provide funding for shared overhead costs, such as office space, telecommunications, and supplies, for all commission program areas.

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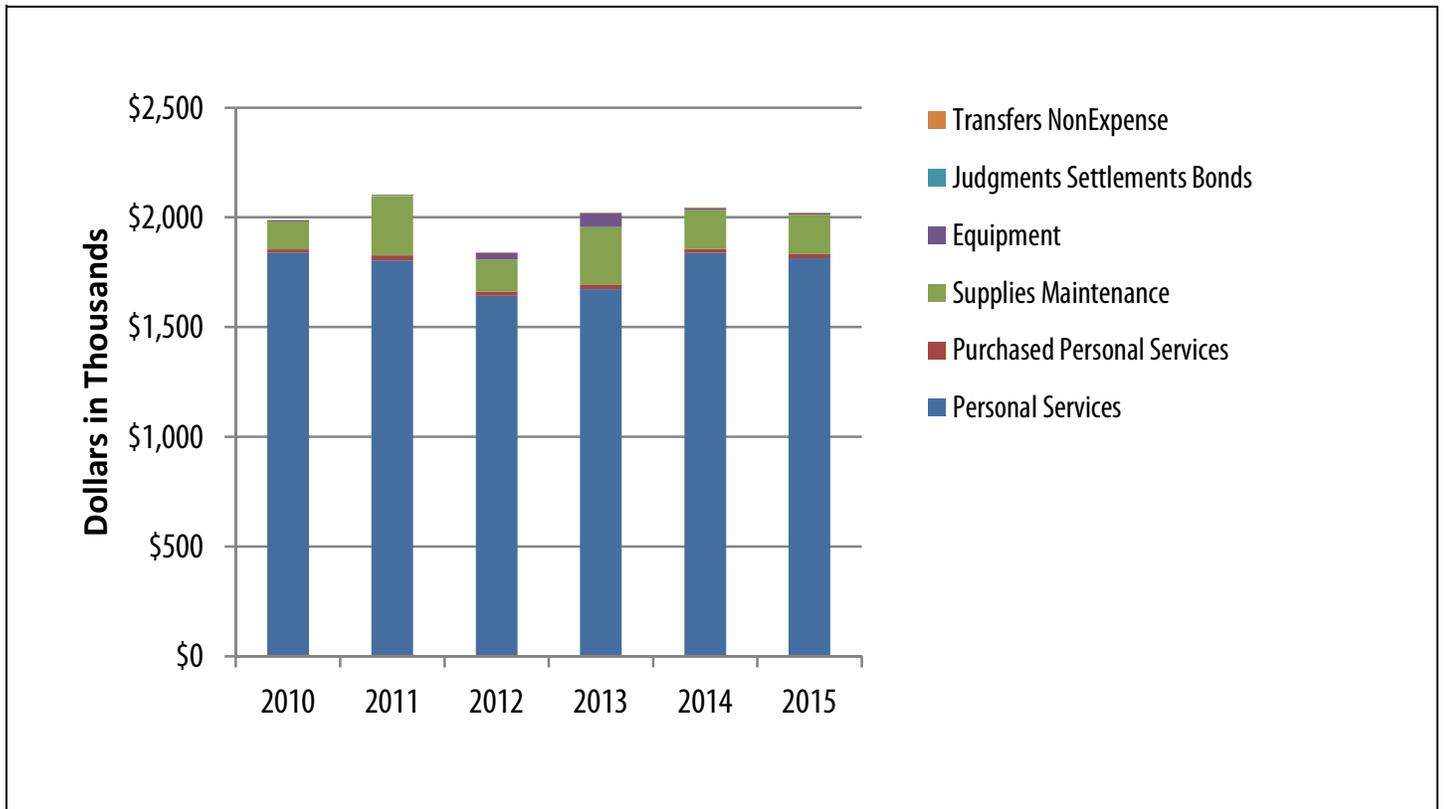
Budget Fund Group Information



- The biennial decrease in State Special Revenue is due to the expiration of one time funds designated for casino related activities.

(in Thousands)	Actual			Est.	% Change	Recommended			
Budget Fund Group	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 12-13	FY 2014	% Change	FY 2015	%Change
General Revenue	1,471	1,462	1,305	1,410	8.0%	1,410	0.0%	1,382	-2.0%
General Services	516	642	521	562	7.9%	636	13.3%	641	0.7%
State Special Revenue	0	0	16	51	221.2%	0	-100.0%	0	0.0%
Total	1,987	2,104	1,842	2,022	9.8%	2,046	1.2%	2,023	-1.2%

Expense Account Category Information



(in Thousands) Expense Account Category	Actual			Est.	% Change	Recommended			
	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 12-13	FY 2014	% Change	FY 2015	%Change
Personal Services	1,840	1,803	1,643	1,673	1.8%	1,838	9.8%	1,814	-1.3%
Purchased Personal Services	14	23	19	19	-3.4%	19	0.0%	19	0.0%
Supplies & Maintenance	126	271	145	264	82.1%	179	-32.3%	179	0.0%
Equipment	6	0	31	63	105.6%	8	-87.5%	8	0.0%
Judgments, Settlements, & Bonds	0	5	0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Transfers & Non-Expense	1	2	4	3	-19.8%	3	0.0%	3	0.0%
Total	1,987	2,104	1,842	2,022	9.8%	2,046	1.2%	2,023	-1.2%

Program Series 1: Ethics Oversight (128A0)

This program series includes the Advisory Opinions and Guidance program (128B1), the Education and Communication program (128B2), the Financial Disclosure program (128B3), the Investigations and Enforcement program (128B4), and the Program Direction and Support program (128B5). These programs administer the Ohio Ethics Law (Ohio Revised Code Chapter 102 and Sections 2921.42 and 2921.43) for public officials and employees at both the state and local levels of government.

Fund	ALI	ALI Name	Estimated	Recommended			
			FY 2013	FY 2014	% Change	FY 2015	% Change
GRF	146321	Operating Expenses	1,409,751	1,409,751	0.0%	1,381,556	-2.0%
4M60	146601	Operating Expenses	561,570	636,388	13.3%	641,000	0.7%
5HS0	146602	Casino Investigations	50,790	0	-100.0%	0	0.0%
Total for Ethics Oversight			2,022,111	2,046,139	1.2%	2,022,556	-1.2%

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Fund	ALI	ALI Name	Actual			Estimated	Recommended			
			FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	% Change	FY 2015	% Change
GRF	146321	Operating Expenses	1,470,954	1,462,222	1,305,221	1,409,751	1,409,751	0.0%	1,381,556	-2.0%
Total General Revenue			1,470,954	1,462,222	1,305,221	1,409,751	1,409,751	0.0%	1,381,556	-2.0%
4M60	146601	Operating Expenses	515,828	641,617	520,677	561,570	636,388	13.3%	641,000	0.7%
Total General Services			515,828	641,617	520,677	561,570	636,388	13.3%	641,000	0.7%
5H50	146602	Casino Investigations	0	0	15,813	50,790	0	-100.0%	0	0.0%
Total State Special Revenue			0	0	15,813	50,790	0	-100.0%	0	0.0%
Grand Total Ohio Ethics Commission			1,986,782	2,103,839	1,841,711	2,022,111	2,046,139	1.2%	2,022,556	-1.2%