

AGENCY NAME:	State Ethics Commission		
AGENCY CODE:	R520	SECTION:	110



Fiscal Year 2014-15 Accountability Report

SUBMISSION FORM

AGENCY MISSION	The State Ethics Commission is an agency of state government responsible for the enforcement of the Ethics Reform Act to restore public trust in government, which is our mission. The Commission’s mandate is to ensure compliance with the state’s laws on financial disclosure, lobbyist/lobbyist’s principal disclosure and campaign disclosure; regulate lobbyists and lobbying organizations; issue advisory opinions interpreting the statute; educate public officeholders and the public on the requirements of the state’s ethics laws; conduct criminal and administrative investigations of violations of the state’s ethics laws; and prosecute violators either administratively or criminally.
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Please identify your agency’s preferred contacts for this year’s accountability report.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Herbert R. Hayden, Jr.	803-253-4192	herb@ethics.sc.gov
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I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2014-15 Accountability Report, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

AGENCY DIRECTOR <i>(SIGN/DATE):</i>	
<i>(TYPE/PRINT NAME):</i>	Herbert R. Hayden, Jr
BOARD/CMSN CHAIR <i>(SIGN/DATE):</i>	
<i>(TYPE/PRINT NAME):</i>	James I. Warren, III

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AGENCY’S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The General Assembly established the State Ethics Commission’s mandate to restore public trust in governmental institutions and the political and governmental processes. The State Ethics Commission’s mission is established by the statutory provisions of the Ethics Reform Act of 1991, Sections 2-17-5, et. seq., and 8-13-100, et. seq., Code of Laws for South Carolina, 1976, as amended.

The State Ethics Commission has one program, Administration. This program encompasses four distinct areas of responsibility of the Ethics, Government Accountability and Campaign Reform Act of 1991: lobbying registration and disclosure; ethical rules of conduct; financial disclosure; and campaign practices and disclosure. Three of the four areas are driven by disclosure and now that all disclosure is done electronically, the Ethics Act needs to reflect that change throughout the Act.

Enforcement of the very complex Ethics Reform Act is one of the major challenges before the State Ethics Commission. Over the last few years, citizens’ and state agencies’ concern with public corruption and violations of the state’s ethics laws have caused increased investigative and non-compliance caseloads. The Commission’s mandate requires close analysis of critical issues of which the outcomes have significant impacts on the lives of the affected individuals, to include criminal prosecution. As the number of complaints and forms filed has increased each year, the need for additional staff increases.

This mandate coupled with personnel and equipment needs, and limited funds, are major barriers to the fulfillment of the agency’s mission and goals. The Commission must ensure that the latest technological advances are taken into account to balance the technology versus personnel scale. The security of technology and personnel are major concerns. The Commission collects large

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quantities of data that must be securely maintained. Commissioners and staff deal with issues with the potential to enrage individuals, so personnel security must be a goal and can dovetail with computer security to certain extent.

One highlight of 2015 was having a full Commission. Seven members are attorneys and two members are retired law enforcement officers. The Commission also began having meetings eleven months of the year rather than six months each year. This change was needed due to a change in staff, a backlog of hearings and the increase of complaints.

Another highlight of 2015 was getting the appropriations and authority from the legislature for another full-time investigator to be hired. This goal will be accomplished during FY2016.