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Executive Director: Dr. Jeremy Farris

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FY28 Budget Request

Legislative Finance Committee Subcommittee A

October 20, 2026, State Capitol, Room 307

What the State Ethics Commission does

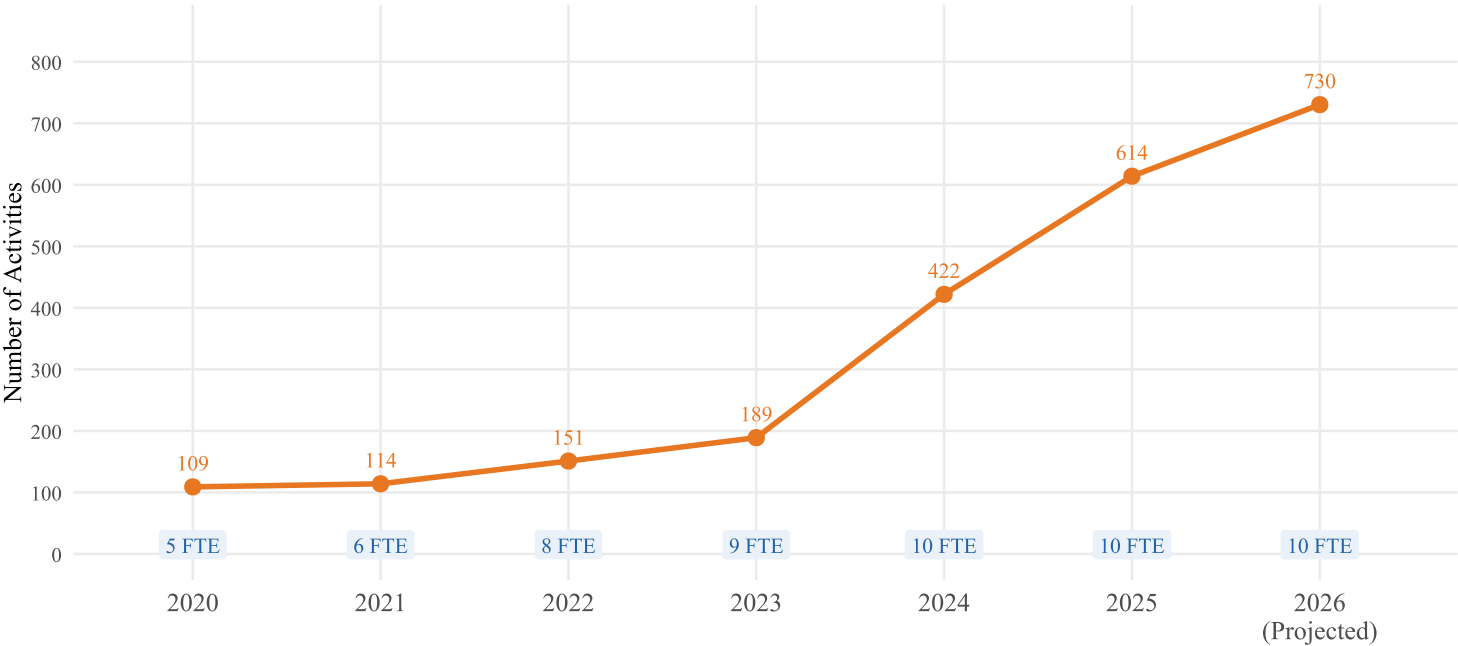
- Investigates and adjudicates administrative complaints alleging violations of New Mexico's governmental conduct, procurement, and disclosure laws.
 - Received 54 administrative complaints in 2025 and 61 so far in 2026.
- Files and litigates civil lawsuits to enforce and defend New Mexico's governmental conduct, procurement, and disclosure laws.
 - Investigated 458 whistleblower complaints and authorized eight lawsuits in 2025; received 446 whistleblower complainants and authorized eight lawsuits so far in 2026.
 - Defends AI-disclaimer law from federal court pre-enforcement challenge in *Babylon Bee LLC v. Foy Castillo, et al.*
- Issues advisory opinions and letters, promulgates a model code of ethics, and provides training statewide on governmental ethics, procurement, and the Anti-Donation Clause.
 - Issued nine formal advisory opinions and 35 advisory letters in 2025, and issued 14 formal advisory opinions so far in 2026. Provides trainings statewide.
- Investigates and adjudicates administrative complaints alleging violations by notaries public under the Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts.
 - Handled 33 administrative complaints against notaries public in 2025.

FY28 Budget Request: \$2,159,200 (12.3% increase over FY27)

- 200: \$1,838,600 -- 14% increase to add one FTE, from 10 to 11. The agency's last FTE increase was FY25. The Commission requires an additional FTE to handle increased workload in whistleblower complaints (162% increase from 2025 to 2026), complaints against notaries public, and litigation.
- 300: \$125,000 – 4.2% increase to meet agency contracts need, including contracts for the Administrative Hearing Office, other hearing officers, court reporters, expert witnesses, attorneys, auditors, and IT-service providers.
- 400: \$195,600 – 2.62% increase to keep pace with increased costs associated with office lease, equipment rentals, Thomson Reuters subscriptions, and travel related to litigation and trainings.

Commission Activity and Staffing

Annual recorded activities and full-time equivalent employees, 2020–2026



Note: 2026 activity figures are projected based on year-to-date activity and current trends.

The Commission’s workload has increased substantially in both volume and complexity, while staffing levels have remained unchanged since 2024. As illustrated in the figure above, the Commission recorded 422 activities in 2024 and 614 in 2025, with approximately 730 projected for 2026. This represents a projected 73% increase in recorded activity over two years, while staffing has remained at 10 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, underscoring the need for additional staff.

This growth reflects both increasing activity within the Commission’s existing areas of jurisdiction and the addition of new statutory responsibilities. In 2022, the Commission assumed jurisdiction over complaints under the Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts (RULONA), creating a new stream of work. RULONA complaints have increased from 17 in 2022 to 39 in 2025, with 63 projected for 2026. At the same time, whistleblower complaints increased from 282 in 2024 to 469 in 2025 and are projected to reach 559 in 2026.

Table 1. Commission Activity by Category, 2020–2026

Category	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Formal Advisory Opinions	8	12	9	9	6	9	16
Informal Advisory Opinions	4	15	28	33	22	37	29
Administrative Complaints	40	45	66	88	82	60	63
Whistleblower Complaints	57	42	31	44	282	469	559
RULONA Complaints			17	15	30	39	63
Total	109	114	151	189	422	614	730