



# Happy New Year

Our next virtual training on the Ethics Act and the Open Meetings Act is on January 30, 2026, at 12 noon - 1pm. Earn 1 hour CLE/CPE credit. Email [kimberly.b.weber@wv.gov](mailto:kimberly.b.weber@wv.gov) for an invite.

## Financial Disclosures Due February 2

All **elected state and county** officials, including county board of education members, and school board superintendents, are required to file a Financial Disclosure Statement (FDS) with the Ethics Commission by February 2, 2026.

Governor-appointed members of **state boards** and commissions and certain executive branch state employees must file. Governor appointees must file within 30 days of assuming their duties. See page 2 for which state **employees** must file.

The only municipal candidates and elected officials who must file are those in Charleston, Fairmont, and Morgantown. Candidates and officials in other towns and cities do not file a FDS with the Commission. Click [here](#) for forms and online filing.

Please notify [Rachel.y.carpenter@wv.gov](mailto:Rachel.y.carpenter@wv.gov) if you are no longer in a position that is required to file. See page 2 for more about online filing.



## \*NEW OPINIONS\*

### Ethics Act Advisory Opinions

**2025-09** A public service district ("PSD") may not solicit donations to cover operating expenses as operating expenses do not qualify as a charitable purpose, but the PSD may sell advertising by recognizing supporters on signs that are reasonably visible to the public.

**2025-10** A public employee working as an events manager may not keep Marriott bonus points that accumulated from her arranging hotel accommodations for the agency's officials and employees other than herself. The points could be used only by the traveling official or employee or for any future state travel to reduce the cost to the state.

**2025-11** A state employee asked if he may accept a prize he won in a raffle with a ticket he bought while he was at a work-related conference. Because the employee bought \$50 in raffle tickets to win the rifle, it was not a gift. Therefore, the gift limitations in the Ethics Act and related legislative rule do not apply and the Commission's Door Prizes, Gifts and Giveaways at Conferences guideline is not applicable.



## Lobbying Laws in West Virginia

The new year brings lobbyists to Charleston for the WV 2026 regular session, which starts on January 14 this year. The Ethics Act requires most people to register with the Ethics Commission prior to engaging in lobbyist activities. Registering is easily done through our website's new **Lobbyist Portal**, at <https://registerlobbyist.wv.gov/>.

### Who Needs to Register as a Lobbyist?

A person who:

- Communicates with a state government official or employee to influence the passage, defeat, approval, or veto of legislation, rules, regulations, legislative rules, standards, rates, fees, or other state agency action **AND**
- Is compensated to lobby **OR**, if uncompensated, spends over **\$150** on lobbying activities. Please see: W. Va. Code § 6B-3-1 and W. Va. Code R. § 158-12. (See special rule for lobbyist of a non profit.)

### Lobbyist Q&A

Q: If a lobbyist spent \$8 on a fancy coffee for a legislator, does the lobbyist need to report this on her Lobbyist Activity Report?

A: The lobbyist must report the amount spent on the legislator's coffee (plus the tip), no matter how small the expense. The name of the legislator must be listed on Schedule A to the Lobbyist Activity Report.



For lobbying questions, contact Kateland, our new Lobbyist Registrar, at [kateland.j.cantrell@wv.gov](mailto:kateland.j.cantrell@wv.gov)

### Do State Employees File an FDS?

Yes, some do! The following state *executive branch employees* must file an FDS: **Secretaries of departments, commissioners, deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners, directors, deputy directors, assistant directors, department heads, deputy department heads, and assistant department heads.** If you have two titles, such as a civil service classification (Director I) and a working title (Supervisor of Maintenance), you must file an FDS because one of the titles has the operative word ("Director") in it. Non-elective employees in the legislative and judicial branches and higher education employees (unless Governor appointed) do not need to file.

**How to File FDS:** To file Online, go to [ethics.wv.gov](https://ethics.wv.gov). If you have previously filed online, you may file online again this year using your username and password. If you have forgotten your username or are unable to reset your password, call Tyler Technologies at (304) 414-0265 for assistance. Please do not call the Ethics Commission for your username or password. The Commission does not have access to this information.

### New Contract Exemption

**CE 2025-04** The Ethics Commission granted the Wyoming County Health Department a contract exemption allowing it to continue contracting with Family Healthcare Inc. at a rate of \$45 per hour. The Exemption was granted up to \$5,000 per fiscal year for 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029.



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