

THE COMPASS

News, Views, Announcements and Calendar from the NJ State Ethics Commission

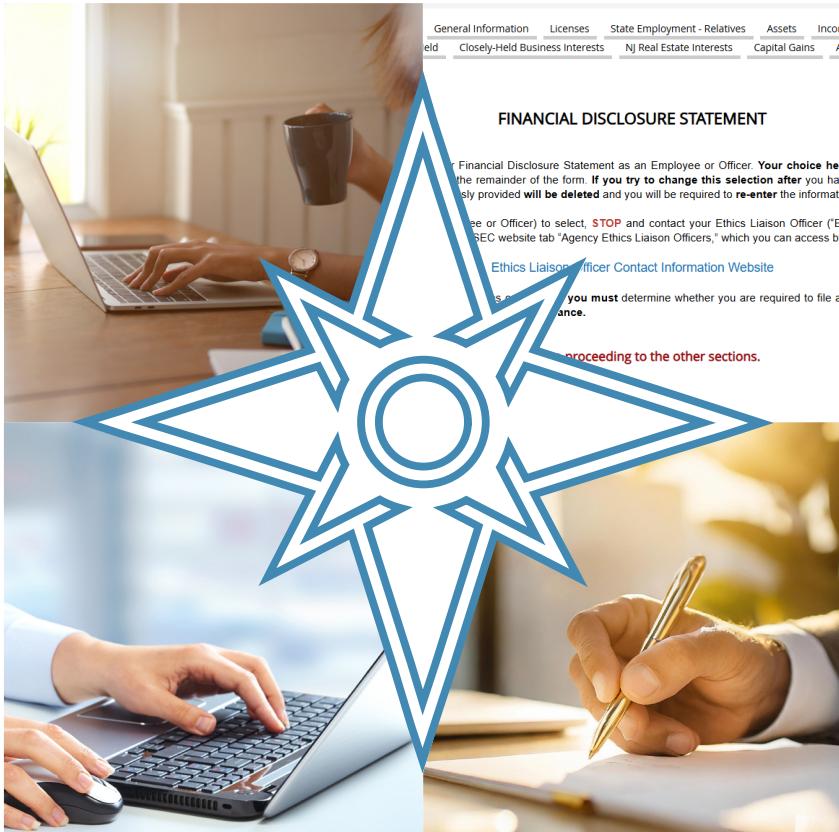
December 2025
Issue No. 8



01
OAQ/
OEQ

03
PBRD

SEC FORMS:



02
FDS/
Conflict
of
Interest

04
AAE

IN THIS ISSUE:

NEWS

State Ethics Commission
Forms

Page 2

VIEWS

Tips and Quips

Page 4

Did You Know?

Page 5

PUZZLES

Crossword

Page 6

Word Search

Page 7

Answer Keys

Page 10

CALENDAR

Dates to Note

Page 8

SEC Members

Page 9



4² FEATURE: STATE ETHICS COMMISSION FORMS

State officials in the Executive Branch are subject to the jurisdiction of the NJ State Ethics Commission (SEC) and are bound by its comprehensive set of ethics rules designed to ensure ethical conduct, integrity, impartiality, and public trust in government. These rules address, in part, conflicts of interest, misuse of position, misuse of government resources, improper political activities, enforcement, annual ethics training, gifts, confidentiality, recusal, and nepotism. Note that, the SEC has a number of required forms.

There are also disclosure requirements whereby some State officers and employees are required by statute, executive order, or other rule, to file annual Financial Disclosure Statements, or in the case of State College or University governing board members, annual Conflict-of-Interest forms, with the SEC. The individuals disclose financial interests, business activities, and potential conflicts of interest to ensure transparency and accountability. Information is disclosed on a SimpliGov platform, and the forms are known as the SEC Financial Disclosure Statement or FDS, or SEC Conflict of Interest form, or COI. The requisite form is filed initially within 120 days of the State official's appointment or employment, and by May 15th each year thereafter. Failure to complete the required form or meet the filing deadline subjects the filer to a civil penalty of \$50 per day until the form is filed.



There are special ethics rules that apply to Designated State Officers. The Governor, the Attorney General, heads of Executive Branch Departments, specified members of the Governor's staff, and certain other persons are identified in N.J.S.A. 52:13D-24(d) as designated State officers. These persons are subject to stricter rules which generally prohibit them from receiving any compensation, salary, honoraria, and other forms of income from any source other than their State paycheck.

Unless designated as a State officer, State employees may have a second job or personal business interest(s) and engage in outside volunteer activities, but only if these activities are compatible with their agency rules and State responsibilities. In addition, there is a requirement to complete an Outside Activity Questionnaire or OAQ initially upon appointment or employment; and at a minimum, update the form every three years thereafter with the caveat that a change in circumstance would trigger the need to update the form as soon as the change occurs. These forms are reviewed by the agency Ethics Liaison Officer (ELO) for ethics compliance, and the employee's supervisor for operational issues; both approvals must be acquired.



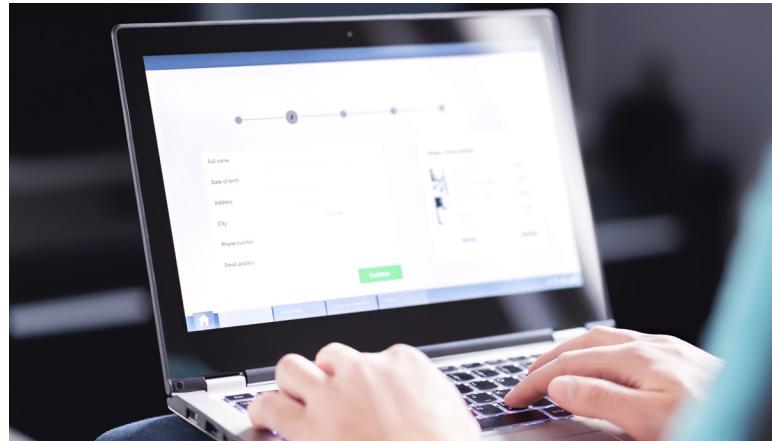
4² FEATURE CONTINUED



All Special State Officers and Special State Employees are required to complete an Outside Employment Questionnaire or OEQ. This document should be completed at a minimum of every three years, when there is a change, or an update is requested by the Department. These forms are also reviewed by the agency ELO, but because the vast majority of Special State Officers are volunteers, many hold outside employment and other volunteer activities. ELOs are not permitted to deny an OEQ.

A State officer or employee, or special State officer or employee, of a State agency as defined in N.J.S.A. 52:34-10.11 who is involved in the procurement process must complete this Personal and Business Relationships Disclosure Form or PBRD, in full. Involvement in the procurement process means drafting, reviewing, evaluating or making contract award decisions or substantively assisting in any of those tasks, whether or not the officer or employee works in a financial services position or holds a centralized procurement title.

The completed form must be filed with the ELO or the head of the State agency in which the State official, holds office or employment. A copy of the completed form must be forwarded to the State Ethics Commission by email. The completed form must be reviewed by the filer on an annual basis with a new form being completed any time there is a material change to any response.



From the SEC's perspective, an event is any meeting, conference, seminar, speaking engagement, symposium, training course, ground-breaking, ribbon-cutting, meal, open house, cocktail party, fundraiser, holiday party, social function, or similar event that take place away from the work location, is sponsored or co-sponsored by a supplier or a non-State government source and the invitation for which is extended to a State official because of their official position. In order to attend the function on behalf of the State, an Attendance at Events form needs to be completed, submitted and approved by the ELO who must determine whether a legitimate State purpose will be served by the individual's attendance at an event.

In making this determination, the ELO will take into consideration applicable laws, regulations, the Uniform Ethics Code, any agency supplemental code, guidelines, exceptions, departmental administrative policies, and any other relevant facts. In some instances, the ELO must forward the approved form to the SEC for review.



Note that special rules apply to State officials acting in a scholarly capacity as defined in N.J.A.C. 19:61-6.2. In this instance, State officials may accept honoraria related to their scholarly activities and must complete an Annual Disclosure Form noting reimbursement for any travel, subsistence or entertainment expenses, honoraria, academic prizes, or other things of value related to activities performed in a scholarly capacity that were received during the prior calendar year.



Tips

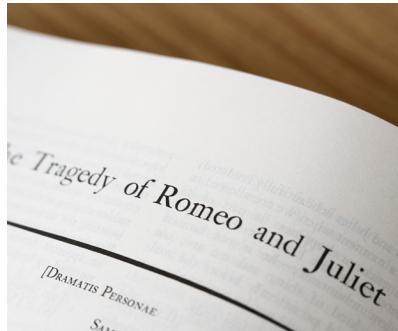
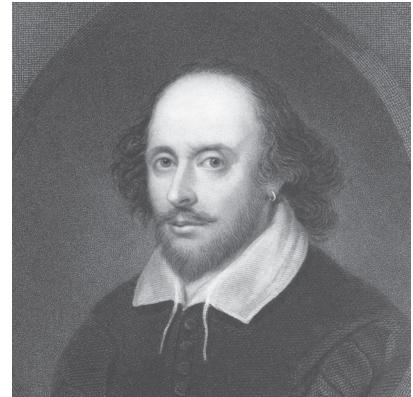
§

Quips

ETHICS FOUND IN LITERATURE

“No legacy is so rich as honesty.”

- *William Shakespeare*



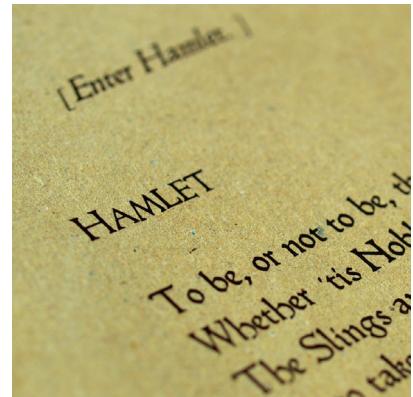
“Go wisely and slowly. Those who rush stumble and fall.”

- Friar Laurence's advice to Romeo in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

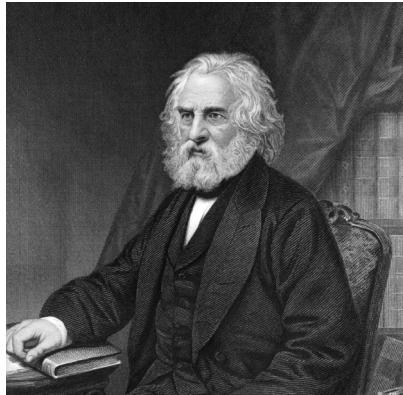
In the world of ethics, the usual guidance is to SEEK ADVICE prior to taking action.

“To Be or Not to Be. That is the Question.”

- Prince Hamlet, spoken in William Shakespeare's Hamlet.



NJ State Ethics Law - That is the Answer; always choose to be ethical.



“ It takes less time to do things right than to explain why you did it wrong.”
- *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



Ethics in New Jersey State Government

State officers, State employees, special State officers and special State employees in the New Jersey State Executive Branch of Government are subject to a comprehensive set of ethics rules designed to ensure integrity, impartiality, and public trust. These rules cover a broad range of topics that include conflicts of interest, misuse of State position, prohibited use of State resources or time, and improper political and other activities.

New Jersey's ethics laws are designed to promote public trust and confidence in government by ensuring that State officials act with integrity, transparency, and in the best interests of the public they serve.

New Jersey's ethics rules and laws can be found in the New Jersey Conflicts of Interest Law ("Conflicts Law"), N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12 et seq., and also in the rules of the New Jersey State Ethics Commission, N.J.A.C. 19:61-1.1 et seq. New Jersey State officials In the Executive Branch are also bound by the Uniform Ethics Code ("UEC", N.J.S.A. 52:13D-23 and where applicable, by any supplemental ethics code adopted by their respective agency.

New Jersey requires that all State officials in the Executive Branch of government complete annual ethics training programs to stay informed and be knowledgeable about their ethical obligations. This training is made available via a number of convenient platforms as well as in person or in person virtual-led formats.



Confidentiality of Investigations

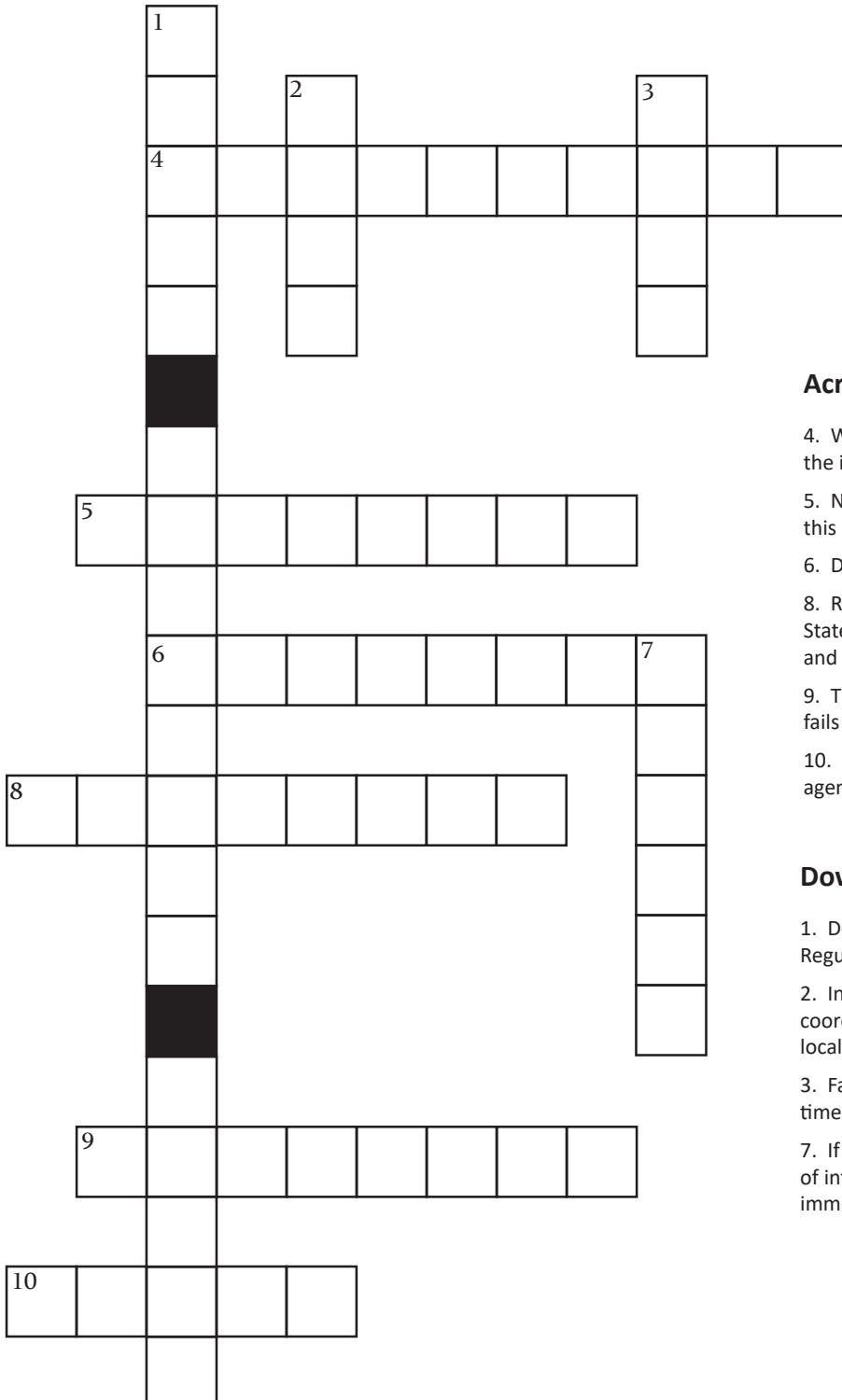
The SEC has jurisdiction over all State officers & employees and special State officers & employees serving in all agencies, departments, divisions, authorities, boards and commissions within the Executive Branch of government. As such, the State Ethics Commission has enforcement powers and regularly conducts investigations related to allegations of ethics violations brought before the Commission.

During the course of the preliminary investigation, no information regarding the allegation is made public by the Commission or Commission staff. Commission staff are required to keep the preliminary investigation, including the contents of the preliminary investigative file, confidential. Individuals interviewed by Commission staff during the course of a preliminary investigation are not required to keep the matter confidential.

PUZZLES



Identify the key terms associated with ethics and compliance.



Across

4. What an individual might bring to the SEC to initiate the investigative process.
5. NJ has legalized the medicinal and recreational use of this drug.
6. Drafter of Executive Orders.
8. Required of all NJ Executive Branch employees and State Officials to ensure compliance with ethical standards and Conflict rules.
9. The SEC has the power to enforce cooperation; if that fails a _____ may be issued.
10. Periodic compliance survey of Executive Branch agencies.

Down

1. Document that codifies the Rules, Statutes and Regulations in an easy to read and understand format.
2. Individual(s) responsible at the agency level for coordinating with the State Ethics Commission to ensure local compliance.
3. Failure to submit a Financial Disclosure Statement timely may result in a _____.
7. If an Executive Branch employee has an actual conflict of interest in a particular matter, they must do this immediately.

ANSWER KEY FOUND ON PAGE 11

PUZZLES



Find and circle the key terms associated with ethics and compliance.

R	P	P	O	L	I	T	I	C	A	L	A	C	T	I	V	I	T	Y
E	O	R	S	O	S	E	Q	M	P	E	P	Z	E	M	A	C	C	S
P	S	O	C	T	Z	P	C	E	L	N	E	D	E	E	Y	X	E	Y
R	T	S	L	O	S	O	I	T	A	V	B	E	X	E	L	I	P	L
E	E	V	N	N	N	N	E	H	A	L	T	E	L	I	T	T	I	I
S	M	I	M	X	U	Q	O	L	S	I	N	T	N	L	A	R	C	M
E	P	M	E	O	M	E	E	I	N	N	T	Y	A	E	C	Y	P	A
N	L	E	O	Z	P	T	C	G	T	F	O	N	H	A	N	E	I	F
T	O	S	I	O	I	X	S	I	M	A	E	I	E	P	E	T	C	E
A	Y	T	A	I	R	N	L	U	V	P	G	E	T	V	A	U	N	T
T	M	U	T	G	A	Z	I	T	D	D	I	I	C	A	K	F	V	A
I	E	N	N	C	Q	R	U	S	A	Q	A	O	T	T	L	N	I	I
O	N	O	K	R	A	E	C	N	I	I	R	R	C	S	N	E	N	D
N	T	S	E	R	L	N	O	E	Y	A	E	L	H	V	E	L	R	E
T	T	E	O	O	C	O	M	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	Q	V	C	M
P	P	N	L	H	E	M	M	P	M	O	N	D	P	T	T	C	N	M
C	O	N	F	L	I	C	T	O	F	I	N	T	E	R	E	S	T	I
H	M	E	N	E	L	U	R	L	E	G	A	B	D	E	K	A	N	E
A	S	C	H	O	L	A	R	L	Y	C	A	P	A	C	I	T	Y	C

Honorarium	ELO
Scholarly Capacity	Advice
Immediate Family	Post Employment
Commission	Relationships
Political Activity	Investigations
Representation	Penalties
Conflict Of Interest	Meeting Snacks
Naked Bagel Rule	

ANSWER KEY FOUND ON PAGE 11

CALENDAR

2026 DATES TO NOTE



Commission Meeting

Dates:

Tuesday, February 3

Tuesday, March 17

Tuesday, April 21

Tuesday, June 9

Tuesday, July 28

Tuesday, September 29

Tuesday, December 1



ELOs PLEASE NOTE

**THE DEADLINE FOR 23d SUBMISSIONS
AND REQUESTS FOR ADVISORY OPINIONS
IS JANUARY 9TH FOR THE FEBRUARY 3RD
COMMISSION MEETING.**

ELO Quarterly Meeting

Dates:

Thursday, February 26

Thursday, June 25

Thursday, October 15

Thursday, December 10

ELO Orientation Dates:

Thursday, January 29

Thursday, April 16

Thursday, July 16

Thursday, September 17

Thursday, November 19

SEC MEMBERS



Commission Members

- **Stephanie A. Brown, Esq.**
Chair, Public Member
- **Patricia C. Morgan, Esq.**
Vice Chair, Public Member
- **Christine Norbut Beyer**
SEC Commissioner; Commissioner, Department of Children and Families
- **Sarah Adelman**
SEC Commissioner; Commissioner, Department of Human Services
- **Brian Bridges, Ph.D.**
SEC Commissioner; Secretary of Higher Education
- **Carrie S. Parikh, Esq.**
SEC Commissioner; Public Member
- **Peter A. Stokes, J.D.**
SEC Commissioner, Public Member

Staff Members

- **Christina C. Fullam, Esq.**
Executive Director
- **Shamecca Bernardini, Esq.**
Deputy Director
- **Rachel L. Eger, Esq.**
Compliance Officer
- **Susan J. Flynn-Hollander, Esq.**
*Training Officer; Editor, *The Compass**
- **Jessica Calella, Esq.**
Legal Specialist
- **Zachary Egan, Esq.**
Legal Specialist
- **Claudia Gallagher, Esq.**
Legal Specialist
- **Alicia M. Reaves, J.D.**
Legal Specialist
- **Alyse Berger, Esq.**
Legal Specialist
- **Shanna Cook**
Executive Assistant
- **Harvey Coffman**
Legal Secretary
- **Victor Kushnir**
MIS Administrative Analyst
- **Daisy Siedlecki**
*Information Technology Assistant
Creative Designer, *The Compass**

State of New Jersey STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

P.O. Box 802
Trenton, NJ 08625-0082

609-292-1892

Ethics@ethics.nj.gov

www.nj.gov/ethics



PUZZLES



ANSWER KEYS

