
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2020

Fiscal Services Division

July 24, 2019



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board

Overview

The Iowa Campaign Finance Disclosure Commission was established in 1973 by the 65th General Assembly in [SF 583](#) (Campaign Disclosure Act). The Commission consisted of five members appointed by the Governor. Commission duties included approving the forms developed by the State Commissioner of Elections; reviewing reports and statements filed by candidates; conducting hearings regarding grievances filed; and reporting violations to the Attorney General and county attorneys in the case of county, city, or school election violations. In 1982, civil penalty authority was enacted by the General Assembly, and fines were assessed to candidates for late filings. In 1993, the Commission's name was changed to the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board, and the Board was expanded to six members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for staggered six-year terms. The Board continues to educate the public, including county auditors and election commissioners, regarding information that is available to candidates for office and political committees and other facets of the election process.

Responsibilities

The Board's current responsibilities include:

- Administering State law regarding:
 - Campaign laws that apply to candidates for State and local office, State and local ballot issues, permissible and impermissible financing of campaigns, use of campaign funds, paid-for-by attributions, and campaign signage.
 - Ethics laws that apply to candidates for statewide office and officials and employees of the Executive Branch.
 - Codes of ethics adopted by political subdivisions, if the Board has entered into agreements with the political subdivisions.
 - Lobbying laws that apply to persons who lobby the Executive Branch, including receiving registrations from lobbyists, reports from clients, and legislative session function registrations and reports.
 - Complaint investigations from the State Commissioner of Elections about whether a county redistricting plan was drawn for improper political reasons.
- Providing advice to political candidates and governmental agencies on:
 - Campaign laws and the Board's rules on campaigning.
 - Ethics laws. The Board investigates complaints, and the county attorney handles the prosecution. The Board's advice, if followed, constitutes a defense to a complaint.

More Information

Iowa Ethics and Campaign Finance Disclosure Board: www.iowa.gov/ethics
LSA Staff Contact: Chris Ubben (515.725.0134) chris.ubben@legis.iowa.gov

- Gift law, conflicts of interest, post-State employment, and use of State resources, along with enforcement.
- State lobbying laws and the Board's rules on Executive Branch lobbying.
- Receiving reports and making them available through the Board's website. These reports include:
 - Reports regarding dual compensation, consent for sales/leases by regulatory agencies and the Governor's Office, personal financial disclosure statements, and legislative session function registrations and reports.
 - Copies of personal disclosure forms filed by Iowa federal elected officials, which are posted on the Board's website through a link to the Federal Election Commission's website where the federal reports are posted.
 - Reports on all gifts and bequests received by an Executive Branch agency (other than a Regents university). The agency must file a summary report with the Legislative Services Agency regarding the gifts and bequests pursuant to Iowa Code section 8.7.
 - Copies of reports filed with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by 527 committees that engage in certain campaign activities in Iowa.

Staffing

The Board staff consists of:

- The Executive Director (also serves as legal counsel).
- One attorney also serving as legal counsel.
- Four field auditors responsible for political action committee (PAC), legislative, statewide, and county central audits.
- One executive secretary.

Funding

The Board is funded by an annual General Fund appropriation.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapters [68A](#) and [68B](#)

Iowa Code sections [331.210A](#), [714.16](#) and [8.7](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [351](#)

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